

Jesus looks at Peter

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Preacher: Prof E.Donnelly

- [0 : 00] Our text this evening is found in the 61st verse of Luke chapter 22. The opening words of the verse.
- And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.
- Some time ago I was visiting in a home in which there were a number of young children. And they had been squabbling. And their mother had tried to quieten them and get them to behave.
- And as we were sitting talking the little girl of the family suddenly said of one of her brothers. Mummy he's looking at me.
- And her mother said well he can't do you much harm looking at you. He can't help looking at you. And with respect to that mother I think the little girl was right.
- [1 : 14] Because I had seen the little boy. And there was such a look of malice. Malevolence. Wait till I get you later.
- That I wouldn't like anyone to look at me as he was looking at her. A look can be very, very eloquent indeed.
- We all know that. There is the dog who sits at the table looking at us during the meal. And completely ruining our enjoyment of everything we eat.
- Because we are conscious all the time we eat of a pair of pleading, beseeching, liquid brown eyes. Gazing expectantly at us.
- There is the first look perhaps that a man and a woman give each other. A look which can be so very eloquent.
- [2 : 16] Husbands know that wives can have very eloquent looks. Frighteningly eloquent sometimes. There is sometimes more in a wife's look than would fill several volumes.
- So a look can be very, very eloquent. And here in this deceptively simple statement by Luke we are told that in the judgment hall of Pilate the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.
- That's all he did. He didn't speak to him. He didn't approach him in words. He didn't take him aside and try to deal with him.
- He simply looked at him. And yet can we imagine what there must have been in that look of the Savior.
- What volumes of meaning. What intense affecting power.
- [3 : 41] Christ looked at Peter. And that's all he needed to do. He didn't speak a word.
- The ancient Greeks had a legend about a monster whose look could turn a man into stone.
- But the look of Christ broke Peter's heart. It changed him. It took him out into the darkness to bitter weeping.
- He was never the same again. And we want to think this evening of that look which Christ gave to Peter at that moment of his failure and denial.

To see perhaps how the same Savior may look with similar meaning and power at each one of us this evening.

[4 : 47] That we may be changed as Peter was. What was in the look of Christ?

I want to suggest three things. In the first place that look was a rebuke.

That look was a rebuke. Try to imagine the mental condition of this man, Peter. He had been told in the upper room that all the disciples would flee and forsake their master.

And his generous heart had been stirred to the depths. And he had said, though all men forsake you, yet will not I.

Christ had repeated the warning. He had said, Peter, you will deny me this night.

[5 : 52] And as he said those words, the fierce resolve was formed in Peter's heart. That should he die and spill his life's blood, he would not deny his Savior.

Throughout the rest of that meal and the conversation, Peter was saying again and again to himself, I will not deny him.

I will not deny him. And they walked together through Jerusalem by night. And they came to the garden. And Peter was still nerving himself to stand by his Savior.

Peter, when the moment of crisis came, there would be one man found faithful. One man to strike a blow for his master.

And the moment of crisis did come. Or so Peter thought. And when it came, he drew his sword from his sheath and struck out for his master's safety and name.

[7 : 01] And what happened? Jesus rebuked him. He told him to put his sword away.

He healed the wounded man. He said, that is not the way. And he, the King of Glory, allowed himself to be led away, passive and unresisting, in the hands of his enemies.

And Peter followed, confused, dismayed, and troubled. And as the long hours passed, his courage and vigor ebbed away.

And suddenly, taken by surprise, he was surprised. And I believe he was surprised into a lie. And he said, I don't know the man.

But once having told the lie, he had to stick with it. And again and again, he repeated his denial of his master.

[8 : 14] With each denial, growing more angry. Wretched with himself. And miserably unhappy.

We can tell that by his curses. They show his inner turmoil. When you see an angry man.

Angry with other people. That man very often is angry with himself. His problem is not other people. His problem is in his own heart.

We see it in the church. And in the world. We want to say to such men, friend. Why are you angry with yourself? But Peter was an angry man.

And a miserable man. A wretchedly unhappy man. Three times he had denied his savior. But he had this to hold on to.

[9 : 17] As long as he stuck by his lie. No one could prove him in the wrong. No one could find him out.

