

John 18:12-27 - David Baumgartner

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[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the Gospel According to John.

These are warning signs. You think about a warning sign. I'll give you an example. Danger, quicksand ahead. What does that tell you? You realize that most likely that sign got there because somebody learned the hard way.

And they put a sign there. But here's the second thing about moral failures. When we see people who we come to learn and respect, and when they do fall, we see that God has a remedy.

And this applies to you and me today too as well. You know, in other words, if you fall, you're the type of person for whom Jesus Christ came into this world.

Isn't that great news? God is looking for such people. Let's go ahead and continue here in this account. And I'd ask, try to place yourself just in this garden here, this courtyard at the time here.

[1:10] Jesus is arrested and he's whisked away to this residence of Annas, the former high priest. Look with me, verse 15. Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple.

And since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. Who do you think this unnamed disciple is? Most likely, I believe it's Judas.

Yeah. Notice here, verse 16. But Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, and here's what we're told, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door.

And he brought Peter in. So, I'm picturing this large, extravagant home of this high priest. And there's this open courtyard that's below it.

And the night's busy, it's cold. And you've got these temple guards and these religious leaders. They're just hanging around, kind of wondering what to do. And Judas, we're told, speaks to the gatekeeper, this servant girl.

[2:23] And I don't know, does he know a secret password or something? The guy does deals, right? So, he's in here. But boy, is he in control. Judas talks to this servant girl.

And immediately, Peter gets admitted into the courtyard. Judas goes into the house. But Peter, we're told, he's lingering outside in the courtyard.

I want to ask you something. I can understand what Judas is doing here. But I want to ask, what's Peter doing there? What business does he have being there? Well, to get a better understanding of this account, we need to go to Luke's gospel account in chapter 22.

I have it on your handout. If you want to look in your Bible, it's Luke chapter 22, verses 31 to 34. Because there, there's a discussion that takes place just a few hours before this account here we're reading this morning.

Jesus is in the upper room with his apostles. It's right after the Lord's Supper. And Jesus says, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

[3:38] That you there is plural. So actually, Satan wants to sift all of the disciples. But here he is. Jesus is talking to Peter here. But notice verse 32.

But I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. You know, before we go on here, I think that this passage reminds us of a few things.

First thing is this. Notice in Luke here. Satan is a powerful being. He is. Satan demands things. In John chapter 16, earlier, Jesus called Satan the ruler of this world.

And then the apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthians, he says he refers to Satan as the god of this world. And that he's blinded the mind of unbelievers.

And then Paul's letter to Ephesus, he called Satan the prince of the power of the air. He's the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

[4:43] And so, this kind of power that Satan has, we need to take it seriously, brothers and sisters. Not that we should be paranoid or that we should be fearful.

No. But that we should be sober. We should be vigilant. But the second thing, just to notice here, is this. Is that if and when Satan wants to hassle God's people, did you notice that he has to ask God's permission first?

Did you notice that? Boy, what a blessing that is. And can you imagine just how terrible it would be for you and I if Satan could just do whatever he wanted to do?

Boy, we would be swallowed alive. Just like we sang here. Notice, here's a question. He says, Jesus says that Satan demands to sift you like wheat.

What does that mean? To be sifted like wheat? Well, here, we know that a kernel of wheat, in order to be sifted, it has to be crushed under some kind of extreme pressure.

[5:56] And so, sifting here must involve some kind of crushing that's intended to cause us to doubt God. And to stop believing his promises.

Notice here, what Jesus says in verse 32. I've prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. So that's what sifting has to do, causing us to doubt.

But here's the key here. I want you to notice, look at Peter's response. Instead of saying, thanks, Jesus, for the warning. I really appreciate that.

Verse 33. Peter says to him, Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death. In verse 34, Jesus said, I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day until you deny me three times.

You'll deny three times that you know me. Wow. Let's turn back now to our gospel in John chapter 18. It's a cold night.

[6:59] Peter here is mingling with the servants and the officers, warming himself by the fire. Verse 17 in our text, notice you see Peter's first denial.

Verse 25. We see his second denial. I really want to focus on his third denial in verse 26, because it's the worst one. Verse 26 reads, one of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, did I not see you in the garden with him?

How should Peter have answered that question? Yeah, well, based on his earlier comments, he should have said, yeah, I was that crazy guy with the sword.

I was the one. By the way, how's Malchus doing? No, he doesn't do that. Verse 27. It says that Peter again denied it, and at once the rooster crowed.

So, three denials. Jesus was right. He always is. In Luke's account, in chapter 22, there's another thing I'd like you to see here.

