

The Denial

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Turn in your Bibles this morning to Mark 14, would you do that? Mark 14 and we're gonna cover what I call "The Denial." This is the biblical narrative in the night before Jesus was crucified when Peter denied the Lord but the whole narrative of the denial covers some territory. You could say it begins on Thursday afternoon before they travel from what I call the olive farm, the garden of Gethsemane it's often called but Gethsemane means "oil press." It was the place in the olive farm, it seems to be a retreat center that the Lord had chosen during his last week of earthly life where he would minister in Jerusalem during the day and to get a respite and get away from the people, his, his disciples along with himself would journey outside of Jerusalem proper to this little olive farm and it was about a mile, up to three miles depending on the route that they would take from the inner city to get there.

So anyway, they're there on Thursday evening and they travel from the olive farm into Jerusalem for the Passover and there they have the Passover meal in that Upper Room and Jesus transforms the Jewish Passover into the church's Lord's Supper, and then later that night, they travel back out of Jerusalem back to the olive farm outside of Jerusalem proper and there you have the betrayal by Judas Iscariot and the arrest, and then Jesus is taken back into the city from the olive farm and he's taken to the household of the high priest and that's where the actual verbal denial of Jesus occurs. It's a powerful section of Scripture and it really is holy ground and I hope starting today and going through the next four sessions that we begin to marvel even more, that we begin to treasure even more deeply, wonder ever more wondrously over the wisdom and the power and the beauty of our God and our redemption through his Son Jesus Christ.

Let's begin in Mark 14 and we'll look at several sections here. Mark 14, first of all, verses 27 through 31.

27 And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." 29 But Peter said to Him, "Even though all fall away, yet I will not." 30 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times." 31 But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing also.

Now turn over to verses 53 and 54 of the same chapter. Verse 53,

53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. 54 Peter had followed Him [note the phrase] at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire.

Now over to verse 66 through verse 72.

66 As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." 68 And he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch. [Then a rooster crowed.] 69 The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!" 70 But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too." 71 But he began to curse [or pronounce a curse on himself] and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 Immediately a rooster crowed the second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep.

The denial. God is a God that can do two things at the same time, matter of fact, he can do 10 million things at the same time. Obviously the driving central theme of the text is the eternal plan of a sovereign God to deliver up his Son to save for himself a people, and all of these events are unfolding to fulfill that grand and central purpose, not only the central purpose of the Scripture, which it is, it's the central purpose of everything, the universe, time, all that exists centers in Christ and his death for his children that he might redeem them and claim them for his own forever. But in the unveiling of that glorious truth, the narrative gives a lot of attention to Peter, the leader of the 12, and primarily to the events that surrounded Peter's denial of the Lord three times on the night that Jesus was arrested and delivered up.

You see, Peter was a man of enthusiasm. He was more than others perhaps a boisterous man. Peter seemed to do everything in a big way and God knew for Peter to be the leader that God was intending him to do, that there had to be some flaws, some shortcomings, yes, some sins dealt with. And so in this time and it's marvel, and it's a marvel to me but in this time of the holy Scriptures unfolding, the narrative of our Lord going to the cross, it also unveils an intensive and essential training time for the Apostle Peter so that he might be the qualified leader of the apostles and of the early church. So God uses this time in the delivering up of his Son as also a time for the training of Peter and in a broader sense for the training of the 12, and in an even broader sense for the training of us.

Let's notice, first of all, I., let's notice pride arises and is embraced. Pride arises and is embraced. I might just stop there and give you this exhortation. All of us are still housed in this fallen, unredeemed humanity. We all have the old flesh. Now if you're truly God's, if you're born again, you're a new man on the inside but the old man is still attached, and so part of the old man is the pride factor, that thing of, "I can do it and I don't need God, or I'm as wise as God, or my way is as good as His." That stuff always rises up. Well, our job is to catch it by faith and repent of it and put it back down. That's not what happens here. Peter's pride arises and he embraces it.

