

Peter

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] We will turn this again to the chapter that we read, Mark chapter 16. And I would like to look in particular at the two words in verse number 7.

Where it says, but go ye away, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth to fall into Galilee, there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. But in particular those two words, and Peter.

And I know that I preached it in Russian already, but I think that this is a sermon that you will find I return to quite frequently. Because it is a sermon that could be entitled, lest we despair.

And it is of tremendous importance to me personally, those two words. And I hope over the years that it will become very precious to you as well. Now to find out why those words and Peter are there, we have to go back a little bit time.

Scholars are saying that Mark didn't write the gospel without prompting from somebody else.

[1 : 10] Because John Mark was a very young man, and he speaks of the things that he saw as if he had seen them with the wrong eye. But they know that he couldn't possibly have been everywhere where he was.

So scholars are absolutely certain that the man who prompted him, and who gave him, sort of the eye, a witness account of those things that took place, was Peter.

And when they compare the writings of Peter, and the writings of John Mark, they are pretty certain that the gospel of Mark was written by Mark, but as a prompting of Peter.

So we find that it is interesting that none of the other gospels contain those two words. So we believe that that is further truth, that it was Peter who was prompting John Mark.

Because all the others said, but go tell his disciples that they were seen in Galilee. But Peter seems to have insisted on putting in those two words that go tell his disciples and Peter that he goes to Galilee.

[2 : 30] So we will look this evening just for a few minutes to see why those words and Peter were so important to Peter. Why were they written in letters of gold upon his heart?

So that whenever he heard this story being told, he always insisted that those two words be included, and Peter. Go tell his disciples and Peter.

We go back then just a little while to after the peace of the Passover. When Jesus was in the upper room with eleven of his disciples, because a Judas Iscariot had gone out into darkness to betray him.

And Jesus took his eleven disciples and went down to the upper room, down a few steps onto the ground, across the brooked headroom which ran past beside them, and took them on to the gently sloughing side of the Mount of Olives.

And then the first place to where the Garden of Gethsemane was. Now the Garden of Gethsemane was a place where Jesus and his disciples often went. We don't know who owned it or how they came to be able to use it, but we do know that they often went there for peace and to get away from the crowd elsewhere, to have a little time to themselves.

[3 : 47] So they went to the Garden of Gethsemane. And this time, although the disciples were often used to go in with Jesus into the Garden, he surprised them this time by asking eight of them to remain just at the gate of Gethsemane.

And he asked Peter and James and John to accompany him into the Garden. And then when he had walked with them into fire, he asked them to sit down and to wait for him there.

And he himself went on about thirty paces further on to pray. Now we must remember that when Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane, he was a man.

He was a man on this earth and he was subject to all the weaknesses and all the frailties as regards tiredness, loneliness, hunger, thirst, all of those he was subject to.

And we do know that this time he was subject to sheer loneliness. It wasn't a test for the disciples. Jesus genuinely wished for these three close friends of his to be near him for company when he went into the Garden of Gethsemane because he knew that his time was coming near and he had to pray and establish contact with his father.

[5 : 05] So he wanted Peter and James and John especially to be close to him, to give him, as it were, an encouragement in what he was doing. And we know that he went ahead and that he prayed and that there was only thirty paces between himself and them.

But they sadly put a much greater distance between them by falling asleep. So when Jesus came back, he found the three of them asleep.

And he found the three of them asleep three times. Three times he went on into the Garden to pray and three times when he came back he found the three of them asleep.

Now Jesus didn't show any anger or any recommendation. He didn't blame them in any way. But he did say, could you not watch with me one hour?

And he especially mentioned, he said, Simon, sleep at night. Could you not watch with me one hour? Now the three disciples must have been hurt to us.

[6 : 12] But especially Peter would have been hurt because Peter was the leader. And Peter was a strong man. So physically and mentally, Peter was a strong man.

Peter was a fisherman. And he had been used to being up all night often. When the fishing was good, he'd be up all night. be up all night and it was nothing for Peter to stay awake all night. It was nothing for Peter to go maybe for days when the fishing was good without any sleep and he thought of almost prided himself on his physical strength and endurance and the way that he could do things. But yet here he was when Christ, his beloved master, really needed him, when he needed his stamina, his courage and his endurance, Peter let him down. Christ said, could you not watch with me one hour?

