



Luke 22:39-53 - Peter's Model of Weakness

Opening Discussion: when in your life did you feel disconnected or distanced from God? When did you feel the most connected and close to God?

- **Peter modeled weakness while Jesus modeled meekness.**
- **Peter modeled weakness**
 - God disciplines us to accomplish or protect our closeness because we cannot be disciplined from a distance.
 - Peter's weakness was really a lack of faith that manifested in how closely he followed Christ.
- **Luke 22:54–62 [54] Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. [55] And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. [56] Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." [57] But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." [58] And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." [59] And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." [60] But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. [61] 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." [62] And he went out and wept bitterly.**
 - **Peter followed Jesus at a distance.**
 - Peter had a cautious curiosity rather than a courageous commitment.
 - Too many people today follow Christ out of convenience.
 - What we win people to is what they remain loyal to.

Question: How would you define being a distant follower of Christ in your own words or context?

- **Peter denied knowing Jesus.**
 - When we follow Christ from a distance, it becomes too easy to deny him when following is no longer convenient.
 - You may not deny Jesus with your lips, but do you deny him with your walk?
 - Brennan Manning: “The greatest single cause of atheism in the world is believers who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door and deny him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”¹

Discussion: In your opinion, how important is the Christian witness to the call for the church to reach people for Christ?

- **Peter denied even knowing about him.**
 - Once our relationship with Christ becomes based on convenience, then Christ is easily replaced with distractions.

Question: Would you be comfortable with your work relationships being in the same space as your church relationships?

- **Peter forgot him.**
 - It wasn't until Peter had completely denied Christ that he remembered Christ's warning about his weakness.
 - The rooster crow was a wake-up call! What awakened in Peter was a movement in a new direction.
 - If we belong to God but are living at a distance, there will eventually be a wake-up call, and wake-up calls are never pleasant.

Question: Can you share a time when God gave you a “wake-up-call” that inspired change?

- **Hebrews 12:1–13 [1] Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely,**

¹ Quote taken from Manning recorded in DC Talk album *Jesus Freak*, song: *What if I Stumble*. Similar statements are made by Brennan Manning in *The Ragamuffin Gospel*.

and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] 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.

- Jesus is always the original we are trying to imitate or model in our own life.
- Do you notice that Jesus and joy are connected here? The joy that Jesus had was a result of focusing on His heavenly father. Our joy comes from focusing on Jesus.

Question: do you remember Pastor Rob's acrostic for JOY? What was it and why is it important to remember?

- [3] Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. [4] In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. [5] And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. [6] For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."
- If Jesus is the original and we are to model him in our lives, the result is that we will also walk through the struggles and sufferings he walked through.
 - Illustration: a remote controlled Jeep does everything the big Jeep does, just to a lesser level.
 - Maybe a better illustration is a son walking in his father's footsteps. The author of Hebrews chose this illustration to help us see that God is a good father desiring to see good things accomplished (or modeled) in our lives.
 - My son is going to walk through many of the same struggles and sufferings that I have walked through in life. It is my job to prepare him for those things through discipline.

Discussion: Did you grow up with healthy, caring and constructive discipline in your life? How did it shape your life? If you did not, how did the lack of good discipline shape your life? What is the difference between healthy and unhealthy discipline models?

- Being a disciplinarian is tantamount to being a good father. See what the author of Hebrews says next?

- **[7] It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? [8] If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. [9] Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? [10] For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.**
- **There are two types of discipline that the Heavenly Father, as a good father, uses in our lives.**
 - **Preparatory or Directive discipline.**
 - This type of discipline sets us up for strengthening and starts us off in the right direction.
 - **Reactive or Corrective discipline.**
 - This type of discipline is for course correction.
- David in Psalm 23 gave the idea of the shepherd using both a rod and a staff, one for direction and one for correction.
- Puritan Richard Sibbes wrote a book on God's directive and corrective discipline called *The Bruised Reed*. I love his statement on the Father's work in the believer's life during conflict. He states: "Let us not allow Satan to transform Christ to us, to make him other than he is to those that are his. Christ will not leave us till he has made us like himself, all glorious within and without, and presented us blameless before his Father (Jude 24)."²
- **[11] For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. [12] Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, [13] and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.**
- The author of Hebrews reframes suffering and struggle to be about the building of strength and the production of righteous fruit!

² Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*. (The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh. 1630, revised 1938) 138

- The only way to see the joy of God's presence in suffering and struggle is to follow Him closely!
 - When you know your father's heart is for you and not against you, you trust him in his discipline.
 - Coaches are the same. Trainers are the same. Teachers are the same.

Question: What was the best mentoring relationship you have had in life. What made that mentorship so effective in your life?

- **Luke 22:46 states [46] and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."**
 - Jesus invited Peter to wake up and get ready by pursuing the heart of the Father through prayer.
 - This admonishment was very much a part of the Lord's prayer he had given to his followers. "Lead us not into temptation...deliver us from evil!"³
 - If you begin to pray during temptation, you are already behind in the fight of faith.
 - Active moment by moment prayer is what the puritans referred to as "abiding in Christ". John Flavel and Richard Sibbes both preached about the importance of abiding in Christ. You cannot abide in Christ from a distance. Just as you cannot have a close ongoing conversation with a friend across the room. (Daniel and I had lunch on Wednesday and met together in a booth. If we had sat in separate booths, that would have been distracting and unproductive.)
 - Andrew Murray (not a puritan, but a wonderful theologian) wrote an entire book on the concept of abiding in Christ. He stated "It is in Jesus, the Crucified One, I must abide. I must learn to look upon the Cross as not only an atonement to God, but also a victory over the devil,—not only a deliverance from the guilt, but also from the power of sin. I must gaze upon Him on the Cross as wholly mine, offering Himself to receive me into the closest union and fellowship, and to make me a partaker of the full power of His death to sin, and the new life of victory to which it is but the gateway. I must yield myself to Him in an undivided surrender, with much prayer and strong desire, imploring to be admitted into the ever-closer fellowship and conformity of His death, of the Spirit in which He died that death."⁴

³ Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

⁴ Andrew Murray, *Abide in Christ*. (Miracle Press: St. Louis, Mo. 1971). 78-79

- Murray dedicated an entire chapter to abiding specifically in Affliction and Trial. Here are the main points of this encouraging chapter:
 - **1. Abide in Christ! This is indeed the Father's object in sending the trial.**⁵
 - **2. Abide in Christ: so wilt thou become partaker of all the rich blessings God designed for thee in the affliction.**⁶
 - **3. Abide in Christ: in Him thou shalt find sure and abundant consolation.**⁷
 - **4. Abide in Christ: so wilt thou bear much fruit.**⁸

Discussion: Discuss Murray's 4 points of abiding and why they are true and important to the believers life.

- The amazing result of Peter's trial and sifting is that he woke up, drew in close and became the Rock that Jesus knew he was capable of becoming.

⁵ Ibid. 133

⁶ Ibid. 134

⁷ Ibid. 135

⁸ Ibid. 136