

Are You with Jesus?

Mark 14:66-72

3 January 2021, 10:30 AM

Introduction:

Today we are resuming our sermon series in the Gospel of Mark.

- We are in the last section of chapter 14, Mark 14:66-72, where we have the well-known account of Peter's denial of Jesus Christ.
 - It is a very melancholy record.
 - Peter not only denies that he knows Jesus, but he ends up actually cursing and swearing that he does not know Him—he invokes the holy name of God to back up his assertion—
 - and all this after vehemently claiming, in contradiction to Jesus' prophecy that he would deny Him three times, that he would never deny Him, even if everybody else did.
- It is a melancholy record indeed, but one of the saddest things about it is the pleasure that we, as Christians, seem to get out of it.
 - I get the reason—it helps us to know that we are not the only ones who fail.
 - It is good for us to find comfort in the fact that the Lord forgave Peter and restored him to his ministry.
 - But it is not good that instead of using this kind of story to see the horror of sin, we use it to try to minimise our own sin.
 - “If even Peter denied Jesus and David committed adultery,” we surmise in our wicked hearts, “then my sins can't be that bad.”
 - It is very wicked for you think that way.
 - Your sins are much worse than you ever admit—they are so bad that the only way for you to be pardoned even for the least of your sins was for the Son of God to die on the cross and bear the shame and punishment of your sins before His Father in heaven.
 - What we should do with this account is not to minimise our own sin,
 - but rather to maximise the need that we have for God's mercy in Christ.
 - Instead of minimising our estimation of our demerit, we ought to maximise our estimation of God's grace so that we will devote ourselves more fully to Him in gratitude and delight of His grace.
 - To put it another way, if this account of Peter's sin makes it easier for you to sin, you have missed the point!
 - It ought to make sin more disagreeable to you than ever.
 - It ought to make you more committed to put it beyond all question that you are with Jesus all the way.

Peter did not make it clear that he was with Jesus. He did the opposite. He denied it.

- We need to see how wrong this was of him and how wrong it is of us when we do it.
- We need to see how our Lord Jesus has provided for us in every way that we might make it known that we belong to Him—if in fact we do.

Let's read this passage at the end of Mark 14 (verses 66-72) about Peter's denial, but first, let's do a little review.

Jesus has just been arrested in Garden of Gethsemane where He had gone to pray with His disciples, telling them that He was going to be betrayed and arrested that very night.

- We are told in Mark 14:32-42 how Jesus prayed with desperate cries and tears that if it were possible, He might not have to bear the cup that the Father was giving Him.
 - The cup, as He called it, was His call to bear the sins of the people He came to redeem—He must bear the shame of their sin and be punished for them before the Father if He was to redeem them so that they might be fully forgiven and restored to God.
 - Knowing that it was not possible for the world to be redeemed without that, He fully resigned Himself to go through with it. What wondrous love is this!
- Finishing His prayers, and again finding His disciples sleeping instead of praying, He woke them up and went forward boldly to meet Judas, His betrayer, and a great multitude of officers and others who came to arrest Him.
 - Peter tried to put up some resistance, but Jesus stopped him and made it clear that it was His intent to go willingly with those who had come to arrest Him.

In Mark 14:53, we are told that Jesus was brought to the house of the high priest to be arraigned. Their goal was to come up with some kind of charge worthy of death to bring against Him.

- The Sanhedrin were gathered for this purpose and Peter tagged along at a distance to see what the outcome would be.
 - Mark 14:53-55 summarise this for us: **And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. ⁵⁴ But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. ⁵⁵ Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death...**
- In Jerusalem in those days, the wealthy had spacious houses that had an open courtyard surrounded by rooms.
 - So Peter is in the courtyard, and Jesus is in one of the large rooms that is raised up by couple of stairs above the courtyard.
 - Mark only mentions Peter's presence at this point, and then goes on to tell us about the proceedings of the court with Jesus...
 - But after being in Mark for over a year, we know Mark's style.
 - He is giving us one of his literary sandwiches, where he introduces a story, then tells another story, then returns to the first story which he sets as a comparison.
 - We know that he is going to come back to talk about Peter again later.
 - And that is what he does in verse 66—the passage we have come to today.