As they came out of the garden after Peter let him down in the air, Judas and his band of the people from the chief priests, chief priests of us, came and Judas pointed out who Jesus was.

And their people, that's the soldiers, the guards came forward to lay hands on Jesus. Now the disciples had been for some time aware that there was going to come a day when they would have to defend themselves because they knew that there was trouble coming. So they had hidden two swords on their chest so that when trouble did come they'd have something with which to defend themselves.

So this time Peter had wanted the swords and as soon as they went forward, as soon as the soldiers, the guards went forward to try and grab hold of Jesus, Peter pulls out the sword and lashes out wildly and hit the servant of the high priest, the man called master, hit him on a glancing blow on the head and cut his ear off.

[8 : 20] Now we know that Jesus is, the very preciousness of Jesus's sacrifice at Calvary was that he came willingly and that he was willingly giving himself up for mankind. And this business of putting up a struggle was not in the plan of salvation at all. Jesus had to be seen to give himself up willingly. And Peter was, as it were, fighting against that. So Jesus saw that if there was an unseemly struggle, if it looked as if it was being dragged against his will to Calvary, then the very preciousness of the whole sacrifice would be lost.

So he immediately reached forward, touched the ear of the high priest's servant and healed it and calmed Peter down and calmed the disaster self and gave himself willingly to the guard who took off to the high priest's palace.

Peter knew that he had spoiled in some way his beloved master's plan. He knew that he had done wrong, he knew that he shouldn't have done that, so Peter was very, very down about it. But Peter followed afar off.

He followed afar off to the high priest's palace. And we know that John, one of the other disciples, went in to the high priest's palace and Peter followed afar off.

In the courtyard there was a fire, a fire of cold, we are told, that the sword was meant to keep themselves warm. And Peter drew near to that fire to warm themselves because it was by this time three, four in the morning and it was very cold.

[10 : 13] And as he was going in, one of the seven girls says, you were also with this man Jesus. And Peter says, no, no, I don't know what you're talking about. And he moved up around the fire. But the people around the fire say, you sound like a Galilean, your accent certainly sounds as if you're a Galilean, you must be with this man Jesus.

And Peter swore. Peter blaspheme. And Peter denied that he knew the Lord Jesus Christ. With oaths and swear words he said, I know not this man.

And immediately the prophet too. And Jesus Christ, who was in the inner room, looked out and caught Peter's eye and looked on him again without recrimination, without anger, without saying I told you so.

But with a pathetic, but with a pathetic, sympathetic look of patience, he looked at him and Peter caught his eye and Peter broke down. He went out and he wept bitterly.

We know that whatever else Jesus felt at that time, to hear Peter swearing would have been bad, to hear Peter blaspheme would have been bad.

[11 : 51] But to hear Peter, his faithful servant, calling him this man, this man, his beloved savior, Jesus Christ, the son of God, being referred was this man.

To whom else shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life, he had said a few days before. And now he's calling him this man. And Peter, it was all in that look that Christ gave him.

And Peter went out and wept bitterly. We're not told where he went. We're not told what his thoughts were. But we do know that he must have been despairing.

Because he honestly thought that this was the end. He honestly thought that never again would he know another happy day. He thought that he would never again hear the beloved voice of his master.

He would never again see the beloved face of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was full of remorse. Now of all sadnesses, of all things, to bite away at a man, remorse is the most grievous.

[12 : 59] And we pray God that nobody here will ever feel the pains of remorse. All the time that Peter was away, that last tender look of the Lord Jesus Christ halted him.

And we know that he must have been despairing about the rest of his days. It doesn't tell us that I'm sure being a man like Peter, the thought of suicide would have gone through his mind.

And we know that he would not be able to face himself. Peter the strong man. Peter the leader.

Peter the man who had said to Christ, although everybody else will forsake you, yet will not die.

