

Unfinished Business
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Good Morning! I know, I know, you are wondering. You are going to have to wait. You can turn in your Bibles to John 21.

As you can see, I requested that we leave up the empty tomb scene that is behind me because what I find in the Christian community is that there is all this excitement and anticipation for Easter weekend where we celebrate the Risen Lord who is alive within us, but then when Easter passes, that very next week, and we just go about our regular business.

And there are a few lessons that I want to tease out from Scripture, a few events that took place during Easter weekend that Jesus circles back on the week after. And a few events that take place within that first week that are important for us, things that we learn as we study the Word and understand about what that experience would have been like for the disciples.

If you remember, during the Last Supper that Jesus has with His apostles, He indicates to them that the Shepherd will be struck and the sheep will be scattered, that each of them in their own time and in their own way, would fall away at the moment that Jesus needed the most.

And if you recall, there is one disciple in particular – Peter – who is adamant with Jesus that he would never fall away, that even if all others fell away, he would go the distance.

And as we know, when he was in the courtyard of the high priest, three times he disowned Jesus. Three times he denied that he even knew Him. And all of his confidence just collapsed and he went outside and he wept bitterly, we are told in Scripture.

And so I often wonder, after the excitement of the resurrection where they see Jesus is alive, what was it like for the disciples that first week after the resurrection?

See, when we celebrate Easter, we also remember the Passover Feast because that's when the Last Supper took place. We remember that Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been slain, and because of His blood we are released from our captivity, forgiven of our sins because of His blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

But there is a feast in the Jewish calendar that runs in conjunction with the Passover. It is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It begins on the day that they sacrificed the Passover lamb and it runs for a week after.

And in Deuteronomy Chapter 16:3 we read this about the unleavened bread:

“Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction because you left Egypt in haste – so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt.”

So for seven days, during that first week after resurrection, the disciples would have been eating unleavened bread. They would have removed all the yeast or leaven from their homes like every other Israelite would have done.

And for the Israelites, it was symbolic of removing the death and decay – that’s what yeast was symbolic of, this sin - removing the impurities out of their lives.

And so as the disciples are sitting there that week breaking the unleavened bread and eating it, I wonder to myself, did they ever sit there and think about the leaven that was in their life?

Did they ever ponder that look in Jesus’ eye when they were running the other way as He was getting arrested? Did they carry any residual guilt or shame about their actions during that Easter weekend?

And as they ate the unleavened bread, bread that was symbolic of being pure, of having no sin in it, did they come to the realization that they were partaking of the bread of Christ, that He actually was the unleavened bread?

Did it start to dawn on them that Christ, who had no sin, whose body was given, broken for us, was what they were eating?

It is called the bread of affliction. So as they were eating it, did they remember that they were partaking of Christ and His affliction?

And what was it like for them that first week? And in particular, what I want to focus on is what was it like for Peter because he such an epic failure and an epic collapse of his confidence on the night that Jesus was arrested.

And it begs us to ask the question: how do we get up after an epic fail? How do we get back in the game, so to speak? How does Jesus treat us when we encounter Him and deal with the parts of our lives when we have done so horribly?

And so in John 21, Jesus has appeared twice to His disciples already. They know He is alive. They know that the grave couldn’t hold Him. They are celebrating.

But He has sent them up to Galilee, where His home base of ministry was, where their greatest experience of Him was. And they were at the Sea of Galilee (I’m just setting the scene for you) and they decide to go out fishing.

And like all the other times in the Gospels when you see them fishing, they don’t catch anything. They mustn’t have been very good fishermen because whenever you read of them, they are not catching fish.

But Jesus appears on the shore and He says, “Cast your net on the other side of the boat,” and they do so. And all of a sudden it is filled with fish, so much so that the boat is sinking.

And someone says, “It is the Lord.”

Now the boat is about 100 yards from the shore and Peter, when he hears that it is the Lord, puts on his outer garment (for he had taken it off to work) and dives into the water to swim to Jesus.

And when he arrives on the shore, Jesus has already cooked breakfast for His disciples. He has prepared a meal for them. And he engages Peter in a discussion that inevitably brings him back to an event that took place on the night that Jesus was betrayed.

