

John: Jesus is the Christ # 49
(Preparing for Parting # 5)

John 13³⁶⁻³⁸

The danger of not knowing ourselves

Learning from Jesus's foretelling of Peter's denial



*"Lord, **why can't I** follow You now? I will lay down my life for You."*

- if you at all familiar w Jesus's disciples:
⇒ it is v likely : your response will be ...

That's Peter for you!

Typical Peter!

- Peter the impetuous / impulsive / passionate one!
- Peter the one most frequent w foot-in-mouth disease.

But maybe we being bit **impetuous** / **impulsive** ourselves in our pronouncement;

Mark 14(31) Peter said emphatically, *"If I must die with You, I will not deny You."*
And they **all said the same**.

- Peter was not the only one who did not know himself as he ought to have known;
- none of the disciples knew themselves as they ought to have known;
- every single one of them fell down at this point.

I'm left thinking:

- the Lord has a **message** here **for every single one** of us;
 - easy to say: *That's Peter for you!*
 - convenient to **point the finger** at Peter;
 - Peter is the one who was all too sure of himself;
 - Peter is the one who denied : he was with Jesus;
 - Peter is the one who denied : he was a disciple of Jesus;
 - Peter is the one who denied : he even knew Jesus;
 - we point our finger at Peter;
 - comfortable to conveniently excuse ourselves – *typical Peter!*

I think Lord is pointing out : ∃ message / lesson / **challenge for each / every one of us** here;

The danger of not knowing ourselves

As you would have gathered from Bible readings – we looking at **all 4 gospel accounts**;

- shed extra light on exactly what is happening here.

- Mark tells us – in 14(27) : Jesus said: "*You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'*"
- Peter responded (29): "*Even though they all fall away, I will not.*"
 - Peter did not know his own heart;
 - Peter **thought he was better** than the others.

This is a v real problem ...

We think we are better than others

For many of us this is our **default way of thinking**;

- we'd probably deny it – be offended if anyone accused us of it;
- but may well still be the reality.

∃ probably 2 main default ways of thinking about ourselves in comparison to others:

- either we tend to have an **inferiority complex** or a **superiority complex**;
- if tend to inferiority complex ⇒ default is to assume:
 - *I'm hopeless – everyone else is always better than me;*
 - *I can never do anything right – I'm useless;*
- if tend to superiority complex ⇒ default is to think;
 - *Why can't they get this?*
 - *Why are they so slow or so stupid or so insensitive?*
(might be working on project / team / class / drivers on road / boss);
- if tend to inferiority ⇒ tend to get discouraged / depressed;
- if tend to superiority ⇒ tend to be proud / too sure of ourselves;
 - to be pretty sure : we are right
 - others are wrong - or if right, not as right as we are.

But like Peter, if this is us - ∃ v high probability : **we don't see it**;

- we often don't see ourselves as we ought to see us;
- take a rooster crow or equivalent to wake us up to ourselves.

Now that's not only thing Peter shows us:

- Luke's acct 22(33) Peter said to Jesus,
"Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death."
- this is a case of ...

We think we are better than we are

Peter thought : ∃s no way he was going to fall away;

- **nothing will get the better of him**;
- he quite prepared to be thrown into prison for following Jesus;
- willing even to die – nothing will change that;
- Peter thought he was better than he was;
- before night was out – before cock crow at 3am – denied him 3x.

Others may fall – but not him / he'd never do that;

- exposes another side of human nature;
- what we **see** as **other's weaknesses** – may well be **our weakness as well**;
- but we not see it – blind to it in ourselves.

We may think others **talk too much**:

- possibly because we not getting to talk as much as want to – maybe too much;

We may think other are too **opinionated**

- possibly because they not agreeing w our own opinion;

We may think other are too **critical**:

- possibly we being even more critical than they are right there / then;

We may think others are too **controlling**:

- possibly because we are not getting to exercise the control that we want.

We so often think we better than we are;

- experience of Peter shows us ∃ v real danger in not knowing ourselves;
- experience of Peter also shows us : **rooster is really helpful** – if willing to wake up;
- not a good idea to pull up metaphorical doona;
- bury our head in pillow – go back to spiritual slumber;
- wishing that pesky rooster would fall off his perch.

Turn again to Mark's account:

14(29) Peter said to Jesus, *"Even though they all fall away, I will not."*

(30) And Jesus said to him,

"Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me 3 times."

(31) But he said emphatically,

"If I must die with you, I will not deny you."

- Peter was so sure of himself : he convinced that he **knew better than Jesus**
- Jesus said he will deny Him – Peter is emphatic: *No I will not!*
- not only Peter who thought he knew better than Jesus;
- this is where it is recorded :

And they all said the same.

We think we know better than Jesus

Jesus warns us – **Matt 6(24) "No one can serve 2 masters ... you cannot serve God & money**

- maybe we think we know better;

Jesus warns us - **Mark 7(21) From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts,**

sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

- maybe we think we have all these reasonably under control;

God warns us: **Jer 17(9) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?**

- yet we think we understand our own hearts;
- we think we would never do atrocious things that we see on news;
- we would never hurt our wife / husband / children;
- we would never let anger get better of us – do unthinkable things;
- we would never let disappointment turn to resentment;
- we would never retaliate – refuse to serve because noone is serving us;
- we see horrible things on news – forget: There but for the grace of God go I.