He said to himself, well what I have to do. Is to keep on with my denial. To maintain it. And insist upon it. And none of these people can prove.

That I'm a follower of Christ. Christ. And he decided. To brazen it out. And then suddenly. Christ looked at him.

And in that blinding moment. Of realization. Peter saw to his horror. That Jesus knew.

Jesus knew. The laser beam. Of holy insight. Piercing his denials.

- [10 : 23] Stripping away the camouflage. Peter saw himself reflected. In the eyes of Christ.
His cowardice. His falsehood. His ingratitude. His faithlessness. To his master.
In the eyes of the holy one. He saw the reflection of his sin. Its enormity. And blackness.
And he was ashamed.
And he was convicted. And he was silenced. To some extent. We are all like Peter.
We present a front. To the world. Which doesn't always. Which rarely. Coincides. With the reality.
- [11 : 27] Inside. We behave. And act. We behave. And act. In a certain way. Knowing that the inner reality.
Is different. But who can find us out? No one. As long as we keep up the front.
As long as we behave. According to the norms. We can deceive others. And sometimes. Even deceive. Ourselves.
And in this way. We protect ourselves. Against. Conviction of sin. And if someone speaks to us.
About our. Shortcomings. We are offended. We are angry. Our pride is hurt. And there is no force.
- [12 : 24] On earth. Which can convict. A sinner. Of his sin. But there is one person.
We can't deceive. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ. His eyes see us. As we really are.
I knowest my path. And lying down. And all my ways. All my ways. To thee. Are known.
He sees us. He knows us. He looks into our hearts. With a penetrating.
Piercing gaze. All things are naked. And opened. And opened. To his eyes. We speak.
- [13 : 29] Often glibly. Perhaps. Of looking to the Lord. And seeking the Lord. Do we understand. What it means.
To be seen. By a holy God. To be understood. To be laid open.
John. The apostle. Telling us of the risen Christ. Says that his eyes. Wear as a flame. Of fire.
My friends. I would put it to you. That it is. For sinners. As we are. An unsettling thing.
And a painful thing. And a frightening thing. To be seen. By Jesus. All that impurity.
- [14 : 33] All in the very depths. Of our being. A look of holy. Rebuke. The question this evening. Is not.
What do other people see in you? Not even what do we see in ourselves. For our hearts are deceitful.
And desperately wicked. But what does Christ. See in us tonight. What does he see in our hearts.
What does he see in our thoughts. What does he see in our lives. That's what we need.
Not as the poet says. To see ourselves. As others. See us. But to be given. To see ourselves.
- [15 : 31] In some measure. As God sees us. I cry out with Isaiah. Woe is me. For I.
Am undone. Do you feel. The gaze of Christ. On you tonight. Do you feel.
Peter's. Shame. His conviction. His sorrow. Men and women.
Who posture. And pray. And preen themselves. In the presence of God. Have never. See him. They have never felt.

His holy gaze. C.S. Lewis writes. In the presence of God. I see myself.

[16 : 33] As a small. Dirty. Object. Peter's. Life. Life. Was rebuked. By the gaze.
Of Christ. Secondly. Christ's. Look. Was a reminder. A reminder. The Lord.
Turned. And looked. Upon Peter. And Peter. Remembered. What did he remember? Well.
He remembered. We are told. That solemn. Repeated. Warning. Which Christ. His
master. Had given him. Verily. Verily. I tell you.
Peter. Before the cock. Crow. Thou shalt deny me. How solemn. That warning had been.

[17 : 26] How lightly. Peter had taken it. How had he dared. To argue. To argue. With his Lord.
How had he presumed.
In his arrogance. To contradict him. What a fool. He had been. Why had he not listened.
Why had he not trembled. Why had he not walked. More humbly. Peter remembered.
Christ's warning. But I would suggest.
That as he gazed. At the face. Of his friend. And master. He remembered more. The Lord
turned. And looked upon Peter. And Peter. Remembered.
Remembered. Perhaps. His first call. To discipleship. And the Lord. Had come. And said.
Follow me. Remembered.