The last time I preached from Mark, we looked at the unjust proceedings of the Sanhedrin, the highest church court, against Jesus, and at Jesus' amazing response, all in verses 55-65.

- Although the passage we are looking at today in particular begins in verse 66 where Mark resumes the story about Peter and his denial, I will begin reading in verse 55 to refresh your memory and to see out the contrasting story of the arraignment of Jesus with Peter:
- Please give attention now to the Word of God, beginning in Mark 14:55:

Mark 14:55-72: Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. ⁵⁶ For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. ⁵⁷ Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, ⁵⁸ “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.’ ” ⁵⁹ But not even then did their testimony agree. ⁶⁰ And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?” ⁶¹ But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” ⁶² Jesus said, “I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” ⁶³ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?” And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. ⁶⁵ Then some began to spit on Him,

and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands. ⁶⁶ Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. ⁶⁷ And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.” And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, “This is *one* of them.” ⁷⁰ But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, “Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*.” ⁷¹ Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” ⁷² A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And when he thought about it, he wept.

May the Lord add His blessing to His holy Word.

This is a very familiar story to us—it is in all four of the gospels.

- In looking at it now, I want to lead you to consider how it applies to you—to show you how to establish, maintain, and strengthen your testimony that you belong to Jesus.

I. I want to begin with a question for you: Are you with Jesus?

A. You can see that this is essentially the question that Peter was asked and that he denied three times.

1. In verse 67, the servant girl does a double-take when she sees Peter.
 - He was there in the light of fire, and it says that when she saw him there warming his hands, she looked at him...
 - You know how you do that when you see someone and you recognise them as someone you have seen before—she looked carefully at him and then said: “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.”
 - He denies it.
2. Then, in verse 69 after Peter has moved away from the fire toward the porch (probably to get away), she looks at him again—she is sure she has seen him with Jesus...
 - So she calls in others to look at him and she says, “This is one of them.”

- In other words, “This is one of Jesus of Nazareth’s followers.”
 - This makes it clear that when she asked if he was *with Jesus*, she meant with Him as His follower.
 - Peter again denies it.
3. Then some time later (Luke says it was about an hour later), a bunch of them make the same observation in verse 70: “Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean and your speech shows it.”
- People from Galilee couldn’t say the ‘sh’ sound—they said it like an ‘s’...
 - We get the word shibboleth from this because to test them, they had been asked to say “shibboleth” and they all said “sibboleth.”
 - Apparently, they also could not distinguish some of the guttural sounds that are used in the Hebrew or Aramaic language.
 - But you see the accusation that is brought again: “You are one of them.”
 - This line of questioning amounts to asking Peter if he is with Jesus...
 - Is he part of His party—one of His disciples, one of His followers—is He identified with Him?
- I asked you if you are with Jesus.
- B. What does it mean for you to be with Jesus?
1. Certainly, it is not possible for anyone to see you walking around with Him in this world because He is not here. Now He is reigning in heaven.
 - But it means exactly what it meant when Peter was asked it—are you of His party—are you a disciple—an associate—are you with Him in His cause?
 2. It means, my dear friend, are you part of the kingdom that He came to establish?
 - We saw from the beginning of Mark that Mark spoke of the gospel or the glad tidings of God’s kingdom that came with Jesus.
 - When Jesus, the Son of God, came in human flesh, He came to establish a righteous kingdom of people who are restored to God as their God and who are His people—a people to live with God forever.
 - Jesus was the first true member of that kingdom—He was the first man to be holy and righteous, the first to be all that a man ought to be, so that He could belong to God as one of His people.
 - And as the first and only worthy member of God’s kingdom, He made provision for sinful men and women to be added to the kingdom.
 - The good news is that those who were cut off from God by their sin forever were reconciled by His suffering and death on the cross.
 - They can be fully pardoned along with their children when they believe, and then God is their God and they are His people, all through Jesus.
 3. Those who are with Jesus are those who, like Peter, have come to Jesus that they might be reconciled to God.

