

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Fully Alive

PART

45

TITLE

I Am He

SCRIPTURE

John 18:1-27



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Well, I want to ask you to ... actually, John:18, if you have a bible. If you want to turn there with me. If you're a guest here, if you're in this room, or perhaps at home or in the amphitheater, welcome. We're glad that you have joined us as well, but it is great to sing with you. I hope that you know that, and I pray that God has offered you enough grace this week, and you've actually held fast to that grace to have the eyes to be able to see some of the tangible ways that God has been kind to you this week. John chapter 18 is part of one man's earnest attempt to do something very specific. That man, his name is John. John walked with Jesus for three years. He saw Jesus rise from the dead. He saw him die first. He was there. He saw him rise from the dead, and then about 50 years later, he actually chose to write down this gospel.

It says in it that even John says, "I know that I'm not telling you everything. In fact, if I were to write down everything that I've seen him do and heard him teach," He goes. "There wouldn't be enough paper in the world to be able to write everything down that we've seen in Jesus Christ." He said, "But the things that I've written down are specific for this purpose, and that is that you, my readers, would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and in believing that that you would have life in his name."

Every part of this book has been built intentionally to lead you not so much to think about yourself, but to think about him. Because the mystery and the wonder is that when we think rightly about him is that all of his grace and his mercy and his kindness pour out to us, and we find ourself truly receiving an enormous benefit. That's where we're at in the series, and I want to ask that you would bow and let's pray for help.

Father in heaven, we are grateful for your word. We're grateful for the book of John that finds itself in the bible. We're thankful, God, that you gave us the spirit to be able to understand these things. We confess to you, father, that we believe it's your word and yet we also confess to you that much like the father who had a child who was in need of you healing, and he confessed to you, "I do believe Jesus, but would you help me with my unbelief?" We confess to you Lord that that's very similar to our hearts, and our lives. God that we look at this and we say that we're Christians and we say that we believe and yet when it comes time for all of this to be ought in the circumstances of our life, it's amazing how so many times we choose not to believe. God, would you use this? Would you use this text and this time to contribute to our love for you, our faith in you, our love for each other? God, would you give us eyes to see the greatness of Jesus that we would believe what we read, that we would understand it, and choose to apply it to our life.

Would you speak through weakness? I pray in Christ's name, amen. Amen. Well, one thing you know about our staff, if you know, is there's a lot of them that love golf. I'm not one of those, okay? I play golf. I enjoy playing golf with them, but I would never organize golf if it was just myself. Right? The only reason I golf is because I love the guys that I serve with, and they love golf, and they let me have a bunch of Mulligans. Now if you're not certain about what that is, it's basically a do-over, and they give me unlimited Mulligans, which is awesome.

Now my score never counts for anything, but they still give me unlimited Mulligans, and so if I hit and as normal, it's not really what I wanted, they just say, "Well, just drop another ball." Right? It's a freeing way to play golf, and it would be nice, wouldn't it? If life came with just the number of Mulligans to where you could just have an opportunity to do things over again. To not say what you just said or to not do what you just did, or perhaps the opposite.

To say what you didn't say or to do what you chose not to do. It'd be nice if that was the case. The fact is is that we may not be wise enough to know how to use them, even if God gave us some. You think about our wisdom, right? There's a lot of us that if God gave us five, right? Five times that you could actually pull the string that and you could get that day back did over again, we would probably expend our five quicker than when the real pivotal days of our life actually arrived to where our greatest regrets took place. The fact is is that we all have regrets, it's sorta trendy today for a lot of people to get these. Even a tattoo, it says no regret. If you think about it, the only reason that that's trendy is because the category of regret is etched within their heart.

Every one of us has things that we wished that we would not have said that we did. Or that we wished we would not have done that we did. I think most ironic is when we misspell our tattoos, right? Like this one. No regrets, right? Now the fact is is ... I mean, there's a lot of irony there, isn't it? The fact is is that you've never had any regrets, and neither have I. Maybe this applies. However, for you and I, if you really think about the need of our soul is that we're all in need of a deeper solution than a rightly spelled tattoo to deal with our guilt and regret. This is why Jesus is such a friend to centers. What we find here in John chapter 18 is an actual moment in time where one man's greatest life regret literally intersects in time with Jesus coming to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to pay for sin that causes our regrets.