Look at verse 27, if you will. Jesus is speaking to them. They've had the Lord's Supper or, or the Passover meal been transformed into the Lord's Supper, and then Jesus says those words in, in Mark 14:27, "You will all fall away." Now the word "fall" there is an interesting word. It can, is easily be translated "stumble." I think it probably would be better translated that but I'll submit to the scholars who, who went ahead and translated it "fall." But to us, the concept of "fall" means "to fall away fully and forever," or typically that's the way I think. "Stumble" is a better word but just to understand that either word could be used.

So Jesus says, "All of you, Peter and all the rest of you, in this night, in the events that are about to unfold before you, you're all gonna fall away," and here's a powerful four words that you need to grasp, "because it is written." That's interesting to me. You're not, though it is certainly implied and understood, you're not only gonna fall away because you are weak and you are fleshly and you are sinful and we all are prone to such, you're gonna fall away because it's written that you're gonna fall away. Listen to me, child of God, what's written of you is always true of you. What is written of you in this sacred book is true of you.

So Jesus goes straight to the Old Testament and quotes this text from Zechariah, because it is written, "I will strike down the Shepherd," that's God the Father laying on his Son Jesus, the Shepherd of the church, the sin of the world, the crushing retribution of holy wrath in their place. "So when I strike down the Shepherd, the sheep shall be scattered." And then you have verse 28 and what a word of hope and encouragement this must have been if they could hear it, verse 28, "But." My goodness, what an important conjunction. "The Shepherd's going to be crushed, the sheep are gonna scatter, you're all gonna stumble or fall away from Me, but I'm not gonna leave it at that. After I have been raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee. You're gonna scatter from Me but I'm gonna gather you all back together again." Has anybody ever told you God's sovereign in all things? The sovereignty of God in this. God's written that you're gonna fall away and when you do fall away, and by the way, we're not fatalistic, the Bible teaches you're responsible if you fall away, but when the Bible predicts it, trust me, it's gonna happen. "But," Jesus says, "after I rise again I'm gonna take all of you stumbling failing ones and I'm gonna herd you all back together as My sheep going into Galilee." Interesting.

What a wonderful promise. Jesus in effect says this, "You will fail Me but I will not fail you." Now just meditate on that. Jesus in effect says, "You will fail but I will keep you." You know, in the final analysis the perseverance of the saints, that precious doctrine our

Baptist forefathers have held to from the beginning that if you're once saved, you're always saved, it, it's not about you holding onto Jesus, it's about Jesus holding onto you. "You will stumble, you will fall away but I will not fail you." He's trying to drive home a true, truth to these guys and especially to Peter. Peter needs more training like some of us do.

Notice Peter swelling up in pride, verse 29, "But," another conjunction but, boy, good stuff doesn't follow this one, verse 29, "But Peter said to Him, 'Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.'" Peter said, "Lord, You, You don't understand some things. Rest of these guys, I don't know what kind of stuff they're made of but they're not made of stuff I'm made of. The rest of these guys might not hang in there but, rest of these guys, you know, they're kinda a little weak, a little effeminate guys but I'm Peter the rock and I won't fall away." Sir, you remind yourselves pride goeth before the fall. What Peter should have said is, "Oh dear God, I'm prone to all kinds of failure. Please don't let me do it." That's what he should've said. But, boy, that pride swells up and he's embracing it. Isn't it amazing how much we pick on Peter? What if your name was, what if you were Peter and it's recorded for all eternity? Aren't you glad God didn't record all of our failures for all the church of all the ages to study and look at.

Verse 30, "And Jesus said to him, 'Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself.'" there's an emphatic nature in there, "You, Peter, you, you yourself will deny Me three times.' But Peter kept," this present tense, Peter just keeps on boldly, loudly, "insistently, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!'" And then all the rest jump in, "they all were saying the same thing also." Proverbs 16:18 reminds us, "Pride goes before a destruction and a haughty spirit before stumbling." One of the things I want to say here to you is Jesus said this is gonna happen, now notice this, here's the Incarnate Word of God saying you're all gonna fall away, then specifically, "Peter, you're gonna deny Me three times." And then he quotes the infallible inerrant word of God from Zechariah that prophesied you're all gonna fall away, but Peter disagrees with God's word.

