

On the Way to the Garden

by S. Lewis Johnson

The sermon explores the significance of the hymns sung by Jesus and the disciples on the night of the Passover, and how they express the love and joy of Jesus as he prepares to go to the cross.

Duration: 1:00:47

Scripture: Zechariah 13:7, Matthew 6:33, Mark 14:26, John 12:21, John 20:20, Romans 9:16

Topics: "Gethsemane"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares his personal experience of being convicted by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. This transformation in his preaching greatly blessed the congregation. The preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the depth of Jesus Christ's saving work in order to experience true joy as a Christian. The sermon also discusses the perfection of God's Lamb and the need for believers to be vigilant against the devil. The section concludes with a focus on the denial of Peter and the lesson of exaggerated self-confidence.

Transcript

Father, we are grateful to Thee again that we can turn to the Scriptures and anticipate Thy blessing as we consider the teaching that concerns Jesus Christ. We pray that He may direct us through His Spirit and that we may come to a deeper understanding of Him and be led thereby into a closer walk with Thee. We thank Thee for these who are here and for the interests that they have, and we pray that through the Scriptures Thou wilt speak in a very meaningful way to us.

We commit the hour to Thee, in Jesus' name. Amen. Tonight our subject is On the Way to the Garden as we turn again to the Gospel of Mark and consider some aspects of the passion of our Lord.

And again, as we have been following in all of our meetings this spring, first a few words of introduction. The ancient ritual of the Passover is the background of the section in the sense that we have just concluded the last Passover and the first Lord's Supper, and so now in the singing of the hymns as Jesus and the disciples make their way from the upper room, we come to the actual conclusion of those great rituals. In the Passover ritual, Psalm 113 and Psalm 114 were sung at the beginning of the Passover, and then Psalms 115, 16, and 17, the total comprising the famous Hallel or the Hallelujah, were sung at the end.

In the middle they did not sing, Do, Lord. The medieval hymns that were often composed used this great event as their incentive and motivation, and they often pictured Jesus Christ as singing like a nightingale and drew some interesting comparisons between the work of our Lord and the singing of the nightingale. Now as we all know, or if you do not know, I will tell you, the nightingale's song is a song which the male sings in the spring of the year, and we think of a nightingale as singing at night.

Actually, I think they sing in the day and the night. But singing in the night and singing of love, for they always sing only at the breeding season. So the intent of the comparison of our Lord singing the hymns of the Passover night with the nightingale was designed to stress the love that Jesus Christ had for his own, as he himself went to the cross at Calvary.

Now this figure is very interesting, and in some ways enlightening, but as far as the chief stress of the saving work of Jesus Christ is concerned, it obviously is incomplete because it fails to do justice to the justice of God in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. I have no doubt that the love of our Lord Jesus and the will to live caused his holy heart to beat faster, but the finger of God's justice caused his holy heart to stop. And we must remember when we think of our Lord going to the cross that it is not only a matter of the love of God, but also of the justice of God.

And furthermore, I think that this comparison of our Lord singing as he left the Passover room to a nightingale singing in the night, aside from the fact that the kind of love that the nightingale sings about is erotic love, aside from that fact, it fails to show that the songs that Jesus sang were songs that fulfilled the word of God and explained the word of God. We make a great deal over the seven last sayings that Jesus Christ uttered on the cross, but so far as I know, we never make anything over these hymns that he sang as he made his way toward Calvary. And so tonight in the opening part of the message itself, I want to lay a little stress on the hymns that our Lord sang and what they meant.

Schilder's beautiful title of the section is *The Author Sings His Own Psalms*, and that gives us a clue and a hint into the significance of the fact that we read in verse 26 of Mark 14, and when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Now there is one other great subject in our section for tonight, and that is the subject of the denial of Peter. One of the signs of the inspiration of the Scriptures is the pitiless portrayal of its heroes that we find within it.

If this book were not inspired, we might expect it to be a book in which the heroes of the Scriptures were lauded and their blind spots overlooked. But the Bible is not like that. Generally speaking, the biographers of men tell us the good about the men.

Very rarely do they tell us the evil, unless someone may be writing a biography of a man like Richard Nixon. Then, of course, things may be different. But very rarely do biographers tell us the truth, the good and the bad.

And one of the interesting things about the Bible is its capacity for telling us the truth, or in the words of 1974, telling it like it is. And that is what we find in the case of Peter. I happen to be a great admirer of Stonewall Jackson, as a number of you know.