These two moments take place in John chapter 18, so let's read it together. It says, "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook [kidrawn 00:06:34], where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priest in the Farosces, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. And Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said them, 'Whom do you seek?' And they answered him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' And Jesus said to them, 'I am he.' Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. And when Jesus said to them, 'I am he.' They drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again, 'Whom do you seek?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'"

"And Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So if you seek me, let these men go. This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, of those whom you gave me, I have lost not one.' Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Maocus. So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into its sheath.

Shall I not drink the cup that the father has given me?’ So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas, for he was the father in law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people. Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple.” Now just a little pause right here.

Okay, this is most likely John himself. We’re gonna find that he keeps showing that he was there, but he never uses his name, okay, so this was most likely John the author with Simon Peter, and it says, “Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?” And he said, “I am not.” Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I’ve said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them. They know what I said.” And when he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” And Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong, but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?” Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” And he denied it and said, “I am not.” 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?” And Peter again, he denied it, and at once the rooster crowed.”

So three things I want you to see about the character and the authority and the power that resides in Jesus, okay? The first thing is this, is that Jesus is sovereign. So we can have peace. You see this in the first 11 verses, the sovereignty of Jesus. This word sovereign, it means God. It means that he has the power and the authority and the wisdom to do his will. He’s sovereign. He’s in control of all things.

It says that after he prayed to his father in John chapter 17, after he said these things. It says that he took his disciples and they crossed the brook, the base of this valley, right? Once you cross the brook, all of a sudden you start walking up the Mount of Olives, and at the top of the Mount of Olives, there’s a garden. It became a very important garden. Because there at the garden, the weight of sin and the separation that Jesus had never known from his father all began to weigh down upon him, and it caused such sorrow that Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell us that Jesus not only began sweating because of the inner tension of these sayings but actually most likely his capillaries broke because the scriptures say that he began to even sweat blood.

I want you to think about how remarkable the anguish this must have been, because just a few verses later it says that it's a cold night. They're warming themselves by a charcoal fire, and here Jesus is in a garden. That very same time, that very same night. Maybe just an hour before, and he's literally in such anguish over what's about to take place in his life that he is literally sweating to the place to where his biology, his cells literally cannot contain the anguish in his divine soul. It's a remarkable thing, and while he's praying in agony, saying, "God, is there any way for this cup to pass, but not my will, but your will be done?" We're told that the disciples were sleeping, at least until Judas showed up. It says that when he showed up, he actually came with a band of soldiers. Now we get a little bit more clarity of this band in verse 12, when it includes a captain. Now the captain was a captain of 600 Roman soldiers, and so what we find here is not just some local militia guys that say, "Hey, I got a club. I'll come with you." No, no, no. These are, like, trained military soldiers along with some of the Jewish security guards, okay?

They've come to Jesus with Judas. Now this is a remarkable thing to me if you think about what happens. Because what John wants to make absolutely clear is that Jesus is in absolute and total control of everything that's happening in John chapter 18, and I want to show you some of the clues that we have that actually demonstrate that. First of all, it says that Judas knew the place, and he knew the place where he would be because Jesus often met there with his disciples. Jesus wanted to avert danger. If he wanted to escape, he could have, but he chose the place that he knew that Judas could find him. There he is praying, and it says that Jesus knowing, verse 4. "Knowing all that would happen to him." It says that, "When this small army comes into the garden to arrest him." It doesn't say that he flees or that he even waits. It says that he stands up and he addresses, and he starts walking to them. This is a man who knows what he's about to do. He gets there and he says, "Whom do you seek?" They say, "Jesus of Nazareth." He says, "I am he."

Actually, if you look at the Greek, we only add the pronoun "he" in the English bible, it's because we think it sounds better in translation. What he actually said is, "I am." Now we've seen this time and again through John, where Jesus is claiming to be the God that opened up Moses' eyes as to who his is creator over all things. Way back when God called Moses to go to Egypt and to bring all of his ... this whole nation out from Egypt. Called Israel. Moses says, "Well, God. Who are you? And when I get there and they ask for a name of this God, who do you want me to tell them?" God says, "Why don't you tell them that I am has sent you?" So when Jesus says this, he's literally claiming to be the creator and sustainer and righteous ruler and judge over all humanity and over the entire universe. What we're told, the very next thing that happens is when Judas and the soldiers heard these two words, they all fall to the ground.

Now this is an amazing thing 'cause these are courageous warriors, right? Two words are spoken and they're all laying on their back. What's even more amazing is that when you go back to John chapter 13, when Jesus is literally opening up the eyes of everyone there as to who was going to betray, and he said, "I'm gonna dip this morsel and whoever I give it to, that is the traitor."