And Jesus lovingly, gently, presses some lessons into Peter to ensure that he has learned a truth about Himself.

And so sometimes the lowest moments in our lives are the very moments that are an open invitation for God to work.

In John 21:15 we read this:

“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?’

“‘Yes, Lord,’ he said, ‘you know that I love you.’

“Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’

“Again Jesus said, ‘Simon son of John, do you truly love me?’

“He answered, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’

“Jesus said, ‘Take care of my sheep.’

“The third time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’

“Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ He said, ‘Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep.’

“‘I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead where you do not want to go.’

“Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, ‘Follow me!’”

What I want to look at this morning, in conjunction with the events of when Peter denied that he knew Christ three times, I want to look at the problem of pride, the pitfalls of our penance, and the painful realization.

You will remember, as I already indicated, that on the night Jesus was betrayed, He foretold His disciples, “You will all fall away on account of Me.”

And Peter, more so than any others, is being asked to revisit that moment with Jesus right now.

Now why is Peter getting special treatment? All the others abandoned Jesus at His greatest time of need. All the others scattered just like Peter did.

So why is Jesus revisiting this situation with Peter and not with John or others who are there? Why is he getting special treatment?

Well you have to remember, if you read your Bible, when Jesus predicted that all the apostles would fall away, Peter was the most vocal one that said, “Lord, even if all others fall away, I mean Lord, I can understand that James and John are going to fall away; they are marginal at best. Lord, I can understand that Philip and Bartholomew – I mean who has even heard of them - they will fall away. But I will never fall away.”

And Jesus looks at Peter who is so adamant that he won't fall away and Jesus says to Peter, “Peter, this very night you will disown Me three times before the rooster crows.”

And we are told in Mark's Gospel that when Jesus said this to him, that Peter insisted emphatically that Jesus was wrong. I mean he had the audacity, the confidence was oozing out of him, that even Jesus, who was saying this is going to happen, had it wrong.

How did Peter get to that place where he was so confident in his abilities to be a Christ follower? Could it be that subtly pride started to creep into Peter's life and created a blindness to him that even when Jesus was pointing it out, Peter couldn't see it?

See, when we read Scripture, we recognize that out of a group of about 120 disciples, Peter was appointed by Jesus with eleven others as an apostle. So Jesus had started to institute a leadership structure, a governance, to His church, and Peter was appointed to a prominent position. He was an apostle.

Not only was he an apostle, but there were three apostles – Peter, James and John – who oftentimes were brought by Jesus into experiences that the other apostles wouldn't get to experience. So he was also one of the big three.

And Peter started to see Jesus do some things, to have experiences of Him, like on the Mount of Transfiguration, where he is seeing Moses and Elijah, and maybe he starts thinking to himself, “Well, I'm not just a disciple, not just an apostle; I'm getting to see some pretty awesome things here.”

When Jesus said, “Who do people say that I am? Who do you say that I am?” Peter was the one who said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Good answer Peter, right answer.

And maybe just subtly somewhere that kind of puffed him up and went, “Man, I am tracking well! Lord, even if all others fall away, You know and I know that You are the Christ the Son of the Living God and I’m in this to the end.”

And maybe Peter was overly confident in his ability. And the danger is that sometimes when God puts us in positions of responsibility we start to think to ourselves that we might be just a little bit more important or better than other parts of the body.

And pride starts to find a foothold in our lives and we begin to compare ourselves with others and take our gaze off of Christ. And it leads us down a destructive path.

And the moment we begin to compare ourselves with others is the moment we are slipping into the pride that must have slipped into Peter’s experience. And Peter had made some pretty fantastic claims and Jesus, through this series of questions, brings him back to that moment.

And Jesus first asked him, “Peter, do you truly love Me more than these?”

What do you think the “more than these” are? Is He saying, “Peter, do you love Me more than the fishing and the nets and that job that you have gone back to? Do you love Me more than your career? Do you love Me more than these?”

Was He talking to Peter about being a really good fisherman? Maybe Peter thought, “Jesus is done with me. I have failed so miserably and Jesus said, ‘He who puts his hand to the plough and turns back isn’t fit for service in the kingdom.’”