I don't think there was ever a general like Stonewall Jackson, unless perhaps Moshe Dayan in the 1967 war. But I have a hunch that he really probably copied Stonewall Jackson's strategy in order to win that war so well. And I'm quite sure in my own mind that had Stonewall Jackson lived, we might have been a free country in the south of the United States.

But as it is, we are not. But someone said that God knew that in order for the North to win the Civil War, it was necessary to get rid of Jackson. And so he arranged, by a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances, that his own men should slay Jackson and thus enable the North to win.

I read a biography of Stonewall Jackson. I look out over the audience here, and I'm afraid there are probably some Yankees in the audience from the way you are responding tonight. But I read a biography of Stonewall Jackson by Burke Davis once, who was a professor of history at the University of Rice.

And when I finished the last page of that book, I turned it, put it down, and said, well, it is hopeless to attempt to follow a man like Stonewall Jackson in the way that Burke Davis presented him, because he was practically perfect. And of course, as you might expect, I also admired him because he was a Calvinist. And so here was a great general, and a southerner, and a friend of Robert E. Lee, and on top of it, he was a Calvinist.

And there was really nothing wrong with that man, so far as I can tell, except that he got in the way of one of the bullets of one of his soldiers. Now Peter is a man who is so presented in the Scriptures. He is presented, he is not so presented in the Scriptures.

He is presented with all of his blind spots and all of his wonderful characteristics. His denial, actually, was a kind of theological lecture which our Lord delivered him on Romans chapter 7, verse 14 through verse 25. And he was taught, through this experience, that in him there dwells no good thing.

It was a costly experience for Peter, but it is included in the word of God that you and I might learn from his experience and not make the same mistake. But first we're going to look at the Man of Sorrows singing psalms. In chapter 14 and verse 26, and I read verse 26 through verse 31.

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, This day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. But he spoke the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any way. Likewise also said they all.

Of all the hymn sings, this was undoubtedly the greatest hymn sing that was ever held. The apostles and the Lord Jesus, as they got up from the Passover table, sang the hymns that made up the great hallel and went out to the Mount of Olives. In it there is no question but that we have the perfection of spiritual singing.

Think of it. Jesus goes to God singing. Is there a greater love manifested in the last words that he uttered on the cross? I think not.

I think in these hymns that our Lord sang and the truths that are in them, as we shall see in a moment, we have an expression of the love of God for the souls of men that we rarely find in the holy... in the whole of the Bible. It has been said that a poet who recites his own poetry is the best reciter of his poetry if he has the rhetorical ability to recite. For in the final analysis, it is he who has created his poetry.

And I think that that would generally be true. And we all look forward to hearing great poets read their own poetry. Now in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is the Messiah.

He is the Messiah of Israel. He is the one who through his Spirit has caused the Old Testament hymn writers and Old Testament prophets to give us the Word of God. And so our Lord is singing his own psalms.

I remember hearing a story a long time ago. It's been told by many preachers, but it illustrates the point that I'm trying to get over. It is said that in London some years ago there was a gathering of very cultured people, and included in the group was a well-known actor and a well-known clergyman.

And in the course of the evening of the party, someone suggested that the actor read and recite the 23rd Psalm. And so the actor finally agreed to do it, and he stood up, and with mellifluous tones and with beautiful diction and with the skill borne of many years of study and practice, he read the Psalm, the 23rd Psalm in such a way that those who listened were transported into the East and seemed to be observing all of the things that Psalm 23 speaks about. And when he finished, he was given a great deal of applause from the gathering, and in a few moments someone suggested that the aged clergyman also recite the Psalm.

He first remonstrated, finally reluctantly agreed to do so, and then he began to recite the Psalm. And it was evident that he knew something about the Psalm, because after a few lines the audience became very, very calm, very quiet, and it was evident that he was not so much reciting the Psalm as expressing an experience that he himself had passed through. And when he sat down after having completed the Psalm, there was a moment of quietness, and then the actor stood up, and he said, I think I would like to speak for all of us here and express our gratitude to so-and-so for reciting the Psalm.

You see, he said, the great difference between myself and him is this. I know the Psalm, but he knows the shepherd. Now, in the case of the songs that Jesus sang on the night of the Passover as he went to Gethsemane and the agony of Gethsemane, there was no one who understood those Psalms more than he.