He hands it to Judas, in chapter 13 verse 27 says this, "After Judas had taken the morsel, Satan entered him." Now think about this for a second, what that means. That when Jesus Christ said, "I am." Not only were 600 Roman soldiers pinned to their back, but Satan, who was within Judas, is literally lying on the ground as well. You see, even the powers of hell and the powers of earth, they all crumble under the name of Jesus, under the authority of Jesus. He has absolute control is what John wants us to know.

What's amazing is at this very moment, I think it's almost comical. Apparently, while they're still laying on the ground, Jesus asks, "Now, who you lookin' for?" They say, "Well, Jesus of Nazareth." Again, he says, "I am." Suddenly, Jesus decides to become protector and defender once again. It was Jesus who was gonna hang on a cross that day, but it was Jesus that morning that said, "You're lookin' for me and you found him, now let these men go." It's a remarkable display of authority, and what's even perhaps more remarkable is what was available to him that he could have called on. In Matthew's gospel, he tells us that this wasn't the only thing that Jesus said at this moment, and the only thing that happened. I'm gonna get to that in a moment, now I want you to think of this though, right? So here you have somebody that can speak two words, and the powers of hell and the powers of earth are literally lying on the ground, and this is the moment that Peter chooses to go brave heart. I can see him putting the blue ...

On his face, and all of a sudden he takes out his sword and he cuts an ear off. Now just think of the irony of everything that's happening here, okay? The servant of the high priest. I mean, he may have been holding the high priest's snacks for the day, not a sword. He chooses. You got 600 soldiers carrying weapons and he chooses the one guy that's like, "Oh, I got him." It's not like he tried to cut his ear off. Be still, I'm gonna cut an ear off. No, he tried to separate him from left to right. He was reckless, and at that very moment, Jesus stops him, and he says, "Put your sword down." You see, he didn't say it with his mouth, but what he said with his actions is, "Jesus, you need to back up, 'cause I'm here to protect you. I've got this." This is taking place after Jesus says two words and they're all on their back.

I said earlier that Matthew adds a little bit more commentary in it. This is when it happens. After he says, "I want you to put your sword up." He actually says, "Pick up the ear, let me put it back on." Then this is what he says. He says, "Peter, do you not think that I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once send more than 12 legions of angels?" I don't know if you know what a legion is, right, but 12 legions of angels is 72,000 angels. When you look through the bible and you look at when angels show up, they always bring one of three things. They bring news, they bring comfort, or they bring death. They bring a sword. In that context, I just don't think Jesus was saying, "I can have 72,000 people give you a message." I think he was saying, "Do you not understand the authority that is in my hands that at any moment, I can say, 'Now.' And this is all over." And he didn't. What do we do, knowing that Jesus is this sovereign, in our everyday life today?

The application that I have for you is this. Is let's trust God to assemble what is broken. I'm gonna have to explain what I mean by this, right, but let's trust God to assemble what is broken.

How many of us, or how often are we just like Peter? We come in here, we sing that God's in control, then we go out of here and we're confronted with a circumstance. In our mind, we think, "Well, I know God's in control, but Jesus, back up, I got this." Listen to me. Peter is not the villain. He's just the mirror. We're not suppose to look at this and go, "What an idiot." We're supposed to look at this and go, "God, would you have mercy on me?" For how many times have you woken up after a prayerless night and done something reckless?

This is where Peter is at. He's laboring to try to put these two things together, you see? We all live between what life should look like and what we know it should look like and what it does look like. We all live right in the middle there and we're all wrestling with how does the God who has this much authority in John 18, how does he come through, break in where I'm at right here between, here's the pieces of my life and here's the pictures of how it's supposed to look like? Life in many ways is like a LEGO set. I got this from a friend. This isn't mine, so I can't really give it away, right? This is 996 pieces of pleasure right here, okay? You got this amazing castle, and if you first looked at this, and you go, "What a great picture. I'd love to play with that."

You buy it, you get it home, you open it up, you pour it out, and it doesn't look like a castle, does it? No, it looks like just a bunch of pieces. This is the same thing that's happening even with Peter. Peter has a picture of what the messiah's supposed to be like, that he's been taught his entire life. That picture was this. That the messiah would come, and he's gonna get rid of all of the enemies of Israel. He's gonna setup his kingdom in Jerusalem and he's gonna rule the world. Now here at the moment, the messiah is about to be arrested, and so Peter says, "These are my pieces, I know this is the picture. Jesus, get out of the way. I've got this." We do the same thing with a lot of areas of our life, don't we? Like our marriage. We get married. We don't have this picture what our marriage is gonna be like. It's beautiful, isn't it? I mean, it looks fun and ... and then all of a sudden, we get married and we open the box and it's like, "Wait a minute. It's not assembled. It's all in pieces." Sometimes we're like, "Oh, how am I supposed this and this together?" It's the same thing with our parenting, isn't it?