- They have joined His cause to gather people into this kingdom that Jesus started where those who were alienated from God by sin are reconciled by faith in Jesus who was crucified.
 - They are a people who come to Jesus to be forgiven and who are in the process of learning to live for God, according to His righteous commandments.
 - Their goal is to live for God under the leadership of Jesus by His enabling grace.
 - In Him they have forgiveness as well as guidance and grace to put off their own ways and to live according to the beautiful way of their Father's house.
 - They stand out in the world as those are devoted to the good news of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish.
 - They devote themselves to this kingdom and seek first this kingdom and the righteousness of it.
 - They are with Jesus in the world as those who have come to be reconciled to God, forgiven and restored to life where God is their God and they are His people with Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
- So my question is, "Are you with Jesus? Are you one of them?"
- C. Perhaps a related question will be helpful: Is there evidence in your life that you are with Jesus?
1. Do strangers ever perceive that you belong to Him?
 - Can they tell by your conduct, your speech, the way you carry yourself?
 - Do you ever have someone in the store or at school ask you if you are a Christian?
 - Perhaps they know because they see that you go to church, that you keep the Lord's Day, that you pray before your meals or that you do not participate in filthy talk or wild parties.
 2. What about those that know you well?
 - If they don't know that you are Christian, there is something wrong in your life.
 - If you are a believer, there needs to be evidence to show it.
 - I have known professing Christians who were close friends with people who had no idea that they were a Christian.
 - Yet, Jesus told us plainly that we are to let our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.
 - How could it be that you could be close to someone, and yet that you have never spoken to them about God's kingdom?
 - How could it be that you have never cared enough about your Lord, or about the other person, to tell them of your hope?
 - of the good news that Jesus has established this kingdom of righteousness in this fallen world?

- that like Abraham, you are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God, an eternal city of righteousness and perfect love?
 - How could you have hope in such a kingdom and leave your friend to flounder in this world of despair?
3. And what about the people that are closest to you—the people that you live with every day?
- Do they see evidence that you belong to Jesus and His cause?
 - Sometimes, there are those who have a great testimony in the community that they belong to Jesus, but what they are at home tells a different story.
 - At home there are angry outbursts, cursing, lying, gossip, immorality, perhaps violence.
 - Sadly, this is what many children see in their parents—a testimony that they are with Jesus at church and even in the community, but a very different story at home.
 - Let me say to any such children, if your parents are hypocrites, you should not join them in their rebellion against God.
 - We are so sinful by nature that that is what children often do—it makes no sense, but that is what they do.
 - Their parents are against God as hypocrites, so the children turn against God too.
 - What you should do instead?
 - You should serve God truly and sincerely by truly looking to Jesus.
 - Why would you join them in opposing God—whether in private as they do, or both publicly and privately?
- So what do others see in you? Do they see that you are with Jesus or no?
- And now I have one more related question for you related to all of this.
- D. What do you do if you are *accused* of being with Jesus? Do you deny it or do you affirm it?
1. Notice that the question here is not merely if you are *asked* if you are a Christian, but if you are *accused* of being with Jesus.
- If someone who is favourable, or at least not antagonistic, asked you if you are with Jesus, it is rather easy to say, “Yes I am...”
 - But I am asking what you do when they *accuse* you of being with Jesus—as if it were a bad thing.
 - When the one asking sees it a negative thing to be with Him—a shameful thing, a stupid thing, perhaps even a wicked thing.
2. If you are following Jesus, you know the kind of questions I am talking about:
- Do you mean you believe that the Bible is true?
 - You believe that God made the world?
 - You believe that everybody who doesn’t believe in Jesus will go to hell?
 - You believe that wives are supposed to submit to their husbands?