He was actually singing the Psalms that he himself had written through the Spirit, for the Spirit of Christ is the one who inspired the Old Testament prophets and Psalmists to write the words of Scripture. That's exactly what Peter tells us in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 11, for he speaks concerning the messianic promises and the messianic times, and he speaks and says in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 11, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. You see, it was the Spirit of Jesus Christ who in the prophets and in the Psalmists testified of the sufferings and the glories.

It was not the Holy Spirit separated from Jesus Christ, but it was the Spirit whom Jesus Christ gave to author Scripture, who wrote through the men the words of Holy Scripture, and Psalms 113 through 118, the Great Halil, were Psalms that were written ultimately by the Lord Jesus. He was perfectly qualified as no other Israelite to sing the Psalms of the Great Halil on that night. Now I want you to turn back, if you will, with me to Psalm 116, and let's notice some of the things that Jesus sang on that last night as he made his way toward Golgotha.

They have just concluded the Lord's Supper in which he has celebrated proleptically the shedding of his blood in the cup and in the bread. And we read in Psalm 116 in the last of these three Psalms that were

sung, I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Now isn't that interesting that in the midst of this occasion our Lord should sing this Psalm, and remember these are Psalms that he himself has composed.

In a moment we will read Psalm 118, one of the passages of the New Testament which is applied to our Lord Jesus in a number of occasions. We've already had one occasion in Mark chapter 11 in which it referred to him. These are typically messianic Psalms in which the Old Testament Psalms are Psalms that ultimately refer to the Lord Jesus, and he says, I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

Out of all of the voices that God has to hear, the Lord Jesus can sing, he has heard my voice and my supplications. What are the things that Jesus sings about? Well he sings about his sufferings. We notice in the tenth verse, I believed, therefore have I spoken, I was greatly afflicted.

He sings about his death. Notice the third verse, the sorrows of death compassed me and the pains of Sheol got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow, but he also sang of his resurrection.

For we read in the ninth verse, I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. And finally in the twenty-second verse of the 118th Psalm, the stone which the builders refused has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes.

So the Lord Jesus, as he proceeds from the upper room out to Gethsemane, sings the Psalms that he has himself composed, and they are Psalms that speak of his sufferings, of his death, and of his resurrection. There is also here the perfection of joy, for remember these are hymns. This is the last and final illustration of the joy of the Lord.

We have more joy expressed in this incident than we have in when the Apostle Paul sings in the prison at Philippi. We have more joy expressed here than when the Apostle Paul sings in Rome. For you see, it is the Lord Jesus rejoicing in the Lord.

Now there cannot be any greater expression, any purer expression of joy than the Lord Jesus rejoicing in the Lord. Now of course it is a great, it is a great exhortation to us in the experiences of life to rejoice in the Lord as well. For remember, no one was ever going to a more terrible destiny than Jesus Christ, and yet in the midst of it, he can sing these tremendous expressions of joy and thanksgiving to God.

Just take that 118th Psalm again, you needn't look back and find it again, I'll just read the first and last verses. We read, I oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, because his mercy endureth forever, and now I'm going to be crucified by him. And you see in verse 29, oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever.

It hath pleased the Lord to bruise me. So in the midst of the greatest suffering that any man ever experienced, Jesus Christ can sing of the joy, of the greatness of God and the greatness of his mercy. One of the things that troubles me a great deal about the saints is that they do not seem to have a great deal of joy in the Lord.

Have you ever noticed the great contrast between the saints on Sunday afternoon and the saints on Sunday morning? Well Sunday afternoon they sing, they shout and cry and holler like Comanche Indians at the football game. But then in the meetings of the saints they are like Indians, but this time it's a wooden Indian. They have no joy whatsoever, because they've never really entered into the truth of the death of

Jesus Christ.

The secret of joy is found in a couple of words in the text of John chapter 20 and verse 20. Now it's an old story in connection with it that I like to repeat. There is in the Highlands of Scotland a little church.

It's not a great church, but it has some words on the pulpit like this. They are taken from John chapter 12 and verse 21, which reads, Sir, we would see Jesus. And the story is this.

There was a young Highland minister who came to this church many years ago, and after some time of ministering the scriptures, the members of the congregation and particularly the elders were a little disturbed that he was not really preaching the gospel of the grace of God. And so they went to him, or they didn't go to him, but they wrote out a little note. And they just took these words from John 12, 21, Sir, we would see Jesus, and put that note right on the Bible in the pulpit.

