

Title: Tell Peter
Texts: Luke 22.31-34; 22.54-62; Mark 16.1-7; Luke 24.10-12
Theme: Resurrection promises a salvation that restores
Occasion: Resurrection Day 2026
Prop Stmtnt: The resurrection of Jesus secures our salvation and restoration.

Malcolm Guite wrote a "Sonnet for Easter Dawn"

*She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognize the Gardner standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question "Why,
Why are you weeping?, or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply
'They took my love away, my day is night'
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.*

In the beginning, God created the world and made humankind as the chief act of his creation. We were made in his image to rule the earth, under his rule. We liked the ruling part, but rejected the being ruled part. Our first forefather, Adam and everyone since, rejected God's authority and our sin made us guilty, and liable for judgment. God would have been perfectly just to judge us for our sin, but instead, he sent Christ to come to this world and to do in our place what we could not do. He lived a perfect life and then, he died on the cross, in our place, as an offering to God in order to pay for every single sin of every single person who would ever believe in him. Then he rose again not only to live forever, but to demonstrate that the debt of sin had been paid and therefore, the power of death was broken. Anyone and everyone who trusts in Christ to save them, is forgiven, declared righteous by God and made to be in the forever family of God. That is the gospel. That is the message of the Bible. Trust Christ and live.

Read Texts:

David Bernard Mulligan was a Canadian golfer from Montreal 100 years ago, who, according to his friends, often took what he called a "correction shot" on the first tee. He simply took a second shot. It was a do-over that they began calling, "a mulligan." The leader of our men's golf league, has said that mulligans are not permitted. We all know that on the PGA a mulligan is not permissible. I'm not sure how well that rule is enforced among the brothers here. What if life came with a mulligan? Of course, we would all need more than one because we have all done something or failed to do something that we wish we could take back or have a do-over. Have you ever hurt someone or made a mistake that has been the source of deep regret? There are plenty of people in the Bible, just like us, who could have used a mulligan, starting with Adam. Abraham and Hagar, Moses and the Rock, Joshua and the Jebusites, Jephthah and his vow, Saul and the Amalekites, David and Bathsheba and of course, Peter and his denial of Christ. Peter did not get a mulligan. He was given something better. And so are we.

The story of the Bible is the story of our world (big) and the story of our lives (personal). God made it, we messed it up, and God is saving it and us in a way that is restoring both. At the heart of this saving and restoring is the life, death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The work of Christ accomplished our salvation. This morning, I want to focus on Peter's role and experience in the resurrection account so you can see both the incredible power of Christ in accomplishing our salvation and the amazing love of Christ in how he applies it. What Jesus did for Peter, is a beautiful display of the heart of God that I want you to embrace and enjoy.

1. **The Unbearable Weight of Regret** (Luke 22.54-62)

On Thursday night, Jesus observed the Passover Meal with his disciples in the Upper Room. From there, they went to the Garden of Gethsemane which is on the western side of the Mount of Olives. On their way Jesus told his disciples (Matthew 26.31) that they were going to forsake him that night. In fact, they were going to be scattered because of him. Jesus quotes from Zechariah 13.7 showing them that this very event had been prophesied about him and them over 500 years before. *"I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."* Even though they are going to abandon Christ, he gives them this hope and promise of restoration when he says in Matthew 26.32 *"But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."* Jesus told them that he was going to die. They were going to abandon him. He was going to be raised up and they would be together again. They did not really believe him. In fact, Peter said, *Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.* Then Jesus told Peter that on this very night, before the rooster crows, that Peter will deny him three times. It is never a good idea to pick a fight with Jesus, but Peter digs in his heels. He is adamant and says, *"Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you."* And all of the disciples said the same.

A few hours later, Jesus having been arrested was at the home of the high priest. Peter and others were in the courtyard outside of the house to see what was going to happen. This was the setting where Peter denied knowing Christ or having anything to do with him. And, as you likely know, he did exactly what Jesus said he was going to do. He denied knowing Christ 3 times. Luke's gospel says that while he was denying that he knew Christ for the third time, a rooster crowed, and what is worse, Luke says, *"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter."*

Peter left and wept bitterly. He was inconsolable. And what is worse, Jesus was killed. Jesus died. A son, that I know of, was in a bitter argument with his dad and shouted, "I wish you were dead." A second later, his dad had a heart attack and died. What do you say to this son? What do you say to Peter? Any hope for forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration was gone. How do you live with the fact that you just denied Christ? You just abandoned Christ and now you cannot do anything to fix it?