Peter, of all people, had denied the Lord Jesus Christ. And not only could he not face himself, but he could never again face the other.

He had been the leader. And yet he could never again get back in amongst the other. But we know that when he heard this message that the woman gave, that this must have been like a lifeline to a drowning man.

[14 : 12] Because although they, the woman, didn't know really what they were saying, they were only passing on the message as they got it. And they didn't see the tremendous relevance he offered to Peter.

They thought it was just a message to the disciples and to Peter in particular because he was the leader. But Peter knew what it meant. Peter knew that this was Christ speaking to him.

Peter knew that this was a special epistle, especially for himself. Peter knew that this was a message that the Lord Jesus, Christ had sent him, go tell his disciples and Peter.

And he would know for a fact what he speaks about again in his own epistles. That he was begotten again to a living hope. Because the Lord Jesus Christ had sent him a special message to say that he remembered him.

We know that Peter's feelings towards others would have been different from that day on. Peter from that moment would have known what Christ meant when he had asked him, How often should we forgive our brother?

[15 : 49] Should we forgive them seven times? And Christ said, Seventy times seven. And Peter was restored because he knew that Christ remembered him.

But let us look for a few moments at the Lord Jesus Christ who did the remembering. Who can tell the depth or the tenderness of the love of Christ.

But we are shown it to a fair measure here. Jesus had suffered. We've heard often how he suffered on the road to Calvary, how he suffered on the cross.

We're not told much about what he went through in the grave. But we do know that he had gone further into the meaning of sin. Than any other soul out of hell has ever gone.

We do know that he met the powers of hell head on. And we do know that he had wrestled the power of death out of their hands.

[17 : 00] We do know that he led captivity captive. That he robbed death of its sting. That he robbed the grave of its victory.

And all the time that he was so taken up. As it were, speaking with respect, with his hands full. Doing all those things. There was no change in the direction or the tenacity of his love.

As his eyes closed in death, he remembered Peter. And when his eyes opened on resurrection morning, he still remembered it.

What death and the grave could not do. Then time and the glories of heaven have not done. He loves us.

He loves us. He loves us still as he loved Peter. He understands our faith. He understands us when we fall.

[18 : 11] He picks us up when we fall. He knows our waves of ingravity when we don't even think of him. He knows our indifference when we find it a chore to come to church to hear his word.

He knows about us denying him when we fail to witness for him when we shouldn't. But through them all, Jesus loves us with a love that will not let us go.

If Jesus loves us with a love that will not let us know. If Jesus loves us with that kind of love, should we not, as professors of the love of Christ, witnessing for him, should we not open wide the messy doors and have a little compassion on each other, have a little friendship towards each other because of the example of Jesus Christ.

Now we are all passionate lives. I said at the beginning that this sermon is an antidote to despair. You will find that as you go through life, there are struggles, there are times when you feel down.

There are times when your unbelief seems to be getting the better of you. But no matter what happens, once you entrust yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing can erase you from that love.

[19 : 45] Because the Lord Jesus Christ has put that love into your heart for Christ himself. So that it is impossible for any of his people to be lost.

Because he has instigated the love in your heart for him. It belongs to him. And when you have that love in your heart, you cannot be forsaken.

We are, as we go through life, commanded to wait upon the Lord. And by waiting on the Lord, we are able to master life.

We are able to endure in whatever circumstances we are in, because of the Lord Jesus Christ. We never become victims of life.

We are masters of it, because of the love of Christ that is in our hearts. We do not get carried away with anger that will make us blind out judgment in things.

[20 : 54] We do not get carried away with frustration that would make us, as well, hit the panic button and do something deaf. We do not get discouraged so that we will show the white flag of surrender.

We will go on waiting on the Lord, even though he kills us, as Paul says.

No matter what happens, because of this love in our hearts for Christ, which he has put there, we can go on, we can go on, and not even questioning the Lord's dealings with us.

A Christian never says, why me? A Christian never takes God to the bar of judgment and says, why did you do this to me? A Christian says, even so, Lord, because it seems good in that sight.

Waiting on the Lord is the Christian's work. Because of the resurrection, that has given us a foundation to build on.