And so the next Sunday morning when he came in, the first thing he looked at was this little note, which said, and I suppose it was anonymous, Sir, we would see Jesus. He was greatly convicted by it, and he determined after some searching of his soul that he was going to preach the grace of God in Jesus Christ. And it made such a tremendous transformation in his preaching that the whole congregation was greatly blessed by what they heard.

And it wasn't too many weeks afterwards that he went into the pulpit and there was another note. His heart sank, but then was lifted up to heaven as he read, then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. And the text from John 20 and verse 20 had been placed there.

Now that is the secret of joy in the Christian life. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. And you will never be a happy Christian until you have come to understand something of the depth of the saving work of Jesus Christ for you.

Now finally we have the perfection of God's Lamb. It is evident from the Scriptures that the Lamb of God must be without blemish. That is specifically stated in Exodus chapter 12 and verse 5. In fact, it was so important that the Lamb that was to be the Passover Lamb would be blameless, that he was tested for three days to be sure that no blemish would appear.

Now in the case of our Lord, he was tested for 30 years of his ministry. His life and ministry testified to the fact that he was the Lamb of God without blemish. Now the Lamb then must, the Lamb of God must be morally superior to the lambs of God.

They were sacrificed involuntarily. No lamb ever said in the morning, I want today to be the burnt offering. They never said that.

No lamb, no bullock ever came forward voluntarily to be sacrificed. And as a matter of fact, it was so evident that they did not want to be sacrificed that they had to be tied with cords to the sacrificial altar. And as a matter of fact, in that very Psalm 118 we have a text which expresses this very fact.

For there we read, God is the Lord which hath showed us light, burned the sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar. The animals were involuntary sacrifices, but Jesus Christ is the voluntary sacrifice. And so here, they went out to the Mount of Olives and our Lord goes out with the songs which he has composed centuries before, voluntarily and willingly because he has the sense of the destiny of God upon him in the fulfilling of the will of God.

And so when he reads and sings, God is the Lord which hath showed us light, burned the sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar. It is he who wrote about the lambs typically who now fulfill voluntarily the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. Thou art my God and I will praise thee.

Thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever. No lamb ever was sacrificed like that.

Our Lord in the perfect obedience of his active obedience went to the cross as the lamb without spot and without blemish. Now we turn from a great subject to a different one. And here we have the prophecy of the offense in verses 27 and 28.

It seems to me that from the study of the Scriptures that all of the apostles were warned first, but then Peter was warned particularly. And his expressions of faithfulness have caused the experience of Peter's denial to be singled out from the rest. We must not forget that they all forsook him and fled.

And so in a sense they all denied him. And as the text says here in verse 31, likewise also said they all. So they all boasted and they all were disobedient.

Now the declaration of the prophecy is given us in verse 27. And Jesus saith unto them all ye shall be offended because of me this night for it is written I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered. The events Jesus said shall so take them by surprise that their faith will totter and falter like buildings in an earthquake.

They are going to be scandalized the Greek says. They are going to be scandalized because of him this night. But it is to be the fulfillment of the Word of God.

And the Lord Jesus adduces a text from Zechariah chapter 13 in proof of the fact that Peter is going to deny him. Now we're going to turn over to Zechariah chapter 13 because the title of this course which I have been trying to give you has been the Suffering Servant of Jehovah the Old Testament and the Doctrine of the Atonement. So we don't want to skip any of these three emphases.

We've talked a lot about the Doctrine of the Atonement recently. And we have spoken about the Suffering Servant of Jehovah. But we want to also relate these passages of the New Testament to the Old Testament.

So will you turn now to Zechariah chapter 13 and I'm going to read a few verses beginning with the first verse of chapter 13. You may remember and you may not that the last part of the book of Zechariah contains two great prophecies or burdens. The first burden is chapter 9, chapter 10, chapter 11.

The second burden is chapter 12, chapter 13, and chapter 14. Now in this second burden, which is the last burden of the book of Zechariah, we have a great deal of stress upon the work of man in the first part and a great deal of stress on the work of God in the latter part. But the chief theme of this last burden is the divine side of national deliverance.

In other words, what we are talking about in these three chapters is the national cleansing, which Israel is going to experience after national repentance. Now national repentance is described in the twelfth chapter and then the national cleansing is described in chapter 13, beginning with verse 1. Now have you had, have you found Zechariah yet? There is enough time now for even the elders and deacons to find it. So will you listen now as I read beginning at the first verse of Zechariah chapter 13.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. Now he is speaking about the time of the second advent, and he is not saying to us that there is going to be a new fountain opened in that day. It is obvious that what he means in the light of the context of the scriptures is that they, Israel, are to enter into the blessings of the fountain that was opened on the day of Calvary.