[8:15] It's on the handout there. Luke 22. Notice here that this is what Luke says. And immediately, while Peter was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

And get this. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.

And then Luke adds this. And he went out. This is Peter. He went out and wept bitterly. A double whammy.

Peter heard the rooster. He saw the look from his Savior. Peter. Gary, would you show that picture? Maybe you've seen this painting. It's by Karl Bloch. He's a Danish painter. He died in 1890. Maybe you've seen this before. I want you to just look at some of the details here.

[9:16] Here you see these roosters. But you also see Peter. He's ashamed. And there's Jesus. He's probably done with one of his interrogations.

And now they're taking him somewhere else. And that look from Jesus. He's ashamed. What did that look from Jesus say to Peter?

Was it a look of anger? No. Probably a look of pity. How about that sound of the rooster? What did that sound like?

My mother grew up on a farm. And I remember as a little kid, I'd go out to the farm with her. She'd be visiting her brothers and sisters. And they had roosters, chickens.

And I'd listen to these roosters crow. And boy, what a magnificent animal. Such a distinct sound. If you hear a rooster crow, you don't think, oh, is that a dog? Or is that something else?

[10:16] No, you know it's a rooster. When Mary Ellen and I went to the Philippines, I was asked to speak at this one place called Apo Golf, a very rural setting.

And so I'm speaking, and about halfway through, this big black and orange rooster decided to start crowing. And he wouldn't stop. And so I suggested to Gilbert, I said, you know, that rooster must be demon possessed.

Because it just keeps interrupting me. Boy, those are pleasant memories that I have. If I ever hear a rooster crow again, I'll be taken right back there.

Either to my mom's farm or to the Philippines, mingling with those dear people. Well, what kind of memories does Peter have when he hears a rooster crow?

Probably pretty sad. How can Jesus ever forgive me? Am I ever going to get over this? I mean, is this event in my life, just a few minutes, is it going to define me the rest of my life?

[11:26] How about you? Do you have anything in your life that sometimes you think that it just defines you? And most likely, it's a failure.

Those are the things that we remember. Sometimes, doesn't it seem, brothers and sisters, that Satan just wins too much? We give him, we yield territory to him because we let him accuse us. We allow these past failures to define us. And he's right there to help us remember that. What can we learn from Peter and from his situation?

Well, there's four truths here. And if you want to follow along, I think the first one is this. It's a good exhortation for us to be watchful. In the Gospels, wouldn't you agree that Peter has had some really good moments in his life?

Would you agree with that? You know, he was allowed to see the transfiguration. He was allowed to see the healing of this young 12-year-old girl. Peter actually walked on water for a little bit.

[12:35] That's pretty cool, isn't it? Yeah. Yeah. Here's some real positive things, some positive statements. Simon says to the Lord Jesus, To whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. How would you like for you to have said that to the Lord Jesus?

Yeah, that's recorded in John chapter 6. Or how about in Luke? It says that they came and they filled the boats, the fish did, and so it began to sink.

And here's what it says, that Simon Peter saw it. He fell on his knees at Jesus and he said, Depart from me, Jesus. I'm a sinful man.

Atta boy, Peter. Way to go. But we also see some negative things. In verse 32, in the gospel here, we read that Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked him.

[13:39] Yeah. Not Jesus rebuking him. Peter rebuked Jesus. This is about going to the cross. You're not going to be doing that.

And he rebukes the Lord. And it says in Mark chapter 8, turning and seeing his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter. And he said, Get behind me, Satan, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

How about this one? We covered this in John. Peter says to Jesus, You shall never wash my feet. Jesus said, If I don't wash your feet, you have no share with me.

And then Peter says, Oh, Lord, wash me. Wash all of me. My head, my hands, everything. How about this one? John 13. Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for me?

Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times. Did you know that Jesus actually gave Peter a second warning?

[14:46] He did. This, again, is right before Jesus was arrested. It's in Matthew 26. Listen to this. Remember, what did Peter do?

He denied Jesus. And look at what the Lord says to him. He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, So could you not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And so what did Peter do?

He fell asleep. He was not watching. And then he walks right into the hornet's nest. Psalm 1, verse 1 tells us, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

And what did Peter do? He walked in the counsel of the ungodly. He stood with the enemy there by the fire. And then in Luke 22, he sits with the enemy.

[16:00] What's the remedy? Well, here's what Peter would write. Some 30 years later, it's 1 Peter chapter 5, he says this, Be sober-minded.

Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Be watchful. Secondly, God knows our failures even before they occur. Obviously, this incident didn't catch Jesus by surprise, right?