Now just stop for a moment this morning, brothers and sisters in Christ. What's in God's word that you disagree with right now? Now I'm not talking about secondary things that we can all disagree on that the Bible's not clear on, I'm asking you what in your life right now is the word of God clear on and you've decided, "I don't agree with that"? You know what that is? That's called pride and pride goeth before the fall and you need to say to your heart this morning, have you learned to talk to yourself and stop listening to yourself? Do you not know, don't you know your heart is full of foolishness and wickedness? You've gotta talk truth to yourself. You need to talk truth to yourself this morning and say, "O God, wherever Your word is clear, if I disagree with it, humble me and help me to be in agreement with You and with Your word. Don't let pride swell up in me, and further, don't let me begin to embrace it." 1 Timothy 3:6 talking about how deacons need before they're appointed to the office, need to be men of proven men, it says "and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited," pride, "and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil."

So here the Apostle Peter is still young, he's immature, he's looking to his natural or fleshly strength and we have to remind ourselves that in and of ourselves, our natural selves – listen to me – we are unable and we are always unwilling to do anything purely for the glory of God. It's just not in us to do it. The flesh, the old natural man is always about serving self, it's always about self-pleasure, it's always about self-exaltation. It is written also in Matthew 26:41 that "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." It's written also in, in Romans 8:8 "those who are in the flesh cannot please God." So here Peter is, maybe he's trying to impress the Lord, maybe he's trying to impress the other disciples around him, rising up in, in the strength of his fleshly wisdom and, and the strength of fleshly power saying, "I will remain faithful." Jesus said, "No, you won't. The word of God prophesied that you won't remain faithful. You'll stumble. You're gonna fail Me and you'll do it this very night before a cock crows twice. You'll actually deny Me publicly three times."

This confidence of Peter was really not well-founded because he's had a bumpy discipleship already. He, he, he told the Lord, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and just a few moments later, he rebukes Jesus for, when Jesus tells him he's gonna die on a cross. He's saying, "No, no, no, Jesus, time out! You can't go down on the cross. That's not the way we're gonna work this thing out." Have you learned that when you submit to somebody, you don't get to submit your way? Submission means you line up with their way. So Peter said, "I'll submit to You, Lord, I'll build Your church, but I'm gonna do it the way I want to do it," and you know what the next thing Jesus told Peter was after that proud moment of self-confidence? He said, "Get behind Me, Satan. You're not setting your mind on man's, on God's interest but on man. You're acting like a fallen, fleshly, foolish human again instead of a Spirit reborn, Spirit indwelt believer."

Human pride is always the basis for our doubting God's word. We reject God's word when we think that our wisdom is superior but we must as children of God vow in humility that we will serve God his way, by his strength, and for his glory. That very conviction is what brought me decades ago to a stalwart, unmovable conviction about the local church because I studied and studied and studied and studied and studied the New Testament and all the amazing things I was going to do to make disciples and do all this work for God, God kept saying, "It's all the church. It's all the church. It's all the church. It's all the church." And finally I said, "It's all the church." I had my Peter humbling season of realizing God's got his way he wants to do it and my way is not to compete with his. I'm to yield to his. And here Peter is saying, "You're not, I'll not fall away. I'll in my flesh hold up. I'll do right." And he's full of pride. Pride arises and it is embraced.

II. The denial gets closer, you begin to distance yourself from the Lord. Distance yourself from the Lord. Look at verses 53 and 54. As Jesus has been arrested, he's taken away to the, um, high priest house, verse 53 of chapter 14 of Mark, "They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together." First of all, let me comment on that. Boy, they're all there, aren't they? High priest, all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes. They're all there. I mean, they all are excited about this moment. This is what they've been wanting for months, even years now. They wanted to get this Jesus. They wanted to silence him. They wanted to get him out of the

way but they never knew how to do it because he had so many of the common people who thronged around him and loved him so, and they knew to arrest Jesus or do harm to Jesus would cause a riot. If they'd cause a riot, the Roman government's gonna be really upset about that. They can't do that but finally they got him. They come in the night to arrest him with their torches, come to the garden of Gethsemane, the olive farm. They didn't have electric lights so here these guys come with their torches to arrest the light of the world. They'd seen him every day. He'd been teaching in the open. Yeah, but they were too cowardly to do that.