And he goes on to write in verse 2, And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered. And also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother who begot him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord.

And his father and his mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day that the prophet shall be ashamed, every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied. Neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive.

You see, even in those days the false prophets had clerical garbs. But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am a farmer, for men taught me to keep cattle from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Now these, by the way, are not references to the wounds of our Lord Jesus.

These are the wounds that the false prophets frequently inflicted upon themselves in order to convince the people that they were sincere in their work. What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Now we have the prophecy of the means of cleansing.

For you see, we've had national repentance, we have had national cleansing, but there needs to be a foundation in righteousness. As we have been talking in the doctrine of the atonement, it is not enough to say that Jesus Christ died to preach the atonement. In order to preach the atonement, we must say that he died as a penal satisfaction to the justice of God.

Now until we have made that point, we have not preached the atonement as the New Testament or as the Bible proclaims it. It is by means of a substitutionary sacrifice by which our Lord Jesus, under the punishment of God, satisfies the justice and holiness of God. So that the salvation we possess is not a salvation wrung out of an unwilling God, but it is a salvation that rests upon righteousness.

We have not persuaded God to forget any of his claims against us when we talk about the atonement that Jesus Christ made. It is not that our Lord so prevailed upon the pity of God by what he did on the cross that he forgave. Jesus Christ satisfied every claim that God had against the sinners for whom our Lord died.

So that the sacrifice that we possess is a righteous sacrifice. Righteous before God. And I've tried to stress that and will continue to stress it.

That grace reigns, but it reigns through righteousness. And any kind of a preaching which suggests that God is forced or compelled or urged or so moved upon that he forgets his claims against man, that is an unholy kind of salvation. And we don't preach the gospel when we proclaim that kind of gospel.

So the question would come, if Israel is repentant and if national cleansing is prophesied, what is the righteous ground of the forgiveness? For repentance itself does not bring forgiveness. If men repented,

they would not be saved. Jesus Christ must die in order for that repentance to have any force at all.

So we read in verse seven of the righteous basis of Israel's forgiveness. And it shall awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man who is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts, smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. Now it's evident that this is the text from which our Lord cited when he said, All shall be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, but after that I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

So the righteous basis of Israel's cleansing is the death of the shepherd. The shepherd must die. Now notice, it is the Lord of hosts who calls upon the sword to smite the shepherd.

Who is really active in the death of Jesus Christ? Well of course our Lord is active, for he voluntarily gave himself up. And of course the world is active, for wicked men took him and nailed him to the cross at Calvary. And of course Satan was active, for Jesus said, This is your hour and the power of darkness.

And it is evident that Satan was active in the death of our Lord. But the supreme actor in the death of Jesus Christ is the Father. It is he, the Lord of hosts, who says to the sword, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man who is my fellow.

It hath pleased the Lord to bruise him. The psalmist says in the typical 22nd Psalm, Thou hast brought me into the dust of death. And so again here, it is the Lord of hosts who says, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow.

Notice that he is called my fellow, for this particular term is a term that suggests the equality of the fellow or the shepherd with the Lord of hosts. Now in a moment we'll say something about that, but I want simply to say this at this point. It is evident that we have here a direct messianic fulfillment of Zechariah chapter 13 and verse 7 in our Lord's words in Mark chapter 14.

Furthermore, it is evident from this that Jesus Christ sees himself as the suffering shepherd. And yet at the same time, in the same prophecy of the book of Zechariah, back in the first burden of the last section of the book, we read in chapter 9, verse 9, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Behold, thy king cometh unto me. He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. So here in the same prophetic book, in the last two burdens of the book, in one burden we have the king pictured as one who comes upon the foal of an ass, and then in the next burden we have him as the shepherd.

So it is evident that he is the suffering shepherd, and yet at the same time he is a king. But he is a lowly king, for we read he is lowly and sitting upon a colt, upon the foal of an ass. So he is a lowly king, a shepherd of the flock of Israel, who shall be smitten by the will of God, and who shall, by his piercing, be the cause of the repentance and salvation of his people at the second advent.

Now I said something that I have not said before, and if you were listening, you would have noticed that I said it, and frankly it just occurred to me that I hadn't said anything about it. I said that he would be the cause of the repentance that would come to Israel. Well in chapter 12, verse 10, we read, and I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for

his only son.