- You believe that it is sinful to have sex outside or marriage and that gay marriage is sinful?
 - Are you with Jesus in *these* ways?
 - Maybe they talk about how stupid it is to be a Christian and point out how it is a weak and failing movement—are churches not being closed down?
 - In effect they ask you, are you part of that weak, failing movement that has shown itself to be full of hypocrisy and hatred?
 - Are you part of that movement that scientists and other intelligent people reject—even the most sophisticated Christian leaders?
 - They ask you in such away that you feel pressure to deny Jesus, at least in part.
3. How do you answer those questions?
- Do you give a vague and uncertain answer?
 - Do you deny certain teachings of your Lord to present a message that will be more acceptable?
 - Do you just try to change the subject or say that not all Christians believe those things?
 - Peter was facing great pressure because of where his Master was—being tried and condemned by the church.
 - Like today—where the most popular preachers do not place the same emphasis on sin and hell as the Bible does, but present Jesus as the one who picks you up and bolsters your self esteem...
 - Or the ones who say that our cause is the same as the world—not redemption, but social justice.
 - Peter’s Master’s cause did not look good—
 - He was being delivered over to be crucified.
 - He had not gained much of a following at all.
 - And all the leaders and the important people in Israel had rejected Him.
 - How much better it would have been if Peter had immediately said, “Yes indeed! I have been with Jesus for three years and I can testify that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. I have seen Him calm storms and I have seen raise the dead. Didn’t you hear about how He raised Lazarus this very week?
 - “And now He has told us that He is going to the cross to die for our sins, but just you wait and see. He also said that He will rise from dead on the third day.
 - “Everything He says is true—just you wait and see.
 - “Don’t you know how John testified that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?
 - “I tell you, He is here to establish God’s kingdom of righteousness.
 - “You know the hypocrisy of the priests. Jesus exposed them and instead of repenting, they turned on Him.
 - “Don’t you want to be part of His kingdom, too?

- “It is a kingdom of love and beauty. He promises eternal life and the full forgiveness of sins to all who come to Him.”

4. If you deny Jesus when He is unpopular in this world, let me ask you something.
 - Will you also want to deny Him on the Day of Judgement?
 - If you want to be with Him then, why not now?

TRANS> Mark, with his sandwich technique, has given us a beautiful contrast here with the way Jesus answers His accusers and the with the way that Peter answers his.

- By telling us in verse 54 that Peter was in the courtyard of the high priest’s palace (that is the first slice of bread), then going on to tell us how Jesus answers His accusers (the meat of the sandwich) and then telling us how Peter answers his (that is the second slice of bread), Mark puts the two responses in a lively contrast.
 - He shows that the accusation against Peter was going on at the same time as the accusation against Jesus.

II. So let’s look at the contrast between Jesus and us as believers when we deny Him, using Peter’s example.

A. First, there is a difference in the accusations.

1. Jesus’ accusers speak lies, but Peter’s accusers actually speak the truth.
 - Jesus did not blaspheme in saying that He would destroy the temple in the way that His accusers say.
 - But Peter was indeed one of Jesus followers—and one of His closest followers at that.
2. It is often the true accusations that we often have the most difficult time with...
 - the ones such as I mentioned before...
 - When our accusers say, “Do you really believe that God sends people to hell?”
 - We are best to turn it around and say, “Do you really believe that God doesn’t send people to hell? Do you not see sin in the world?”
3. Jesus did not dodge at all. He actually helped His accusers get to the truth about Him.
 - He made it clear that He did indeed believe that He was the Messiah and that He was the Son of God who was coming to judge.
 - It sort of throws accusers off when you attest that their true accusations are true and are not ashamed to do so.
 - Of course in Jesus’s case, it gave them what they wanted, but this was far better. He established his position clearly without skirting around.

➤ And that brings us to the next contrast.

B. Jesus does not try to save Himself by denying their lies, but Peter resorted to lies in an effort to save himself.

1. When saving ourselves is the goal, we often get ourselves tied up in knots.
 - Peter began a little indirectly by saying, basically, “I don’t understand what you are talking about.”