They arrest him. They take him to the household of the high priest. They're enjoying their new prize. They're all gawking over it and they are too blind to see that they are falling right into the plans of a sovereign God. This is exactly what he has orchestrated to happen. But look at verse 54, getting back to the way the narrative keeps bringing out the episode with Peter. Verse 54, "Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire." Following at a distance. I call this half-hearted discipleship. Can I charge you this morning, brothers and sisters in Christ, have you fallen away to, to a degree or are you now walking in half-hearted discipleship? Peter is following along but he's keeping a distance, the text tells us. He's not declaring he's a follower of Jesus. He's not taking out that big sword he used to carry around and try to cut people's ears off, really tried to cut people's heads off, he just hit ears. He's not taking out that big sword and hacking on that door and saying, "Let my Lord go!" No, he's quiet. He's at a distance. He's following along at a distance.

I call it half-hearted discipleship. Half-hearted discipleship manifests itself in a lot of different ways. Are you one of those that show up on Sunday but you don't seek God hardly ever Monday through Saturday? How's your prayer times? How's your time with the book open? How's your morning devotions just to say, "Lord, this is Your day. I want to honor You this day. Work on my heart, Lord." How's your prayer time and your devotion times in the morning? Are you a half-hearted disciple? "Well, I'm a disciple of Jesus." Yes, but are you following at a distance? Are you, are you seeking him in the morning? Are you seeking him during the week? And I'm not talking about legalism here because you can have quiet time seven days a week and still miss God. But you need to be seeking God. Did you study your small group lesson this week so you'd be prepared so that when you come to small groups you realize it's not about you, it's about you being a blessing to your brothers and sisters in your small group? Or are you following along at a distance? Do you sit under the preaching of the word with alert sobriety, prayerfully saying, "God, I want to be a repentor this morning. I want to receive Your truth and repent of anything in my heart and mind behavior, motives, whatever it is that doesn't line up with You?" If you're not doing those things, that doesn't make you a super-Christian, if you're doing those things, that makes you an average Christian or are you following at a distance? "I'm following. I'm just kind of at a distance." That's half-hearted discipleship.

Those who are into half-hearted discipleship judge a church by what they get out of it, not by what they can give to it. Boy, I'm so glad that we don't have much of that anymore. Some family come waltzing into the church like they're the greatest prize in, in

the kingdom of God and we're all supposed to just fall down and gawk over them instead of walking into the church humbly saying, "We don't, we're unworthy to be a part of God's church. We're unworthy to be God's servants. We would just like to join and be a part of serving God's bride. If He loved it enough to die for it, then I outta love it enough to live for it." Are you kind of warped and half-hearted in your discipleship and you view church like, "Well, if it cranks my tractor, if it scratches my itch, if it blesses me, if it fits my emotional predisposition of what I like and don't like, then I'm in." Why don't you go play religion somewhere. This is the church of Jesus Christ. Are you a half-hearted disciple? You want me to be honest with you? We all are from time to time but we don't have to stay there. But we don't have to stay there, we can repent and get back onboard.

The sentimentalism and emotionalism guides the half-hearted disciple. "What's in it for me? What blesses me? What encourages me? What do I like?" What does it matter what you like? It's his bride. It's his church. You should be conditioning and training your heart to say, "God, I want to like what You like. I want to love what You love. Don't let me fall into my fleshly, ah, definitions of what's good and right. I yield those to the word of God and I will be determined that by the Spirit's help, I will learn to treasure, love and joy in what You treasure, love and joy in. Find me a church that's anchored in truth and I'll learn to love it because I don't want to be a half-hearted disciple. It's not about me." You see, at this point as Peter's following at a distance, it's not about Jesus, it's about Peter. He's worried about himself. He's worried about where, where's this gonna end up for me?

Notice the text says in verse 54 that Peter's following at a distance and he's, last phrase, "warming himself by the fire." You've heard sermons, preachers have been using it for years how people warm themselves by the enemy's fire. When you have distance from Jesus, it's often seen by the fact that you socialize with the enemy. I'm not talking about folks you'd have to work with, folks you may have to socialize with for business or whatever, I'm talking about the people you choose to be buddies with, the people you choose to run with that do not honor or love Jesus Christ. You're Peter warming yourself by the enemy's fire. You're distancing yourself from the Lord.