[18 : 29] Perhaps. That Sabbath afternoon. In Capernaum. When Christ. Had come with healing.
Into his family. And home.
Perhaps. He remembered. That time. When he began. To sink. In the sea of Galilee. And
cried. Lord. Save me.
Christ. Christ. Had stretched out his hand. And upheld him. Perhaps. He remembered.
Those many days.
And months. That they had spent. Traveling together. The roads. Of Palestine. Perhaps.
He remembered. His own words.
Lord. To whom. Shall we go. Thou. Hast the words. Of eternal life. Thou art. The Christ.

[19 : 24] The son. Of the living God. Sweeping. Through the floodgates. Of memory. Like a tide.
Came all.
These memories. Peter. Remembered. And what had he just been saying. I do not know
the man.
I do not know the man. A lie. A black. Ungrateful. Lie.
He who had been. Everything to him. And time and time again. Had proved himself.
Gracious. And good.
And faithful. And strong. And loving. Who had been all in all. To Peter. Peter. Denied him.

[20 : 26] Surely as he remembered. His guilt was deepened. As he looked into the face. Of his
friend and master. What excuse had it.
What shadow of an excuse. For the lies. Which he had been telling. I wonder what we
remember tonight.
What you remember. As Christ looks upon you. My friend. Do you remember.
Warnings. You have received. Do you remember. Do you remember. Do you remember.
This evening. The prayers.
Of a father. Or a mother. Their teaching. Their example. Do you remember.

[21 : 27] Perhaps. Times. In this building. When God. Has come near to you. And spoken to you.
Do you remember.

The daily mercies. With which God. Has abundantly. Blessed you. The gifts. And the goods. Of each day.

As goodness. And mercy. Have followed you. All the days. Of your life. Do you remember. When Christ.

Has helped you. You've cried to him. In times of danger. And he heard your cry. You've come to him.

In sickness. Or in sorrow. And he answered your prayer. He blessed you. Far above. All your asking.

[22 : 23] Or thinking. Do you remember. Perhaps. Past vows. And promises. You've made. Vows. In the quiet. Of your own heart. Vows. Before the people. Of God. This is no stranger. Who looks at you. Tonight. No stranger. He has been present. And active. In your life. All your days. Yet perhaps. Here tonight. You're denying him. I don't mean. That you are openly.

Repudiating. And scorning. The Christian faith. Perhaps. Some of you here. Are refusing. To believe. To believe. On him. You will not believe.

[23 : 26] You will not receive him. As your savior. And your lord. You deny.

His savior. His authority. His savior. His authority. Perhaps. Some of us. Are denying. His lordship. Over our lives. In some area.

Of disobedience. Or failure. We know. We know. What he wants. Of us. We will not do it. Perhaps.

We are. Hesitant. To associate. Publicly. With his cause. Or his people. In some way. To share.

In his suffering. Perhaps. In our workplace. Or our daily lives. We would rather. Merge. With that crowd. Around the fire. And not be noticed.

[24 : 25] And not be marked out. As the people of God. Perhaps. In a hundred. Subtle. Almost. Unconscious.

Ways. In your daily living. You are compromising. Your allegiance. To Christ. And not standing. For him. As you should. In the world.

Ashamed. Of the reproach. Of the cross. Hesitant. To go outside. The camp. And so. Denying him. In this way.

Saying. I do not know him. Even in small ways. That is a lie.

You are included. Among the covenant. People. Of God. I imagine. That most of you here.

[25 : 25] Have received. The sacrament. Of baptism. Numbered. Among. The professing. People of God.

Perhaps. You. You. Cannot. Deny. The authority. And lordship. Of Christ. Over you.

You. Cannot. Say. I do not know him. You. Cannot. Say. I owe nothing. To him. I challenge you.

To remember. Can you say it. Can you say it. You cannot say it. If you seek to do so.

You violate deep instincts in your being. Perhaps. You. You. You. Perhaps. Some of you tonight. Are unhappy.

[26 : 22] And miserable. And that is the reason. That you are living. A lie. Peter.

Peter was doing it. Doing that which he knew. To be untrue. There are many people in the world. Who have not heard the gospel.

But you have heard the gospel. There are many who do not know the way of salvation. But you do know the way of salvation.

You do know of Christ. You do know of his truth. You do know of his claims. And I put it to you that in your heart of hearts. You understand the authority of those claims.