Maybe Peter was thinking to himself, “I’m just going to be a lifelong fisherman. I tried that whole ministry thing but clearly I failed so badly and even when Jesus told me I was going to fail, I just kept telling Him I had it handled.”

And maybe Peter thinks, “My life is just going to be about fishing fish and not fishing people.”

Is that what Jesus meant when He said, “More than these?”

Or as He is sitting and having breakfast with the disciples and the others are around the fire, did Jesus draw his attention to, “Peter, do you truly love Me more than these, the others sitting around the fire? Remember how you bragged so deeply that you go the distance, that even if all others fell away, you never would. Do you love Me more than these?”

Peter looks at Jesus and says, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.”

Notice that Peter doesn’t say, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You more than Nathanael. Nobody’s even heard of him. He is not an apostle.”

Or he doesn't go, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You more than Judas Iscariot. He is the one who handed You over."

Peter no longer compares His love to others. Peter's sense of pride over others has been broken because of his epic fail. And as Peter displays humility, Jesus bestows on him responsibility when He says to him, "Feed My lambs. Peter, I've got work for you to do."

Isn't that marvelous that even in our point where Jesus is disciplining us because of our failure, maybe confronting a blind spot in our lives and reminding us that our need of Him, that He entrusts a responsibility to Peter. "Feed My lambs; care for My young ones."

Verse 16:

"Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?'"

And Peter answers.

"He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.'

"Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'"

Notice the difference in the question Jesus asks him. He drops the "more than these"; He just says, "Do you truly love me?"

And Peter again doesn't compare his love to others; he simply says, "Yes, Lord, You know that I love You."

Now there are two pits that we fall into as believers when we experience epic fails in our lives.

The first pit that we can fall into is the pitfall of duty and overcompensation to double down in our efforts to do better next time.

We experience a failure in our lives and we think to ourselves, "Because I failed I have a lot to make up for."

And it throws us into duty mode. We are ruthless in our discipline and often become judgemental of others who aren't as disciplined as we are. And we become spiritually stiff and rigid.

In its fullest form it becomes perfectionist driven. It's all about rituals and routines so that we don't ever fail again. And it can never do enough. It always feels like there is more to do.

And Jesus warned His disciples about this pitfall when He said, "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees." Because when we experience an epic fail, the tendency might be to throw ourselves into more effort and to double down in our discipline; Jesus said, "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees."

What did Jesus mean by that other than that there was a lot of hypocrisy in the lives of the Pharisees? They advocated a certain life but in their own personal lives were full of all kinds of hypocrisy.

But this sense of duty that even we as believers can enter into. If you grew up in Jesus' day you needed to know the Old Testament books of the law because you were a covenant people. But rabbis, over the years and over the generations, had interpreted that law and so there was an oral law that also existed in Jesus' day.

After the time of the writing of the New Testament, all those rabbinical teachings on the Old Testament laws were gathered together and they are what is known today as the Talmud, the oral interpretations of the written laws of God.

So what does it mean to not break the Sabbath? A bunch of teachers had started to articulate what it meant to work on the Sabbath. So there were all kinds of rules that existed in your life that would determine your sense of duty and your sense of purity tied to your observation of these laws.

Now the Talmud consists of 63 different articles and in standard print is over 6200 pages long. Hence, the binders.

Now let's just say one of these binders can hold 500 sheets of paper, because generally they can hold a full set of paper from a Staples box - 500 sheets of paper. You would need 12 binders to contain the Talmud.

So if you wanted to enter into the covenant community and be really dutiful, and be really obedient and really know your stuff, the membership classes are robust. Twelve binders full of all the details and explanations of what it meant to be obedient to the law and to be a covenant people.

Now out of curiosity, when I started to think about 12 binders full of all these rules, I emailed one of our staff and I said, "How long is the manual to become a member at the Peoples Church?"

You will be happy to know that you do not need to know 12 binders, 6000 pages of content. It is 43 pages long. It sounds a bit thin, doesn't it? I mean 1200 pages of written rules and ours is 43 pages to become a member at the Peoples Church. I might have to look into that and bolster it up a bit, be a bit more dutiful.

But my point is this: one of the pitfalls that we fall into even as believers, when we experience an epic fail in our lives is we get into this sense of duty and we try and double down in our efforts to never do that thing again.