I haven't used this phrase in a long time but I taught it a lot years ago and it's time to think about it again and that's this: do you choose friendship over Lordship? Do you decide, "Jesus is my Lord. I'm not gonna be ashamed of Him. I'm not gonna deny Him and I'm not gonna be one of these Bible thumper or in-your-face all the time rebuking everybody." No, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about your convictions are real, you still believe homosexuality is sin and you're not ashamed to say it. You still believe sex outside of marriage is sin and you're not ashamed to say it. You still believe dishonoring your marriage vow is a sin and you're not ashamed to say it. I'm not saying you get in the street and scream at people, I'm just saying as you live your life, you're not ashamed of Christ or his truth. When you start distancing yourself and you become a half-hearted disciple, you'll start socializing and you'll start picking friendship over Lordship and right now Peter is warming himself and socializing around the enemy's fire and so it happens to us and we begin to enjoy what they enjoy.

The things that warm the enemies of Christ are now warming Peter. We are not to get our satisfaction from the sooty, polluted, smoldering flames of this world but from the illuminating fire of his word and his dear and precious presence. We're not to be warmed by the fallen, fleshly passions of this life but by the person of Jesus Christ who lives in our heart. Peter has so distanced himself from the Lord that he lost sight of the light of God just to enjoy the smoking, dim light of the world as he warms himself by the fire.

Well, now comes the denial. Pride arose and he embraced it, he didn't rebuke it. "I know best. I know what's right. I don't have to agree with the word of God on everything. I'm pretty good at obeying the Bible." Peter full of himself. Then he begins to distance himself. Then thirdly, he begins to deny the Lord openly. He denies the Lord openly. Look, if you will, over at verses 66 through 72. Would you do that? Verse 66 through 72. Here we have Peter's in the courtyard of the high priest. He's warming himself by the enemy fire. He once claimed that he'd follow Jesus to the death and his Lord is behind a door just a few feet away being brutalized and he's not saying a word. When the pressure came, Peter fails and he denies the Lord.

Look at verses 66 and 67. "As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself," there was enough light from the fire, she began to recognize him and, "she looked at him and said, 'You were also there with Jesus the Nazarene.'" Denial number 1, verse 68. "But he denied it and said, 'I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.'" Not only is he denying Jesus, he's a liar. "I don't know what you're talking about. Me, devoted to Jesus Christ? No, man, I'm here to have fun." "And he went into the porch." And a rooster crowed. That's number 1, look at verse, ah, 69, "The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, 'This is one of them!'" First part of verse 70, and "again he denied it." That's number 2. Then the second part of verse 70, "And a little while, rather after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, 'Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too.'" Verse 71, "But he began to curse and swear, 'I do not know this man you are talking about!'" When, when you, when you get the passion and the force of the language here, it's hard to receive. It's hard to see Peter doing that. It's hard to think of yourself doing that but is it not true when we live in our lives and intentionally do things that dishonor our Lord, that in itself is a denial? Peter is undergoing intensive training. He's, he's being unfolded in the pages of Scripture for us so that we could see how God was teaching him so that we could also be taught ourselves.

Well, it says he cursed and swore. It means he, he, he, he made a vow as such. He called down, "May heaven curse me. May God of heaven curse me if I'm not telling you the truth." That's some powerful stuff right there.

Look at verse 72, "Immediately a rooster crowed the second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark, 'Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.' And he began to weep." You see, God knew that Peter was going to be the leader for the other disciples and he knew of Peter's weakness, Peter's pride, and he used this crisis, this, these very events to deal Peter's pride a deathblow and get it behind him so he could be used as he needs to be used of God.