Every one of you, every one of us, has regrets. Like Peter, we have all said things that we so desperately wish we had never said and words that you wish you had never heard. If only we could turn back time, cause the earth to spin backwards to just before that moment, how many of us would take that opportunity? All of us. One of the hard griefs of this life is living with the consequences of our words. I don't need to give you illustrations of generals who regretfully

gave an order that cost soldiers their lives, or couples that destroyed their marriage and shattered the lives of their children. You fully understand this pain, this angst, this irretrievable moment that changed your life and those around you. And for some of you, the pain is fresh, the wounds are still bleeding.

Whatever it is that you have said, or done, that weighs on your chest like a cement truck, I cannot imagine that it is worse than denying that you knew Jesus after living with him for 3 years, witnessing his miracles, listening to his instruction, and even walking on water with him. We are tempted to think, “how could you, Peter?” We can only imagine the utter despair that Peter felt. Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ and then hanged himself. Peter denied Christ and I have no doubt he thought about doing the same. Why didn’t he?

2. The Incredible Love of God (Luke 22.31-34)

Jesus warned Peter that Peter was going to fail. He warned him because he loved him. He also warned him because he wanted Peter to know that his failure was not going to be a surprise to Christ. His failure was going to be a failure, for sure, but it was not a failure that was going to be fatal nor final. In those agonizing hours between Peter’s denial and Peter’s reconciliation, Peter could think back on what Jesus said to him. When I compare Luke’s and Matthew’s accounts of the conversation of Jesus with Peter, I think it is possible that Jesus warned Peter and the disciples twice. Clearly, Jesus knew that these men would all run away from him and yet, he never treated them as if they were all going to be a major disappointment to him. Beloved, this account is here, not just to let us know what happened to Peter but to let us know that this is our God and King. This is the incredible love that God has for you. He knew everything that you were going to do and he went and died for you. Will you at last believe it? Your God loves you!

We also see the incredible love of God displayed in the fact that Jesus prayed for Peter. In Luke 22.31 and ff. Jesus told Peter that Satan demanded to have Peter so he could sift him like wheat. But Jesus told Peter, “I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.” Clearly his faith faltered, but in the end it did not fail. His denial was not the last chapter of his story. Peter recovered because Jesus prayed for him and Jesus gets what he prays for.

Jesus also promised Peter that he would turn again and Jesus told him, that when he turned again that he was to strengthen his brothers. If Peter remembered this conversation, which I am confident he did, he had to know that if Jesus was right about Peter’s denial, then he had to be right about Peter’s restoration.

Then, Jesus died for Peter. It was Peter who, later on wrote that “*you were ransomed, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*” (1 Peter 1.18-19) Peter could tell others that they were ransomed by the death of Christ because that is exactly what had happened to him. Related to that is the fact that Jesus rose again for Peter. Again, it was Peter who wrote, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead....*” (1 Peter 1.3-4) It was the

incredible love of God that sent Christ to the cross, kept him on the cross, and accomplished our salvation by rising again from the dead. Then, on the day that Christ rose again....

Jesus pursued Peter. The angels at the tomb told the 3 women to tell the disciples AND PETER that Christ would meet them. That day Jesus, somewhere, met with Peter. The rest of the disciples found out and were so overjoyed by it, that they told Cleopas and the other brother who were with Christ on the road to Emmaus. Finally, Paul mentions this meeting with Peter as evidence of the resurrection of Christ. We know of 4 things Jesus did on the day he rose again: 1) He talked with Mary Magdalene. 2) He spent a good part of the day teaching Cleopas and the other brother how they were supposed to read the Old Testament. 3) He showed up at the secret meeting of the disciples that evening and 4) He met with Peter. Finding and meeting with Peter was a major priority for Jesus. He wanted Peter to know he was forgiven. How many times had Peter wept and repented? How much sleep had he lost to his regret? How slow was he to accept the consolation of his wife and friends? Jesus knew all of that and on that day, made a bee-line for Peter so Peter would know, he was forgiven. Forgiveness is not a bother for him. He died in order to forgive. When you repent of your sin and ask forgiveness, you do not exhaust nor exasperate the Lord because he already paid for it. The death of Christ paid our debt. The death of Christ purchased our pardon. Forgiveness is an opportunity for Christ to give you the gift he already paid for.