And the danger is that we can start to create our own Christian Talmud, our own interpretation of what it means to be a good Christ follower, and start to create all kinds of rigid disciplines and rules that take us away from the joyful experience of being a Christ follower.

It takes us away from the joyful heart of Christ and knowing Him intimately and allowing Him to do what He wants in our lives because we are so caught up with our sense of duty.

And it looks like this. Have you ever prayed this prayer after an epic fail in your life, that sin that plagues you and you commit it? Have you ever said this? “I will never do that again,” in your prayers? Put up your hand if you have said that prayer.

Have you ever prayed, (no, keep your hands up); have you ever prayed, “I will never do that again”?

See, some of you are sinning right now by not putting your hands up.

We have all had that moment of despair where we go, “Lord, it happened again. I will never do that again. I promise I will double down on this. I will remove all these things out of my life so that never happens to me again.”

And then we have that great first week, you know, like we are going strong, we’re loving the Lord, everything is going good.

And then all of a sudden, you know, by week 2, by week 3, we might even really still be doing better, but then by week 4, oh! Blindsided! And all of a sudden we are undone again.

See, when we get caught up in duty, we can start to create a Talmud experience that becomes stiff and rigid, and knows nothing of the joyful heart of Christ.

I am not advocating that we don’t have discipline in our lives. I am not advocating that it is not important for us to cultivate a relationship with Christ and meet with Him. But we cannot convert it into a legalistic approach. And it’s a pitfall that we can all fall into.

The second pit a believer can fall into is depression. After that epic fail where we failed Christianity 101 and blew it big time, we spend too much time in self-inspection which results in shame.

We have an unhealthy way of re-living that failure over and over and over again. All we can see is the mistakes we have made and our inner critic delights to tell us how messed up we are. And the deeper our trust is in our own abilities, the deeper our confidence is in our own strength to handle things, the deeper that valley of shame becomes. And we beat ourselves up and we look down on ourselves and it sounds like, oh, we are all broken. We are all just messed up. Woe is me.

You know we clothe it with spiritual language to sound very, you know, Christian. “I’m just a mess, but we’re all just messes.”

And it never moves beyond focusing on itself, and the shame becomes all-consuming.

Charles mentioned last week a statistic that caught my attention. He mentioned that patients who meet with their counselors, that Newsweek reported in a psychiatric journal that 95% of patients struggle with forgiveness, that they are caught up literally under a wet blanket of shame and can't seem to forgive or receive forgiveness for what has happened.

And so instead of throwing ourselves into a sense of duty, we can just focus on ourselves and enter into this depressed state as a Christian, as a believer.

If you are here this morning and even since Resurrection Sunday where we celebrated all that Christ is and has done for us and is alive in us now; if you blew it big time this week – I mean blew it and had a bad week – you don't need to throw yourself into more duty and try and double down and do better. You don't need to walk around wallowing in your shame and just weeping bitterly all the time.

If you are in that place today, please know that is not Jesus' plan for you. Our forgiveness before a Holy God is not secured by our sense of religious duty and it is not granted on the basis of our repentant and groveling and weeping bitterly.

Our forgiveness before God is secured by the blood of Christ and the finished work of Christ on the cross. Amen?

But so often in my own life and in the lives of other Christians I meet, it is easy for us to slip into these modes, it is so subtle at its beginning that takes us down a path where our eyes aren't on Christ; they are on ourselves. And it is taking the form of religious duty or depression.

And we forget that He is standing there saying, "You don't have to beat yourself. You don't have to try and do it on your own. I am right here."

As the disciples at the bread of affliction, they are eating the bread of His affliction. He did it for them.

You know it's telling to me that when Peter was told that it's Jesus on the shore and he dives in to go see Jesus that he didn't hide behind James and Nathanael and not make eye contact because he was ashamed of his actions on the night that Jesus needed him the most.

You know, you or I; we might have just stood there and like, you know when you don't want to stare at the person because you really let them down? It's like when I'm disciplining my kids – just give me your eyes, give me your eyes, right?

But we're like that with God. He wants to talk to us about an epic fail that we had in our lives and because we are caught in this trap of duty, we don't even want to stare at Him. We're just busy, busy, busy trying to make it up to Him. Or we are so covered with shame we just can't even look at Him.