No, in fact, Jesus knew that all of his apostles would fall away and hide. And yet, what do we read? He welcomes them at his table. He washes their feet.

He prays for them in his high priestly prayer. I'm reminded again, in Psalm 103, the psalmist says, Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

[17:14] For he himself knows our frame, and he's mindful that we are but dust. I want to ask you this question. So why does the Lord allow Satan to hassle his children, God's children, in the first place?

It's a good question. God wants you and I to grow, brothers and sisters, to be refined. 1 Peter, in chapter 1, says this, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, and here's why.

So that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold, that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to the result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I truly hope that one day when I'm standing before the Lord, I can say, Lord, I'm so glad that you didn't give up on me.

That you actually didn't desert me, but you walked through those fires along with me. And that's the reason you allowed them. Third thing, notice this is about God.

[18:32] God forgives. He forgives. Peter's eventually restored by Jesus, and we're going to see this later in John 21.

I think it's Tom's message, and so I'm not going to spoil it, Tom. I'm just going to let you have it here. But I tell you what, forgiveness. What a blessing. How wonderful.

And Paul says in Romans 4, Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. But how can that be? Is the Lord unfair? No. Paul goes on in Romans 8, 1. There is therefore now no condemnation, and here's the key, for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Those in Christ Jesus. This is the very reason why Jesus is allowing himself to be tied and humiliated, going through all of this hassle himself.

[19:43] It's because he bore the penalty of our sins. He died on our behalf. And lastly here, fourthly, God forgets.

He forgets. Some of you, you've done things and maybe you're having a hard time giving them to Jesus. Maybe you're tormented by old memories. Maybe they just keep playing in your life like an old tape and it says, my life's always going to be this way.

Maybe Satan loves to accuse you and make you feel guilty all the time. And he uses past failures. He knows which ones. He uses them to neutralize you and to rob you of your joy.

Maybe you're wondering, how can an almighty God even forget these things? I'd like to read a passage here in Jeremiah chapter 31. Jeremiah is talking about the one offering that Jesus makes on our behalf.

And look at what he says with me, brothers and sisters. This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord. I will put my laws on their hearts.

[20:57] I will write them on their minds. And then he adds, see this is the writer of Hebrews telling us this, quoting Jeremiah. Then he adds, I will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more.

Here's the key, brothers and sisters. It's not that God forgets per se, but it's rather he doesn't bring them up anymore like Satan does, like maybe you and I do.

And so, if God won't bring up our sins, why should you? Why should me? Why should I do it? You and I must learn to think biblically.

The key is, is that if you are in Christ, it's not what you or I say about myself or yourself, what does God say about you?

He says you're forgiven. And the next time Satan comes around, you plead the blood of Jesus. Reminding Satan, reminding yourself, I'm forgiven.

[22:07] Thank you, Lord, for laying your life down for me. Dealing with all of those things, that's, all the things that I've done, all the thoughts that I've think, you've taken care of them.

And I can now stand before you as righteous because of the cross. If I can have the musicians come up, there's a story that's told and it reminded me about another aspect of our troubles. Sometimes God uses our failures to guide us and to teach us. There's a story told about this Methodist missionary, his name is E. Stanley Jones.

E. Stanley Jones, he was getting ready to preach his very first sermon. It's a small church and it's filled with his relatives and his friends. Everybody wanted Stanley to succeed that day.

And he had told others beforehand, I'm going to be, listen to this, I'm going to be God's lawyer. I'm going to argue his case before the world and I'll do it well.

[23:20] Well, his first sermon came and things didn't go real well. He stumbled over his words. There was this girl that was sitting out there in the pews and she smiled at him and then she puts her head down as if to fall asleep.

And he became so distracted by this that his mind just went blank. And he just stood there frozen. And so as the seconds go by, he actually starts walking back to the pew to sit down. But then this inner voice spoke to him and it said this, don't you have anything to say?

Tell people what I've done for you. Haven't I done anything for you? If so, tell others about that. And so he kind of came back in front of the podium and he said this, you know what, I can't be God's lawyer, but I can be his witness.

And so, I can tell others of the grace that he has shown to me, a sinner. every day, maybe every hour, situations come up, don't they?

[24:43] Where each day we're faced with choices. Friends, brothers and sisters, let's believe God's word and what it says about us. He knows us, he loves us, he forgives us, and we can walk in that grace and be strong in the Lord.

And see how he uses us. Look, as we go into our transition into our Lord's Supper remembrance meeting, look at these words from the writer of Hebrews, chapter 12.

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself. Here's why. So that you may not grow weary and faint-hearted.

Father, thank you so much that you are