[22 : 10] And because we are waiting on the second coming, that gives us the height in our lives. Because we are waiting on the Lord to come to us.

We accept the present with no bitterness. Because we are looking for a better kingdom.

We are looking for the kingdom of Christ where there is no more pain, no more sorrow, no more tears. Hunger and thirst are unknown. And we pray with sincerity.

And with a full knowledge of what we are doing. When we say, thy kingdom come. We are waiting for the judgment day.

But we are waiting with happiness and joy. Because who is going to do the judging? The Lord Jesus Christ. Our friend. So that instead of being frightened.

[23 : 17] Instead of it being a message of doom. It's a great liberating message. Because the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the judge.

The world today has its pressures on everybody. And has particular pressures on the Christian.

But as the psalmist says, I have fainted. Unless I have believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. The Christian sees and knows that no matter what comes into his life. Everything is alright. Because of Jesus Christ. Who cannot forget us?

Those that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

[24 : 21] That's the Christian. And it's all because of Christ. That Christ cannot forget us. And we praise the Lord that because he has put that love in our heart.

We can't forget him. My friends, those who know the Lord Jesus Christ. Know that this is right. Know that this is true.

And they never are tired hearing it. But what about you who doesn't know the Lord Jesus Christ. Who doesn't yet realize that what we're saying applies to you.

And that you're hearing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you hope? Have you hope? If Christ came back tonight? If Christ appeared in clouds when every eye will see him.

You can't sort of hide away at the telly. You can't hide away in your room and say I'll see him tomorrow. Every eye will see him. As the lightning goes from the east and the west. As the lightning goes from the east and to the west.

[25 : 26] So every eye will see the glorious majestic coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we don't know when he's coming.

He could be here tonight. Are you ready for him? Maybe you need to come back to church next week. Christ could be here before then.

And you still don't know him. But the glorious message is that as long as you are among the earth's ground.

You can meet with him. And he will never, never turn anyone away who comes to him. You have nothing to offer. Nobody had anything to offer Christ.

Because what he had done was a way far beyond the birth. Anything that we could ever dream of giving him. And the good message is that if you come to him tonight, he will receive you.

[26 : 28] And accept you as his own. And when he comes back on clouds. Because we are told that he cometh with clouds. As a sign of his majesty.

As a sign of his power. As a sign of him coming to rule the world. And to judge the world. Then when he comes, you can be looking for him as a friend.

And instead of being frightened and asking for the hills to fall upon you. You can be gloriously looking for him. Because he is your friend.

Now we don't want people to get carried away that this is just a sermon. My friends, this is the truth. This is what the word of God says.

There is no argument about it. So if Christ comes tonight. Will he have a message for you? Will he know your name?

[27 : 29] As a friend. As he knew Peter. Look at the hope you have. Peter had denied him three times. And yet Christ said, go to his disciples and Peter.

You can substitute any name you like in the end. You can substitute your own name there. As long as you come to Christ. Before it's too late.

And it is too late once you die. Or once Christ comes. We don't know which is coming first. But it is as straightforward as that.

That once you die. You have no hope of getting to know the Lord Jesus Christ as a friend. If you don't know him before you die. You have no hope of coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as a friend. If he appears in clouds tonight.

Unless you know him before he comes. The time to know him is now. And he is on duty 24 hours a day to receive you.

[28 : 31] And he does it. Because he loves you. Amen. Let us pray. O Lord God of heaven and earth.

We pray and ask that we may know that love. Which thou dost have for thine own. And we pray that each and every one of us will have our eyes and our hearts open. So that we will close in with the Lord Jesus Christ.

This very evening. We see thine own word speaking to us. Around us every single day. People being called away. From this earth.

O Lord we pray. That we would be able. To gain thee as our friend. And thou dost come to judge the world. That we will be standing in tiptoe.

Excited. Looking to catch a glimpse. Of somebody we love. Remember as we pray thee. We give thee thanks for the love that thou dost have for us.

[29 : 34] And we ask that thou dost go with us. Wherever thou dost be. For Christ's sake. Amen. Amen. Amen.