Matter of fact, Luke 22. In Luke this Gospel account gives us more insights. Luke 22:31 and 32. Jesus or the Bible records Jesus saying to Peter, ""Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat." Now the word "sift," don't, don't, don't make domino effect here and fall into all these applications of what that means. I think it's a simple truth. When you winnow or sift wheat, it falls apart. The, the husk falls apart from the grain. He's saying, "Peter, Satan is wanting to tear you apart. Satan is wanting to ruin you, Peter. But Peter," look at it verse, Luke 22:31 and 32, it's on your screen, "but I have prayed for you," woo, thank God for Jesus praying for us, "that your faith may not fail." Now the word "fail" here is a totally different word from the word "fall away" in our Mark text. The word in our Mark text is a word that can mean "to stumble along," not to completely fall out, but the word here where Jesus says, "I'm praying, Peter, that you may not fail," is a word that means "to cease or to stop." It can even be translated "die." It was even used when there was a total eclipse and the sun's, ah, rays were completely smothered out. "Peter, you're gonna fail Me! Peter, you're gonna stumble and I'm gonna use it to teach you some things you need to learn about yourself and your own pride and your, and the weakness of your own flesh. But Peter, I'm praying that though you stumble, since you're one of Mine, you're never gonna completely fail. It's not over yet. I'm using your pride, your sin and your denial to teach you to get over your pride and your flesh and thinking of doing things your way. I'm not gonna let you die out. I'm not gonna let you be cast away." And that's exactly what this word means.

And what an affirming promise at the end of verse 32, "and when, and you when once you have turned again." When Jesus prays that you don't completely fall out but you gonna make it through, you're gonna make it through. "Once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. You're gonna be a leader and you're gonna strengthen the brethren after you get through with this intensive training I've got you in." Interesting.

Well, back in our Mark text in Mark 14:74, the last part says, "And he began to weep." Fortunately because Peter was one of God's children, Peter was a true born again Christian, this weeping was not like that of Judas. Judas wept because he was sorry for the consequence of his sin. Peter is sorry that he failed his Lord. He's sorry that his sin hurt Jesus.

Then back over into Luke again, we get another good insight. Luke 22:60-62 Peter said, "Peter said, 'Man, I don't know what you are talking about.'" This is that denial again. "Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed." And, "The Lord turned and looked at Peter." That's not in the Mark text. Wow. There's a lot of speculation about what kind of look was this. I'm gonna tell you, are you listening to me? I'm gonna tell you exactly what kind of look it is. Here's the kind of look it is, it was, "Peter, I love you more than you could fathom in a million years of concentrating on My love. You can't out-sin My love for you, Peter. You learn your lesson, repent of your pride and come back to Me." That's the look he gave him. Child of God, are you listening to me? At the end of your deepest sinful failure if you're his, the moment you turn back to look at him you'll find he was already looking at you with eyes of love, forgiveness and faithful covenant embrace.

When we sin, God turns from us but not in the sense of a whole rejection but he turns from our sin, but when we repent and turn to him, he's already looking back toward us with love and forgiveness. This text teaches us that for the child of God, and I want you to hear what I'm saying, for the child of God, in our greatest sin and failure, faith is not absent from us, it's just not active in us. Did you get that? Faith was not absent, it was just not active and what God does through our sin season is humble us and break us so that we activate faith again and get oriented back to him being our Lord, our Master and our Savior and we remember afresh the truth of Proverbs 28:26 that he who trusts in his own heart is a fool. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.

So in all of this that was going on, the magnanimous, unparalleled event of God sending his Son to head to the cross to die for the church, God in his wisdom can do two things at one time, he can actually do a million things at one time but he was also training Peter, humbling Peter to be the leader God called him to be. So I charge you this morning from this text, are you embracing pride in your heart? Is there anywhere anything where you've said, "I know what the Bible says but I think this"? You're acting like a fool. Are you following at a distance? "Yeah, I'm His follower but I'm not really wanting to really be really committed right now. I'm enjoying socializing with the enemies of God right now. I'm enjoying some of the city polluted, smoldering flames of the world right now, warming myself there." Or maybe by your behavior, by your actions, by what you put first in your life, you're actually actively denying the Lord right now. I don't know God's time table but I will say this: it didn't take God long... You know why it didn't take God long to get Peter turned back around? Because Peter was his. You ought to be scared to death if you can live this way for a length of time and God not yank you back in line. You ought to be scared to death. All of us, all of us have to deal with pride. All of us find ourselves at a distance from time to time and all of us could even find ourselves at some aspect of denial of our Lord, but here's my charge to you this morning: repent, call it what it is and may you, like Peter, bow your head before this God and weep and say, "I dishonored and displeased My Lord. Lord, I'm ready to get back on track." And I'm telling you, the moment you turn to him, he's already been looking for you if you're his. If you're his.