So it is the Lord of hosts, it is Jehovah, it is the Lord Jesus himself, who pours upon the house of David, the spirit of grace and supplications, so that then they see the one whom they have pierced. And so the whole work of salvation from beginning to end is the work of God the Son, or the work of Jehovah, the Lord of hosts. So it is he who smites the shepherd.

It is he who moves upon the heart of Israel by the spirit of grace and supplications, so that they repent, and it is he who opens up the fountain for sin and for uncleanness. That's why in the Bible we say the work of salvation is the work of God from beginning to end. Do you believe that? Well if you know the condition of your heart, you would have to believe it, because he could not possibly save you otherwise.

If it depended even upon your free will, you couldn't be saved, because your will is in bondage to sin. That's why the Bible says, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Now that's when you ought to get the joy.

That's like a long touchdown pass, squared, to realize what God has done through Jesus Christ. Now then there is one other thing I mentioned, and I want to bring it out in a little more detail. We said the shepherd is a man.

Now we read in chapter 13 verse 7, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts. Now how can a man be the fellow of the Lord of hosts? Well now the Hebrew word for fellow is the word amith. That is a very interesting word.

If you were to look at it in the Bible, you would discover it occurs, oh my recollection is, about 15 to 18 times. I don't think I have in my notes exactly how many times that I take it back. I do have, and I was exaggerating, as you might expect an evangelist to do.

Eleven times it occurs in Leviticus, and one other time, 12 times it occurs in the Old Testament. Now the interesting thing about this little word amith is that if you look up all of the references in the book of Leviticus, you will discover that amith implies kinship. It is a word that is used of in Leviticus to refer to fellow Israelites.

If you want to check it, I'll give you a few references. But you can look up chapter 5 verse 21 of the book of Leviticus. It occurs twice in that verse.

In chapter 18 and verse 20 and other places. Now if this is true, then what we find here is that the prophet speaks of someone who is the kinsman of Yahweh, his fellow countryman. Now there is only one other person who is Yahweh's fellow countryman.

Two other people, two other persons we could say, the persons of the Trinity. And when the Lord Jesus said, I have come from the Father and I go to the Father, he was coming from the country of the Father and he was then going back to the country of the Father. He is Yahweh's fellow kinsman.

It is a verse, it is a text, it is a word that implies the equality of the shepherd with the one who speaks to the sword to smite the shepherd. Now from what we know in Scripture, we know of course that this is a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ. And this amazing statement, the man who is my fellow, is just his way of saying that the shepherd is a man, but at the same time he is also God.

He is the God man, our Lord Jesus Christ. So in the verse then, we have the death of the shepherd, we have the deity of the shepherd, and we have the dispersion of the sheep prophesied. For he says, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones, and that may express not only the dispersion of the sheep, but also God's care in the restoration of them.

Well, the sequel is in verse 28 of Mark chapter 14. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. For while the apostles were scattered as a result of the death of Jesus Christ, some of them like wounded animals went into hiding.

They finally were gathered in Galilee as Matthew chapter 28 sets forth. Now, this is the first time I've looked at the clock. It's already quarter past eight.

We must turn to the third point, the prophecy of Peter's denial. Here beginneth the lecture to the apostle Peter. The protest of Peter in verse 29.

But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. Now if there is ever a lesson in exaggerated self-confidence, this is it. This afternoon, Dr. Howard and I went to a very learned lecture on money. Now he went because he has money, and I went because I would like to have money.

But anyway, we were in that learned lecture, and I made a few notes. In fact, I made three columns of notes. And if you'd like for me to deliver your lecture on money sometime, I have the material here for a very learned lecture.

It just wouldn't be my own. I would be like the preacher who one morning got up and began to preach, and when he pronounced the benediction, he said, someone said, why did you do that? He said, well it was all a quotation from beginning to end. But now I noticed one statement this afternoon in the lecturer that I put down in my notes, among others.

He said that Disraeli once said, confidence is suspicion asleep. Confidence is suspicion asleep. Now of course he was talking about money, and he was talking about the men who manage money, and he was simply saying that if you are confident of your government or the monetary policies, well then it is nothing more than suspicion that has fallen asleep.

I guess the lesson was, at least I got it, that you better stay awake and be suspicious. Well now, Peter's trouble was really a lot of that, because he forgot the nature of the human heart. And he was filled with self-confidence because his suspicion of his own human nature fell asleep.