Remember. Peter remembered. Peter remembered. Thirdly. And lastly. Christ's look.

[27 : 23] Was a reassurance. A reassurance. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter.

And Peter went out. And wept. Bitterly. And I ask you this. What was it. Which made Peter weep.

What was it. Which made Peter weep. I don't think it was the rebuke. That ashamed him.

And silenced him. I don't think it was the memories. I believe. That it was the love.

Which he saw. Shining. In the eyes of his master. Having loved his own. And he loved them. And he loved them. Having loved his own. Which were in the world.

[28 : 28] He loved them. To the end. Here was our Lord and Savior. Approaching the great climax. Of his earthly life.

When in a few short hours. He would be made a curse. And bear all the sins. Of all his elect people.

Upon himself. On the cross. When he would be forsaken. By the father. And yet. In that supreme moment. Of crisis.

He had time. To turn round. And look. At Peter. We might have thought. That he would have forgotten. About Peter.

That he had much greater. And more momentous. Issues on his mind. And heart. Christ turned. And looked. At his disciple.

[29 : 25] And he looked. I am convinced. With a love. Which would never fail. Which would never. Let go.

They looked at Peter. Not. Coldly. Not. Scornfully. With holy rebuke.

Yes. With disappointment. Yes. But also. With love. With love.

Peter. You have denied me. But I will not. Deny you. You have failed me.

But I will not fail you. You have turned away from me. But Peter. I will not turn away from you.

[30 : 25] I believe it was that. Which broke. This great strong man. And sent him out. To the darkness.

To cry. Like a little child. The reassurance. Of Christ's. Love. Love. I remember.

I remember when I was. A little boy. I was given a model plane. And my father said to me. Don't try to fly it. Till I come home. You'll break it. And I took it out.

And I tried to fly it. And I broke it. And my father was a loving man. But he was a strict man. And I'll never forget. Kneeling there.

In childish panic. Trying to fix the plane. With fumbling. Sweating fingers. Trying to put it together again. And it wouldn't go together. And the hour was approaching.

[31 : 27] When my father would come back. And I had disobeyed him. And I remember. Being almost sick. With panic. At the thought of his anger.

And he came back. And I took. Up to him. The fragments of the plane. And he must have seen. The state I was in. And he wasn't angry.

He wasn't angry. I've never forgotten that. Peter looked at Jesus.

Jesus said. Peter. It's still. All right. My friends. The staggering glory.

Of the gospel. Is this. That Christ. Looks. At the repentance. The self-confident sinner. With love. Yes.

[32 : 28] With love. In his eyes. Now we must be careful. He does not look. At the stubborn sinner.

With love. In his eyes. He does not look. At the self-confident rebel. With love. In his eyes. I saw a young person.

The other day. Wearing a badge. Addressed. Addressed to the world. And the badge said. Smile. God loves you. What an unbiblical statement.

That is. To offer to careless. Heedless sinners. Smile. God loves you. Tremble. God is angry with you.

God is angry with you.

[33 : 40] Heedless sinners. He's angry with you. He doesn't take a look.

Is in your name. His Son. Ghats. God is angry with you. Jesus Christ. His anger. God is angry with you. Jesus Christ. Him is angry with you.

Hallelujah with you. He says that sinned. Jesus Christ. Him has angry with you. Him has angry with you. And whenever we lift tear-blinded eyes timidly to Christ, then the gospel tells us that love is there.

Not contempt, not loathing, but steadfast, welcoming love. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Wasn't it said of him, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them? You see, like Peter, there is nothing so designed to break the heart of the penitent as the love of Christ.

[35 : 02] I would put it to you that that is a great dividing line between the gracious man, the exercised man, and the man without grace.

The man without grace is hardened when he hears of the love and the forgiveness of Christ. His conclusion is, I can continue to sin now.

Everything is alright. But the child of God, the more he hears of the mercy of God, the deeper is his conviction.

And the fiercer his determination not to sin against such mercy. You remember the prodigal son?

How he came back. Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no longer worthy to be called thy son. And while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and ran and had compassion and fell on his neck and kissed him.

[36 : 10] Now, what do you think were the conclusions in that young man's mind? Did he say, oh, this old boy is soft?