What path is Jesus leading Peter down? He doesn't tell him to double down his efforts, do better, Peter.

He doesn't say, "See, I told you, you were going to fall. I told you, you were going to disown Me." He doesn't say, "Wow, you really blew it, Peter."

He just calls him out, not to shame him, not to drive him, but to restore him.

What is truly remarkable throughout this process is that as Jesus presses into Peter's life and presses in for him to re-visit the pain of what took place during his darkest moment; as Peter just answers His question and says, "You know that I love You," Jesus bestows more responsibility on Peter because He says, "Take care of My sheep, shepherd My people."

As Peter expresses more and more humility, he is given more responsibility. And as Peter assumes these greater responsibilities, he will enter into them with a confidence not in himself, not in his abilities, but a confidence that is rooted in Christ because he has learned his lesson about himself, hasn't he?

Peter is not so excited about his own abilities, is he?

And in Verse 17 Peter comes to a painful realization. We read this:

"The third time Jesus said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?'"

"Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?'"

Jesus is so gentle, so loving, so pure, but He doesn't let go. His mercy draws out the past of Peter so that He can address it and heal it.

Has Jesus ever asked you a question that hurt you? Has He ever looked at you and asked you something that left a bit of a wound to you?

Why was Peter hurt? Was Peter hurt because Jesus asked the third time? Or was it the way in which Jesus asked the question that left a little bit of a wound in Peter?

Let me explain.

There is a subtle change in Jesus' question this time. In the NIV translation you will notice that the first two times Jesus addresses Peter, He says,

"Do you truly love me more than these?"

That's the first question; second question is:

"Do you truly love me?"

And then by the third time He asks Peter, He just says,

“Do you love me?”

He drops the truly. There is something important in that distinction. In the Greek there were three words that they used for love. The first was *eros*. It is a sensual love; it is where we get the word erotic from. And it is a sensual love with self at the center of it.

Our culture that we live in today has no shortage of *eros* love expression, does it? I mean you turn on the TV, or if you peruse the internet, you see *eros* expressed love everywhere. And it's not just between people. Even with food there can be this *eros* love relationship. It is a lust-based relationship where it is my benefit that I am interested in. And so it becomes a consumer of people or things to satisfy itself.

So the first Greek word that we have for love is *eros*.

The second Greek word we have for love is *phileo*. It is a brotherly love that involves giving and receiving, but when strained, can collapse in a crisis.

I lived in the city of Philadelphia, literally the city of brotherly love. I lived in the number one homicide district in the city of Philadelphia. And I have to say this about Philly: it is a city of brotherly love. You walk down the streets and people say, “How y'all doing today?” Like everybody and their brother says Hello to you in Philadelphia.

Have you ever tried that in downtown Toronto? Have you ever walked down the streets smiling, fully looking to engage someone and say, “How are you doing today?” The response you get is like... I don't know if it's because it is bitterly cold half the time and you are just like your way to the TTC or whatever, but we live in a cold city. It is not a warm brotherly love city.

Or maybe that's just my experience. Granted, I have a shaved head; I might look like creeper alert or something, you know, stranger danger – just walk faster – because you know, you just give that smile and just, “How are you today?”

And so as I lived in Philadelphia, yes, it is the city of brotherly love, but I can testify that *phileo* love has its limits because when it turns south, when it is under great strain and collapses, you run in the city of brotherly love. You run off that basketball court.

And so there is this love that they use, this Greek word *phileo* that under pressure would break.

But then there was a third Greek word, *agape*, used very little in extra-biblical writing – some believe it was invented for the purposes of writing Scripture, to describe a love that keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable and unworthy.

It is an unconditional love, a love that would describe God's perfect, always trusting, always pursuing, never giving up, love.

So you think of the distinction of those three words. When we go through our normal weekly routines and I walk into the office and there is a box of donuts there and I go, “Oh, I love

donuts!” Am I saying I *agape* donuts? Even when they are unkind to me? Even when my stomach gets upset because I have had too much sugar?