Now that means, my Christian friends, that you should always remember that you are a fallible man. And consequently, Peter's fall is the kind of fall that you are capable of at any moment. At the very moment that you think that you are not going to fall, that's the moment for which you better beware.

Now I don't have time to look at all of the texts that Peter expresses his self-confidence in, but we have them in passages like Matthew chapter 26 and verse 33, where Peter answers and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I, this by the way is emphatic in the Greek text, yet will I never be offended. John may be offended, and James may be offended, and the rest of these guys may be offended, but not I, Simon Peter, I will not be offended in thee. And then Luke chapter 22 and verse 33, if I can find that text in a hurry, Peter again speaks of his self-confidence here.

And he said unto him, after Peter had said, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, Simon, he said, Lord I'm ready to go with thee both into prison and to death. And then in Mark chapter 14 and verse 31, we have the text here, John chapter 13 verse 37 and other places, it is evident that there is no place in Peter's mind for let him that standeth take heed lest he fall. W.T.P. Wollstone once said, The day a saint falls is the day that he ceases to fear to fall.

And I like to pray, I would like to pray, and I would like to have this prayer answered once and for all by God forever, but that's impossible. I would like to pray, O God, never let me cease to fear falling out of fellowship with thee. I think Chrysostom, the great fourth century preacher's remarks concerning Peter's denial are the most telling of all.

He simply says, What sayest thou, O Peter? Though all shall be offended, I shall never be offended. And so our Lord engages in a little prediction, it was evident, I don't think it took a great deal of divine foresight to make this prediction, except the details of it. It's evident when a man starts boasting and how faithful and godly he is, that he's heading for a fall.

And when you ever see, when you see Christians who say, I'm sold out to God 100%, look out, they are ready for a fall. They really are ready for a fall. And when a man says, I surrender all to God, and believes those words, he's ready for a fall.

You can be sure of that, because he'll just, the Holy Spirit, I don't know whether the Holy Spirit has this kind of sense of humor, but I just think that right at that point is when the Holy Spirit might well say, well, that brother needs a little lesson, and it's going to come real soon. Well, I know you don't think I, that that's true. Maybe it's not.

We'll get to heaven, you'll say, Dr. Johnson, that was not true. Well, it seems that way. Now, let's notice our Lord's prediction.

That ye may eat, yeah, I'm in the wrong chapter. I was so, I was so entranced by my idea that came to me that I'm in the wrong book. Chapter 14 and verse 30, And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, This day, even in this night, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Now, as you well know, in some of the other gospel accounts, in the Matthean account, for example, it, Jesus simply said, before the cock crows, thou shalt deny me thrice. But Mark adds a little extra. He says, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Now, the liberals have indulged in some crowing over this cock crowing, and more than once or twice, too, because they have said that the Bible is wrong, because you see, one of the texts says that before Peter, before the cock crows once, he shall deny him thrice. The other one says, before he, the cock crows twice, the Lord shall be denied thrice. Now, you always have to be suspicious of liberal theologians.

Their self-confidence reminds me of what Disraeli was speaking about, because they go through the Bible trying to find little mistakes like this, and never bother frequently to read the Bible for its essential message. Now, if you've done a little bit of study, you would have known, just as in modern times, in ancient times, chickens are noted for crowing more than once during the night. In fact, they have little patterns.

And in Latin, the expression for the second cock crowing was *secundum gallicanum*. It was a well-known fact that they crowed sleepily around midnight, and then they crowed in the morning when they really did

their thing. Now, if you know anything about chicken, I know very little, but I know this to be true, that that is the fact.

Now, let me illustrate. Pliny, by the way, calls the fourth watch of the night, which is from three to six in the morning, that *secundum gallicanum*. It's the time of the second cock crowing.

And Pliny was not on the roll of any assembly, so far as I know. He was an unbeliever, rank unbeliever, even though he had heard something about these Christians. So, he was not trying to justify the accuracy of the Word of God.

Let me illustrate what is meant by this. You see, it is the second cock crowing that is the important cock crowing. And if anyone had said, when's the cock crowing, the cock crowing, you would think about that last time, when they really did their thing, as I said.

But it really would be the second time. Now, at Dallas Seminary, in the old days, we used to begin our classes on the hour, and we would close at ten minutes to the hour. And so, when the class closed at the forty-five minute, we would have a bell, and then we would have a final bell at the fifty minutes.