- He did not look at the situation as an opportunity to testify to the truth, but he looked at it as something he wanted to get out of.
2. Jesus, on the other hand, knew that He was in the Father's hands and He was prepared to suffer on account of the truth.
 - A Chinese minister who has suffered much for Christ gave the advice to go ahead and state your position clearly from start.
 - He said that if you don't, you will be always coming short of saying what you need to say—of speaking the truth, always trying couch your words in a way that will make them acceptable.
 - Jesus counted it a privilege to suffer for sake of His Father and His church. He did not try to avoid it.
- C. Peter and Jesus both double down on their testimony, swearing by God's name.
- Peter uses God's name falsely, but Jesus uses God's name truly.
1. In verse 61, the high priest asks Jesus under oath, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and in verse 62, Jesus says: "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."
 - He says even more than was asked.
 - He presents Himself as coming as a divine being—on the right hand of power with the clouds of heaven—an unmistakable picture of His coming as a divine judge—a judge who is God.
 2. While Jesus was using God's name to attest to the truth, Peter was using God's name to swear falsely.
 - His denials led him into this pathway.
 - After the first denial that was slightly indirect, he gave a more definite denial, and then when he was challenged again and he said the unthinkable.
 - He used an oath formula in which he called on God to curse him if he knew Jesus.
 - That is where you can easily end up if you don't establish your position from the start.
 - Many great men have fallen into this trap.
 - Many small men have fallen into by not letting it be known from the start that they are believers and will not compromise.
 - You leave it open that you might be willing to lie for the company you work for, and then when you are called upon do so, it is all the more difficult to stand up for the truth.
- D. The last contrast I want you see here is that Jesus bears shame—as they begin to abuse Him and to spit upon Him and mock Him; but Peter does what is actually shameful.
1. He gets out from under their accusations by his lies, but then he has to live with his guilt and wickedness.
 2. The suffering of Jesus is noble and will at last bring honour to God, but Peter's suffering is not noble at all—it is a reproach both to Peter and to his Lord.

- It brought him to bitter weeping and left him with a guilty conscience.
- 3. Jesus' suffering will bring many to salvation, but Peter's suffering prevented his accusers from learning the truth that he might have proclaimed.

TRANS> What a contrast there is between Peter and Jesus—between us and Jesus.

- From Peter we learn what not to do, from Jesus we learn what we ought to do.
- However, with Peter, we do see how God helps us all along the way when we are tempted... as I pointed out last week, the LORD never tempts us to sin—He never tells us how good it will be for us to sin or encourages us to sin.
- He always calls us to be holy and to follow what is true and righteous.

III. Let's now take a look at that help Jesus gives us in order that we might remain with Him when we have opportunity to testify that we belong to Him.

A. First, we learn from Peter's example how He warns us against pride and self sufficiency.

1. You will remember at the institution of the Lord's Supper how Jesus warned His disciples they would all stumble and desert Him that very night (14:27).
 - Peter boasted that even if they did, he would not.
 - If Peter had humbled himself, the prophecy might have been, "You will all be very tempted to desert me, but if you humble yourself and trust me, you will stand in my strength."
 - The prophecy was not that because Jesus knew that they would not humble themselves—and indeed Peter boasts the most of them all and falls the hardest of them all.
2. Are we not taught in Proverbs 16:18 that: **Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall?**
 - And in James 4:6 that **God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble?**
 - We need to see that our salvation is of God. If we don't look to Him for help, we will fall on our face—but if we do look to Him, He will help us.

B. Second, we learn from Peter's example how the Lord provides us with ways to rely on Him—the means of grace.

1. Did Jesus not call upon His disciples to examine themselves when He instituted the Lord's Supper?
 - Did He not present Himself as the one who would be sacrificed for the remission of their sins?
 - And did He not present Himself as the one to be sacrificed as nourishment for their souls by commanding them to eat the bread that represented His body and to drink the wine that represented His blood?
 - Was this not something they should have done in faith after just being told that one of them would betray Him?
 - Is it not something we should do in faith, looking to Him to help us to testify faithfully of Him?
 - Do we not need His strength as the bread of life?
2. And then what did Jesus plead with His disciples to do but to watch and pray in the garden?—was it not three times?

- Do not think you will be able to stand in the evil day—the day of temptation—if you do not seek the Lord in prayer.
 - Daniel and his friends were strong because they were committed to a diligent use of prayer—three times a day, Daniel, who no doubt was very busy with the position he had been given in the kingdom—kept up this kind of prayer.
 - You will be bored with your prayers if you are not in the battle for Jesus.
 - They will just be a dull ritual exercise.
 - But when you cry out for grace to stand in the battle, your prayers will become more essential than your daily bread.
3. And all along the way, did He not speak His precious word to them?
- Peter and the other disciples had Jesus Himself speaking to them, and we have His words which we have already seen—the words of warning against pride and the call to rely upon Him lest we fall.
 - He gave them commandments and promises, and if these had been taken to heart, they would have led to a different outcome for Peter.
 - Up until now, he had refused to accept what Jesus had told him about going to the cross, dying, and rising again.
 - He was therefore not prepared to stand up as I suggested before when asked if he was with Jesus and say, “Indeed I am! I have seen Him raise the dead, and now He is going to the cross as a sacrifice for our sins only that He may rise from the dead on the third day—just you wait and see. All my hope is in Him.”
 - He could not say that because all the words that Jesus had spoken to him had gone in one ear and out the other.