Oh, I've got away with it well here. I can go away again any time I like. This is easy. Never. Never. Never. Never.

Never. Never. Never. Never. With every word of kindness from his father. Surely in that prodigal's heart, there was a deeper loathing of his own ingratitude.

And a fierce resolve that to the end of his days, he would not hurt a father like that.

It's Christ's love that breaks us. Finally. I remember speaking to a man who had gravely sinned against and injured his wife.

[37 : 27] And she was a Christian woman. And she forgave him. And I remember him saying to me, it would have been far, far easier if she had been angry.

And what he could hardly stand was the way she wasn't angry. And the way she forgave him. And Peter looked at the eyes of Christ.

There was reassurance of love and calling. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter.

But my friends, let us not forget that Peter must have been looking at the Lord. Peter must have been looking at the Lord.

Otherwise, he would not have seen his look. He would have missed it. Christ looks at us now. Will you look to him?

[38 : 40] Will you look to him? You may feel his gaze upon you this evening. That he's looking on you.

That he's claiming your heart. Your life. You may even now be struggling to avoid his gaze.

Look to him. Look to him. Meet his eyes. It may mean pain for you.

It may mean sorrow. It may break your heart to look at Christ. But he says, look unto me.

And be saved. All ye ends of the earth. For I am God. And there is none else.

[39 : 43] Christ looked at Peter. Peter looked at Christ. Peter was changed. He looks at others this evening.

Christ here this evening looks perhaps at some discouraged people. You sit here tonight discouraged perhaps in your work for God.

You've been working faithfully. You've been working faithfully. You've seen perhaps little in the way of results. You feel apprehensive.

My friend Christ looks at you. He says, well done. Be not weary in well doing.

Perhaps he looks at someone tonight discouraged in the battle against indwelling sin. Overwhelmed and apprehensive.

[40 : 46] He says, you shall be like me. For you shall see me as I am.

Perhaps there's someone in a state of spiritual barrenness. Your flesh longs in a dry parts land. Wherein no waters be.

And Christ looks at you. With understanding. And with compassion. He looks at the suffering. With grace.

And tenderness. He looks at the sorrowing. And the lonely. And it is a look of love. And strength.

And blessing. My friends. Our saviour. Looks upon us. He does not turn away his face. He looks upon us.

[41 : 50] In his wisdom. And his grace. He calls us to look to him. They looked to him. And lightened were.

Not shamed. With their fists. This poor man cried. God heard. And saved him. From all his distress.

You remember that. Poor woman long ago. Hagar. In a time of need. Loneliness. And discouragement.

How she was uplifted. By this thought. And these words. Thou. God. Seest.

Me. To the unconverted. A fearsome thought. To the people of God.

[42 : 53] Our blessing. And our life. Amen. Let us pray. Gracious God.

Thou who dwellest. In the holy place. Who art of pure arise. Than to behold evil.

And canst not look. Upon iniquity. What mercy. What mercy. And grace. That thou dost look. Upon the sons of men. He from his holy place.

Looked down. The earth he viewed. From heaven on high. To hear the prisoners. Morning groan. And free.

Them that are doomed. To die. Oh Lord. Our God. Look upon us. We pray. Look upon us.

[44 : 04] In thy holiness. That we may be rebuked. And corrected. Enable us. To examine our hearts. In the light.

Of thy holy word. That we may see. Our sin. And turn from it. Open up. Oh God. The dark places.

Of our beings. Hidden even. From ourselves. And cast thy holy light. Upon them. To scatter darkness.

That light. May shine there. Lord. Look upon us. In mercy. Look upon us. In grace. Look upon us.

To strengthen. To comfort. To encourage. And help us. Oh God. Men and women. That we are. To lift our eyes.

[45 : 00] To Christ. The Savior. To look upon him. Whom we have pierced. To mourn. To be saved.

To be broken. And to be healed. To be transformed. And changed. And help us. This night. Oh God.

And on the morrow. And on each day. To live our lives. In more conscious awareness. That thou God. Seest us.

May this be our. Barrier. Against sin. And our strength. For service. We ask it. In Jesus name.

And for his sake. And glory. Amen.