For example, if it were eight o'clock in the morning that the classes, or nine o'clock, let's say, nine o'clock to nine forty-five, the first bell would sound, and then the last bell would sound at nine fifty. Now, of course, we would say, when the bell sounded, we all would think of the second bell, because that was the end of the class, or turning it around. We used to have a bell that sounded three minutes before the next class began, and then the bell for the beginning of the class would be on the hour.

And if anyone asked, well now, has the bell rung yet, you would think of the bell which initiated the class, not the three minutes till, but it was still the second sounding of the bell. So likewise in the cock crowing. Now, I've made a lot over this, and I've crowed a little bit over the liberals, but in this case, I think they are dead wrong, and the Bible, by preserving both of these traditions, has again confirmed the fact that there is no attempt on the part of the biblical writers to put, to make everything harmonious.

That is one of the reasons I'm inclined to believe the accuracy of the scriptural records. If all of these apparent inconsistencies were eliminated, I might say, yes, some guys got together on the quietus, and they have given us a record of our Lord's ministry in a threefold way, but they planned it all out so there wouldn't be any possible contradiction between them. Now then, they all pretend to loyalty, and of course, as we shall see in just a moment, Peter denies the Lord.

Now, let me come to the conclusion. First, Peter did fail, and Peter not overly failed, but he failed with curses. I can hear him.

I know not the man of whom you speak, and then he uttered one of his expletives, for that is precisely what we read in verse 71, but he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom you speak. Satan had prayed that he might sift Peter as wheat, that Satan had said that he was going to sift Peter as wheat. He has desired him, but Jesus has prayed that Peter's faith fail not, and Satan's sifting took everything out of Peter but his faith, and that one thing was the thing that Satan could not take from him, because you know, after Peter had denied the Lord Jesus, what did he do? Well, he went out and wept bitterly.

Now, that is the weeping of a faithful man. That is the weeping of a man who, in the midst of his failure, has still trust in Jesus Christ. I think that's why Peter is given us as an illustration in the Bible, for he

illustrates the depths to which a man may fall, but the further depths to which the grace of God holds a man who has truly believed in him.

Now, this is the same Peter who said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, and our Lord said, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven, and in a few hours, this same man is with curses, saying, I don't know the man, but it is the marvelous grace of a high priest who prays, that saves, keeps Peter in the condition of a saved man in the family of God. Now, there are some tremendous truths that are revealed in this, I don't have time to do anything more than state them. First, this is under the second point, the revelation of truth and the conclusion, the power and the powerlessness of Satan.

He often takes us at our strong points. Peter was courageous, but he became a coward. Moses, Moses was meek, but he lost his temper.

Abraham was faithful, it is characterized by some outstanding illustrations of faithlessness. Elijah, he's the great bold prophet, but it's he who runs at the word of a woman. John, he's the loving apostle, but he's the violent Boanerges, a son of thunder.

And so just when you think that you are strong, you not only fall, but it is often in the very area in which you think you have strength, that you are tested and shown to be nothing but feeble, frail man. And, of course, we see the willingness and yet the weakness of man. There are steps in Peter's downfall that you can trace.

He disregarded the first warning. He was sleeping instead of watching in the garden. He was fighting when he should have been quiet, pulled out his sword when he should have said nothing.

He followed afar off, we read in verse 54, when he ought to have been near. He disregarded the second warning that was given him, and finally he's sitting with the enemies of Christ. As the Scottish woman said, he had nay business there among the flunkies.

And when the saints of God mingle with those who are not the saints and spend their time warming themselves around the fires of this world, you can be sure it's not going to be long before they are going to fall. And finally, as I said a moment ago, the power of the prayers of Jesus Christ. Peter, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.

And Peter eventually was restored. He was restored in love, and he was restored both privately and publicly. Our Lord appeared to Peter, individually, in the resurrection.

And publicly he was told to feed my sheep. And Peter also was told, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. What are the things that Peter would say to you and me, for we are his brethren? Well, he's recorded them in the word of God.

He says, be sober. Be vigilant, chip, for your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. That's strengthening the brethren.

And then also for all of you and for me, wherefore the rather brethren, take heed to make your calling and election sure. That's the human side of election. Take heed to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you shall never fall.

May God help us to do that. Let's bow in prayer. Father, we are grateful to thee for thy word.

And O God, help us to remember that we are never at the place that we are not in danger of falling and embarrassing thee, embarrassing thy word, giving a poor testimony to Jesus Christ, dishonoring thy name. Deliver us, O God, from falling, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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