We have kids, we think, "This is how I want my kid to be able to grow up and to have these opportunities. They're gonna know the Lord and they're gonna live like this." We have this amazing picture and then all of a sudden, you get a kid and it's like, "Wait a minute. They're not assembled yet!" The same thing with sin patterns in our life. We say, "This is how I'm gonna get rid of this," and so many times in our life, God says, "Well, but you're not even consulting the manual." See, within this box there's a manual to know how to exactly put this together, but how many of us, in the different areas of our life, say, "Well, I understand you included a manual and I understand that there's an order, there's a step, and you have the power. But why don't you back up Jesus, 'cause I'm gonna take care of this one on my own?"

I meet people frequently who have this idea of friendship. And all of a sudden, they have a friendship that doesn't look like their idea of friendship because it's in pieces, it needs to be reconciled. How many people try in their own power in order to reassemble something that only God can reassemble? Providence, listen to me. So many times because we do this, because we take things into our own hands, our efforts become just as misguided as Peter, and so we sleep when we should be praying and we swing swords when we should be silent. I just want to encourage you to look to him. Be faithful to respond to the instructions that he has given that you're aware of, and then when those pieces simply don't fit at that time, don't settle and don't sin in order to make things right. Trust that God is going to work and that he has the power to assemble the pieces to take brokenness and to create something that's beautiful. He can do it, but you've got to let him. He's sovereign, and he tells us that he's sovereign so that we can live in peace.

The second thing I want you to see is that Jesus is meek so we can have life. This is pretty remarkable to me. Look at verse 12, "So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him." Now did you see that? They bound him. Jesus says two words and an army crumbles, and they bound him. How did that happen? John doesn't help us understand the process where they probably embarrassingly stand up, wipe themselves off and walk over, like, "Who's gonna do it?" Right? "Who's gonna put the chain around his hands?" This is the portrait of meekness. Now, meekness is not weakness. Okay? Meekness is having enormous strength under control. This is what Jesus does. This is the same Jesus of John chapter 18, verses 1 through 11, that's taking place in verse 12. He has all authority, he has all knowledge, he has all sovereignty. Everything is at his disposal, and Jesus allows himself to be bound.

I used to play a game when our kids were really small. I was the bear and they were the zookeepers. They have a bunch of ropes, and I'd lay down and I'd just be still. They'd say, "Move your arm over here." So I move it and they'd tie, and they'd wrap me up. Then I'd say, "Are you ready?" "No, no, no. Hold on just a sec. We're not ready." They'd wrap some more, and then, "Are you ready?" Then finally, they'd say, "Okay, we're ready." Right? Then I'd get up, and I mean, they were this big. I'd bust out of what they tied me up with and grabbed and wrestled and hug 'em. Great time with kids, right? This is exactly what Jesus does. He has all authority over everything and he goes, "Here, do you want me to hold my hands here for you?" He was bound. Do you see the folly in that word when it's associated with the name of Jesus?

He was bound. He was contained. This is not a word that fits with Jesus. If you understand who he is, and you say, "Well, why did he let him do it then?" Some of you maybe don't know Christ is your savior, and you walk in, you said, "Why did he let people kill him?" The fact is is that nobody took his life, he gave his life. He willingly allowed this to take place because he had something in mind. Now what was in mind? Well, Mark 10:45 says, "The son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

To give his life. This is why he did this. Jesus made a promise in the Garden of Eden, saying, "You brought sin into the world, but I'm gonna bring a rescue." Jesus was eventually born of a woman and he lived a righteous life and he went to a cross and he was buried in a grave and he rose from the dead and he extends an invitation to us that if we would believe in him and trust him that we would be forgiven of our sin and he would give us his righteousness, so that we could have a relationship with him.

This is what's available to us, and if this is the case, then Providence, let's trust Christ and share this good news with others. It's amazing to me how many times the New Testament encourages us to remember the chase. The chase that God made in order to reach us. How we were living before, and how he met us. How he came to us. How he loved us. How he opened up our eyes. See, if you know Christ, it's a healthy thing every once in a while to imagine yourself in the place where somebody took. What do I mean by that? What I mean by that is this. It should have been you and me that were bound. It should have been you and me. The night before our death, after being condemned, that was sweating blood out of anxiety of what was to come. It should have been us that died for our sin, and yet Jesus came and he did all of that for us. He drank the whole cup.