If you pay off your car, you get a notice from the bank and the title to your car without a lien. When you pay off your home, you get the deed, free and clear. Your car, your home is free from the debt and the claim of another. The resurrection of Christ is the full evidence that the debt of your sin has been paid. He purchased it, so your cry of forgiveness is not met with hesitation, but with love. Christ loves to give you the gift that he already paid for. It is personal.

The resurrection of Christ displayed the power of Christ over death, which meant that the death of Christ displayed the power of Christ over sin. Christ died for sin, which killed the power of sin for those who trust him. For the believer, the death of Christ is the death of death. Without the curse of sin on us, the curse of death and therefore, the fear of death is gone, again for those who are in Christ. But the death and resurrection of Christ not only displays the power of Christ over sin and death, but it displays the love of God for his own. What was Jesus doing when he died on the cross? He was loving us. He was securing our forgiveness. He was taking our punishment. He was opening the way for fellowship with God and purchasing our eternal life. What was Christ doing when he was being rejected, scorned, abused, and beaten? He was loving us, securing our forgiveness, taking our punishment, opening the way for fellowship with God and purchasing our eternal life.

So, when Jesus was on trial and Peter denied Christ for the third time, the rooster crowed and Jesus looked at Peter, what kind of a look do you think it was? Mark gives us a clue. He uses the same verb in Mark 10.21, when Jesus looked at the rich, young ruler, who rejected him. Mark says that Jesus looked at him and loved him. Here, Luke uses that same verb. Peter denied Christ and Jesus turned and looked at him. When you put all of this together, I think we know what Peter saw in the face of Jesus. He saw love. He saw forgiveness. He saw hope. There is a

love that breaks us in a good way. There is a forgiveness that overwhelms us in a good way. There is a grace that completely dismantles us in a good way. It is found in Christ.

Some of you try to use shame to control and manipulate others, quite probably because shame was used on you and you know how powerful it is. Some of you try to use guilt to get your way because your own guilt has been a massive grief in your life. Shame is powerful. Guilt is powerful. Regret is powerful. Fear is powerful. The evil one knows how to use these powerful weapons to trap, blind and bind you. But there is another weapon that destroys them all, and that is the love of God that raised Jesus from the dead, who then found Peter to let him know that he was forgiven and now had a mission to fulfill.

There is an art form from Japan called Kintsugi that is believed to be from the 1400's. The legend behind this art says that a Japanese shogun had a broken Chinese tea bowl that he sent back to China to be repaired. But when it got it back, it was held together in a rather unsightly way, so some local Japanese craftsmen decided to find a more beautiful solution. This was birth of Kintsugi which means "golden joinery." What the artist does, is take the broken pieces and puts them back together, but instead of hiding the cracks, it fills the cracks with gold (or silver or platinum or an adhesive lacquer). So, instead of hiding the damage and pretending it is not there, it embraces the damage as part of the story of this piece. Now, even though it was broken, it is made whole in a way that doesn't forget that it was broken. But now, the piece is one of a kind. No two items, when dropped, are broken in exactly the same way, but their restoration is now a thing of beauty.

For those of you who are guests, we have been studying Luke's gospel for the past 2.5 years. We are currently in chapter 18 and I thought for this Sunday, that I would simply jump ahead to Luke's account of the resurrection in order to give us a preview of where this is all going. I was reading Luke's account of Jesus on the Emmaus Road when I noticed how the disciples that evening were so excited to share that Jesus had appeared to Peter that day as well. I hadn't really noticed that before. On the day he rose again, Jesus made it a point to find Peter.

Luke told us at the beginning of his gospel that this book of his was written based on research he did with eyewitnesses and ministers of the word who were there with Jesus from the beginning. I'm pretty sure that Luke spent time with Peter and had a chance to hear these accounts firsthand. The seasoned, weathered, now immovable and convictional apostle was a one-of-a-kind vessel whose broken pieces were now put together by the golden grace of the gospel. Jesus made certain that Peter knew and he did not want him to be in despair for a minute longer.

There are two ways to live: You can live with shame, guilt and her friends, despair and judgment. You can look at the pieces of your broken life in regret and go to your grave wondering, what might have been. Or you can trust Christ who loves you so much and desires to forgive you so deeply that he went to the cross and died, so the pieces of your life would become a one-of-a-kind vessel of amazing grace and now, glory.