∃ is real **danger in not knowing ourselves**;

- **thank God** for **whatever roosters** He send our way as wake-up call;
- may not be what we looking for;
- but that knock on door / phonecall / email / sermon;
- that sudden change in circumstances
- that sudden health issue / employment issue / relationship issue
- is God's rooster call / God's alarm clock to wake us up to ourselves.

If \exists danger in not knowing ourselves – text today also says \exists danger ($>$ **danger**) ...

The danger of not knowing the gospel

Jesus had said a little while ago:

*John 10(15) **I lay down my life for the sheep;***

Peter said in our text today – *John 13(37)* ...

No, I will lay down my life for You

(38) Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me?

Will you really? How about you wait & see?

Peter, you don't really have a clue;

*Peter, this is a **gospel issue**;*

Peter, you will not lay down your life for Me;

- that's not the way;

- I am the way;

- to make sure you realise that:

- you will soon find that instead of dying for Me

- you will deny Me.

No Peter, you will not lay down your life for Me ...

No, I will lay down My life for you

This is the gospel;

- in Peter's zeal to follow Jesus - he would actually **overturn the gospel** of Jesus;
- in Peter's desire to honour Jesus – he would actually dishonour Him / deny gospel.

This is a big issue in the church today;

- **What is the gospel?**
- What is it that **makes someone a Christian?**

Is it **my personal response** to God?

Is it me accepting Jesus as my Saviour / yielding to Him as Lord of my life?

Or is it Jesus accepting / embracing me in His sovereign love?

Is it me laying down my life for Him – OR His laying down His life for me?

In one sense it is both;

- but it must be **one before the other**;
- get these back-to-front \Rightarrow overturns the gospel.

Jesus lays down His life for me –

\Rightarrow is foundation / basis for me laying down my life for Him;

- I only love Him because He first loved me;
- I only receive Him as my Saviour / Lord
 - because He entered me / enabled me / empowered me;
- gospel / good news says : salvation is absolutely / exclusively God's work for / in us

Reformation in 16th C was a rooster wall – waking sleepy church up to this truth;
 - every generation / every person needs rooster as wake up call to recognise
 - gospel really is gospel of grace – God's sovereign grace.

Leads us into seeing in our text ...

The beauty of knowing the One who knows all

Look at how Jesus introduces this whole episode as Luke records it for us:

*Luke 22(31) "Simon, Simon, behold, **Satan** demanded to have you, that he might **sift** you like wheat."*

Jesus is ...

The One who knows the sifting of Satan

Jesus knows & controls the seduction / sifting of Satan;

- God in His **sovereignty** **allowed Satan** some **leeway** to get what he asks for;
 - at same time guarantees that Satan will not succeed in his scheme;
 - guarantees that good will come from what Satan plans for evil;

- Satan has demanded to sift Simon Peter;

- to sift is to put thru a sieve;
- Satan wants to crush him / grind him to powder – put thru sieve;

Jesus says OK – you want to put him thru sieve – thru sieve he will go;

- sieve will separate the chaff from the wheat;
- sieve will separate the course external shell from fine work I do within him;
- sieve will expose / leave behind his denials,
 - equip him to go forth as humbled servant to feed my sheep.

Jesus is the One who knows / used the sifting of Satan for His own ends;

Jesus is also ...

The One who knows us better than we know ourselves

John 13(38) Jesus said to Peter, *"Will you lay down your life for Me?*

Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me 3 times.

In effect: *Peter, you think you will **be true** to Me,*

But Peter, I know you Truly, truly.

And Truly, truly I say to you, words which when they come to pass will wake you up to how truly truly I know you;

- I know your weakness / I know your vulnerability;
- I know your pride / I know your self- assurance;
- yet I truly truly love you more than you know now,
 - but you will know one day.

Jesus is the One who knows us better than we know ourselves;

- and **accepts / embraces** us anyway / especially

Jesus is also ...

The One who knows the Father perfectly

Luke 22(32) *"Simon, Simon, Satan demanded to have you ...*

*But **I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.***

*I have prayed to the Father – **My Father & your Father**;*

- He always hears Me;
- He always gives Me whatever I ask of Him;
- I've asked for all those who Me has given Me;
- that's you – He chose you – I chose you;
- your faith will not fail – cannot fail;
- you will turn away for a time;

*And when you have **turned again**, strengthen your brothers."*

- you will strengthen your brothers;
- I'm entrusting you w that responsibility;
- I'm empowering you;
- your turn from Me will equip you as humbled servant;
- you will not be so sure of yourself – you will be more sure of Me.

Jesus is the One who knows the Father perfectly – **intercedes pertinently** for us;

Jesus is also ...

The One who knows the future infallibly

Mark 14(30) Jesus said to Peter *"Truly, I tell you, this very night,*

*before the rooster crows **twice**, you will deny Me **3 times**."*

Jesus is the One who knows the future infallibly – **planned every particular detail**;

- designed the rooster w its internal alarm clock;
- determined the precise time / sequence of its crowing that particular night;
- delivered wake-up call to Peter at precisely appropriate time to bring him to his knees;
- delivered him from delusion of not knowing himself as he ought to have known.

(Conclusion)

So we've **learnt a lot of lessons** from Jesus's foretelling of Peter's denial;

- leant a lot about Peter;
- hopefully learnt a thing or two about ourselves;
- most importantly **learnt a lot about Jesus**;
- He is sovereign;
- He is Saviour;
- He is Sanctifier;
- He is superb!

That's Jesus for you!

Pray

Sing Grace unmeasured, vast & free, that knew me from eternity ...

Benediction – Jude (24-25)