He didn't drink half the cup and leave you half a cup. He drank all the cup of God's wrath so that you would not have to taste a drop. If you know Christ, how can we sit on this news? Do you know there are 2 billion people in the world that do not hear and have not heard what you've just heard? They are bound because they don't know Jesus was bound for them. He's called us to go and tell. That's why we sing about the gospel. That's why we talk about the gospel. That's why every time we open up this bible, no matter where we're at, we're gonna get to the place to be able to tell you and to remind you that Jesus died for us and he rose again. When we leave this place, and you think about the people that are around you, you need to remember that Jesus was bound for them as well, but do they know it?

Do they know it? If they don't, God's called us to tell 'em. For us who know Christ, you look at verse 12 and it should motivate us like it motivated Paul when he said, "You know what? I'm bound in chains, but you know what's not bound? Is the word of God." When the word of God gets to those places where there is no light, it can do its work. If you've never trusted Christ and every single person in this room, they could all echo what I would say to you right now, and that is that you can be forgiven of your sin. You can walk in these doors and not have a relationship with God and you can walk out of these doors being totally forgiven, totally righteous. You can walk out with a relationship with God, and we would commend you to Christ today. He's sovereign, he's meek, there's one other thing I want you to see and that's this. Is that he's gracious. Jesus is gracious, so that we can have hope.

This little section of Peter is one that's fairly well known. There's a lot of people who don't even have a bible and don't even read a bible and they know that there was a guy named Peter that he denied Jesus. There were some rooster involved, and but this happened, Providence. I want you to think about this. A few hours before the section that we just read, Jesus told Peter in John 13:38, he says, "The rooster is not going to crow until you have denied me three times." In other words, you are going to deny having known me three times before the sun comes up. Matthew tells us that Peter responded to Jesus with these words. He says, "Though, they all fall away because of you. I will never fall away. Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you." You fast forward a few hours. They enter a garden and Jesus asks them to pray. Now think about the irony of this.

After being warned that his greatest regret would occur before daybreak, Peter went to sleep. He sped the hours up. Think about how foolish this is. Just imagine some crazy situation where everyone you loved, their life was in peril unless you got to the city where there were at, and there was a flight going to that city. The only flight that would ever take place, it's at 6:00 a.m. You have to be at the airport at 5:00 a.m. It takes you 30 minutes to get there. If everyone you love and care for would perish if you were not on that plane, there's a good chance you don't sleep that night, right? Peter fell asleep. Not only did he fall asleep, but we're told that Jesus actually walked up to Peter and the other guys and woke 'em up twice. Said, "You guys shouldn't be sleeping right now. You should be up praying." Significant things are happening right now. Imagine that thought, not only of being woken up by a grown man, but a sweaty, bloody grown man.

Peter just, he fell asleep. Again. Fast forward a few hours, Judas comes. The irony is that when we're prayerless, when we should be praying, when we awake, we awake to do reckless things. He cuts the guy's ear off and then all of a sudden, he leaves, and soon, we're ushered a little bit closer. Simon, Peter, and most likely John, they follow Jesus and John apparently has this friendship with the high priest. He gets to go into the courtyard, Peter has to stay out. He goes in. He goes, "Hey, I got a friend out here, can he come in?" "Yeah, he can." So he comes in and there's a little gatekeeper. It's a servant girl. She says, "Aren't you one of his disciples?" Notice the irony of the language that's used. Two times in chapter 18, Jesus says, "I am." Or, "I am he." Peter says, "I am not."

"I am not one of his disciples." It's interesting what John does with his camera. He's on Peter, and all of a sudden, he swings the camera back over to Jesus. The high priest is asking Jesus about his teaching and who he was teaching, his own disciples. Jesus says, "Look, you don't have to just question me. You can talk to the people who heard me, 'cause the fact is is that I always taught in public places. The most public places among the Jews. The temple and the synagogues." Now imagine what Jesus just did. See, this is Peter's big break. Just a few hours ago, he said, "When you need a testimony, I'm gonna give that testimony. If you need a friend, I'm gonna be that friend. If even if it costs me my life, I will be with you to the end." This is like the kid on the play, and all the lights are off, and he's got one line. He's got one thing. He's over here and the spotlight hits him and the spotlight's too bright, and all of a sudden, he freezes and he forgets his line. He's just too afraid to talk and he just stands there.