No I’m not saying that. I love donuts. I love Indian butter chicken. I love snowboarding. I love skate boarding. I love playing hockey. I love my wife. Is it all just the same? Do I use the same term and the same emphasis to my love of those things? No.

So when Peter has asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” like I said in the NIV translation, He says, “Do you truly love Me more than these? Do you truly love Me? Do you love Me?” what Jesus is actually saying and what is recorded in the Greek here is a big distinction because in the first question Jesus says, “Do you *agape* Me more than these?”

And Peter’s reply is, “Yes, Lord, You know that I *phileo* You.”

Jesus’ second question: “Do you *agape* Me?”

And Peter’s reply is, “Yes, Lord, You know that I *phileo* You.”

But the third time Jesus asks Peter this question, that actually hurt Peter, Jesus looks at him and He says, “Do you *phileo* Me? Do you even like Me?”

And Peter is hurt because He asked him the third time, “Do you *phileo* Me?”

The painful realization for Peter is that maybe he is not as capable as he thought he was about loving Christ perfectly. Maybe his trust in his own abilities and his efforts, whether it is dutiful and follows all 6200 pages religiously; we still fall short. Perfection isn’t something that is offered to us in and of our own efforts.

But God’s love is perfect, isn’t it? It always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres, never fails. And the whole week Peter has had to eat unleavened bread, the bread of Christ’s affliction, reminding himself that his spotless Lamb was slain for him.

The good news of the Gospel is that His love is unconditional even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, unworthy, which we all are.

Peter realizes that he is a sinner and all of his confidence in his own abilities, in a healthy way has been removed. And he acknowledges that apart from Christ, he can do a whole lot of nothing.

But the good news is that with Christ, or as Paul writes, “In Christ, I can do all things.” And so Jesus lovingly brings him back to that evening that he wanted to forget probably for the rest of his life and redeems it, and has Peter reaffirm his love.

What is so remarkable about the Christian life is that Jesus is not expecting us to somehow produce fruit on our own. He knows that we cannot do it. We are the ones who somehow think that we can, and that’s when we encounter epic fails.

And so He allows us to experience these failures so that we will become disillusioned and then He can press in on those areas where we are depending on our resources, and remove them. It enables us to grasp that our obedience to Him is based on our dependence upon Him - something we have heard many times.

And when you look at Peter in many of the passages in the rest of the New Testament, you notice that Peter didn't necessarily lose his confidence, but he put his confidence in its proper place – in Christ.

Maybe you are here this morning and you have blown it big time this week. Is there an area in your life that you are trying to keep Christ out of? A conversation that He wants to have with you, an area of unfinished business, but that you have been putting the deflectors on, either because you are so ashamed and you think He just wants to rub your face in it, or because you are dutiful and you are trying to double down and do better next time.

And all the while He is standing there and saying, “I want to talk to you about this. Do you love Me more than these, more than that thing I want to talk to you about?”

We need to have a conversation but we are busying ourselves, distracted.

Would we allow Him to just talk to us about that thing? As you can see with Peter, He doesn't rub Peter's face in his mistake. He doesn't scold him. He doesn't drive him. He draws him out so that He can restore him.

And does Peter get it right all the time afterwards? Not at all. By the end of the chapter he is comparing himself to John again. But he has his eyes fixed on Jesus.

And when we do that, doesn't the rest of life just kind of - not get easy, but our ability to walk in it becomes stronger.

Let's pray.

Father, I just thank You for this passage where we get to see You circle back with Peter and deal with him so gently about something that he was certainly embarrassed or ashamed of. Lord, I thank You that when we blow it big time, You don't come to us to rub our face in it, but You also don't just leave it unaddressed; You want us to meet with you and talk with you about it.

Grant us that courage this week. If there is an area of unfinished business in our lives, a conversation that You have been wanting to have with us, may we not run and hide from it, but may we run to You and allow You to press in and show us the areas of our lives where we are still depending on our own abilities, whether it is being too driven or too depressed.

Lord, I thank You that perfection isn't something that You require of us because You have already made us perfect in the sight of a Holy God by Your perfect life imparted to us. Thank You for that gift.

And I pray that as we go through our week ahead that our eyes would be fixed on You and that we would allow You to move in our lives in any way You see fit.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

God bless you, Church.