TRANS> But this is not all that Jesus does to help us in temptation.

- C. There are also the roosters that Jesus provides to help us.
1. In His providence He gives us roosters to wake us up.
 - I speak figuratively.
 - The roosters are the things that He puts in our pathway when we are tempted, to get our attention and to get us to think about what we are doing.
 2. Of all the gospels, Mark is the only one that tells us about the two crowings of the rooster.
 - There were writings about roosters at the time of Jesus that said that roosters would crow at the beginning and the end of the third watch which was nicknamed the cock crow.
 - Someone actually did a study of this at Jerusalem in later years over a twelve year period and they found that even in more modern times, the roosters were quite consistent in crowing at 12:30, then two more times—an hour after that and then another hour after that with each crowing lasting three to five minutes.
 3. What we see is that after Peter’s first denial, the rooster crowed.

- Jesus had specifically told Peter that he would deny him three times before the rooster crowed twice.
 - This first crowing is mentioned in verse 68, but Peter did not respond to it.
 - You know all about this—when you are doing wrong, you will get checks to your conscience—a reminder—a call to stop what you are doing at once.
 - You could respond to that prompting—
 - you know you are gossiping, you know that you are forsaking a duty, you know that you should say something to someone, you know that you should stop wasting time, you know that you should turn from that path you are on to porn or to cheating—but you ignore it and you keep right on going.
 - If we would just listen to our consciences and to the word of God at such times!
 - God is so kind in His providence to bring such checks to us and we are so foolish to ignore them and go headlong after sin.
- But even when we do, there is still more that He does.
- D. Even after we have gone deep into sin, he comes to fully restore us.
1. We see that even here, on this very night, our Lord Jesus brings Peter to conviction of his sin.
 - It is a beautiful mercy that He does not leave His disciple hardened.
 - Look at the last verse after Peter has cursed and sworn that he does not know Christ, verse 72 says: **A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And when he thought about it, he wept.**
 - That rooster call comes again to wake Peter up—and this time it does.
 - The rooster can be something you read, something you remember, another person who confronts you—
 - but the difference is that this time the call comes with God’s powerful grace attached so that you respond.
 2. Peter’s tears are beautiful.
 - He has been broken, severed from his sinful path.
 - He can no longer go on in his sin.
 - We know that Jesus later came to restore him even more fully to his ministry, but already he has restored Peter’s heart to him—as soon as those tears of repentance come.
 3. What a gracious Saviour we have!
 - His help is there for us all along the way.
 - The sooner we avail ourselves of it, the better it will be for us.
 - What pain and grief this brought to Peter for the rest of his life—but what grace it showed in our Lord Jesus.

Conclusion

It is very affecting to consider one more contrast here in closing...

- That all the while that Peter was denying our Lord, our Lord was preparing to give Himself for Peter's sins and our sins.

It is very humbling to think about what Jesus is doing in heaven when we are sinning.

- When you are lying, He is leading men to the truth by His word and Spirit.
- When you are afraid, He is reigning from His throne with all power.
- When you are cursing in vain, He is preparing judgement in truth.
- When you are denying Him, He is interceding for you.
- When you retreat to the shadows, He is showing Himself forth in the light.
- When you pretend to not know Him, He is claiming you as His own before the Father.

Isn't it high time for you to start living whole-heartedly for Him?

- He will always meet you when you turn to Him.
- He is the one who is urging you to do it. If you have ears to hear, hear His call.
- Set it down that from henceforth, you are with Him.
 - Make it clear to everyone that you are with Him.
 - Is there anywhere better to be?
 - Of course not!
 - Go on in His grace.