Eyes wide open. In mercy, the spotlight person comes off of him and they just resume the play. He's on trial, he needs a testimony from a disciple, and for the first time in three years, Peter can't find a word. All of a sudden, Jesus or John takes the camera and he swings it back over to Jesus, and something happens. It's amazing. For the very first time in human history, a created human fist strikes the creator. Think about the irony of that. Without much comment about that, John swings the camera back to Peter. Jesus is sent to the high priest and Peter's there warming himself by a fire, and somebody comes up to him and he says, "Wait a minute. Weren't you one of his disciples?" For the second time, "No." Then all of a sudden, it says that a relative of the man whose ear Peter cut off, he says, "Wait a minute. I was in the garden. I know ... Wait a minute. It was you, wasn't it?" It says then, Peter denied it again. Now it's interesting, in Matthew 26, it says that this third time that he denied it, it actually says that he invoked a curse upon himself.

In other words, what Peter said the third time was, "May God strike me dead if I was one of his disciples." Then something happens that is just ... it kinda goes beyond my creativity and imagination in Luke chapter 22. Verse 61 and 62. It says this. It says, "Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter and Peter went out and wept bitterly." Now I want you to think about what's happening here, okay? Jesus has just been struck. He's on trial. He's got his own context, and yet he is consciously aware of what's happening in a conversation that he even can't hear. At the very moment that Peter denies him the third time, Jesus in his context peers through and looks into his context and he looks him in the eye. Can you imagine that glance? It was too much for Peter and so he ran. He wept bitterly.

Now, we're almost done, but what I want you to see is that not only were Peter's actions predicted, but they were also very predictable. In a matter of a night, what we see is perilsness over confidence and isolation. The three applications that I have are these. Let's remain spiritually alert through prayer. If we go without prayer at the critical moments of our life, we wake up to do things we regret. Some of us are very vulnerable right now because we don't pray. It may have been forever since you've actually talked to God. That's a scenario that's ripe for doing things that you're gonna one day regret. Let's remain spiritually alert by prayer. The third thing is let's run to Christ together. The fact that Peter actually said in the presence of their disciples, "Though they all fall away, I never will." Is a stunning statement. Instead of rallying his friends to lock arms together in order to prepare for the storm, he throws them under the bus. Instead of doing what Hebrews 10:24 says that, "Let us consider who to stir one another up toward love and good deeds." Peter never saw that he was desperately in need of accountability and support and prayer and love from friends until after he had denied his maker.

Some of us are very vulnerable right now because you're choosing to run alone. There's nobody in your life that you have given the authority or access to ask you hard questions, you're not accountable to anybody. Nobody's praying for you. You don't know them, they don't know you. I just want you to know, that is a vee-ry, very vulnerable place to live. The third thing is let's resist overconfidence. Peter had such, at least at this moment, he had such little grasp of his heart's potential to do something it was devastating.

He says, "I will never fall." First Corinthians says, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." There's a man who came to Providence one time and he spoke at a large event with a bunch of men. He was a teacher, and a pastor, and he was grieved over the fact that so many people in ministry had fallen morally, and so he chose to do a little study.

He actually personally called over 400 pastors who had left the ministry because of moral failure. Now the only reason that the word pastor is inserted there is simply to let you know that these are people that love God and that wanted to serve God with their life. They're just like us. Me, and you, and everyone else. He called in order to find, were there any common threads between all of them? Among the common threads that he found were these three. Every single one of 'em said that at the moment before failure, he said every single one of 'em had stopped having a quiet time to feed their own soul. They stopped praying. Number two is every single one of them were isolated. That they all said there was nobody in my life close enough to hold me accountable. Number three is they all said, "It would never happen to me." Prayerlessness, isolation and overconfidence.

Now when we arrived at John 21, we're gonna see that Jesus not only forgave, but restored Peter. Let me go ahead and just say this now that if you have sinned against God and feel the wave of guilt and regret for the dishonor that you've brought to him and to you, Jesus promises forgiveness. He says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and the cleanses from all unrighteousness." That grace is yours because he is so gracious. We have hope, so let's pray together. Father in heaven, we are grateful for your love for us, and we're grateful for this passage. It examines our own heart, and some of what it shows is ... makes us uncomfortable, and so I pray God that you would work in our hearts today. Help us not just to let this fall to the ground. I pray, father, that as we give, not only in song but even out of our resources, God, that you would give us a happy heart in what we give you. We're so grateful for your love for us, for the kindness that you've shown us, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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