

Matthew Chapter 26... we will be finishing this Chapter today. Just a heads up that we intentionally skipped a passage a couple Sunday's ago so we could come back to it today... since we will be looking at **Peter's Great Fall**.

The Title of the sermon is: **Falling Into Sin One Step at a Time**

Let's pray...

But, before we get into our text this morning...

As we have been in **Matthew 26** the Holy Spirit has shown me that there is a progression of **"warnings"** among the people surrounding Jesus leading up to **Peter's Great Fall**. I would say there has been a prophetic progression (or, theme) of **"warning's"** in 4 of the last 5 sermons in **Matthew 26**..., which I believe the Spirit of God is speaking to our church; **for such a time as this!!!**

I believe God is **warning** us (His Sons & Daughter's)... because He loves us; just as a loving parent **warns** a son or daughter who is in danger.

As we have been talking about the last couple of weeks, it seems that many in our church are on the brink of **breakthrough**. God wants to tear the walls down... **break open the dam** — so the waters of "living water" can freely flow.

And any time there is a pouring out of **God's Spirit** in this way... there is always a call to deeper holiness. A deeper level of consecrating ourselves unto God. And these **"warnings"** we have seen in the last 6 weeks of sermons are for the purpose of bringing us closer to the Father... **and deeper into intimacy with Jesus**.

Again, He is **warning** us for the purpose of intimacy. And it is not just for His glory, **but it is also for our good and our joy!!!** Don't miss what the Spirit is saying to you right now - **TODAY!!!** Respond to His loving warning.

God's prophetic voice is going out to His people – you and me... His sons and daughters!!! **Are you hearing the voice of God? Are you heeding to His voice? Are you responding to His love?**

So, in light of these **"warnings"**, it's really important as we move into our text today... That we should be **asking ourselves** these questions; as it relates to this prophetic progression of falling away that's been happening in **Matthew 26**... and now leading up to Peter's Great Fall...

How did he get there? And... Where are we in relation to that? And... What might be some warnings for us this morning?

So... were going to read **Matthew 26 versus 31-35** and then we will skip to the end of the Chapter and look at **versus 69-75**.

Matthew 26 starting in verse 31... this is right after **The Last Supper**... it say's, **31** Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

" 'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."

34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same. Matthew 26:31-35 (NIV)

Moving forward now to verse 69... remember Jesus was just betrayed and arrested in the **Garden of Gethsemane** and brought before the religious leaders and chief priest... **spit on**... **beaten**... and **struck**...

Verse 69 say's,

69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

70 But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. Matthew 26:69-75 (NIV)

Maybe you've heard or said the phrase, "I fell into sin." In reality, there is no such thing. A person never "falls into sin" but rather walks into sin **one step** at a time. We will see in this passage **Six Steps** Peter took that led to his **sin** and **sorrow** (his heartbrokenness).

Also, we must take into account... that there is a progression to **sin** & **sorrow**.

For the sake of context this morning... after **The Last Supper**... Jesus had revealed that one of His disciples would betray Him - of course that was Judas. You could only imagine how offsetting that was for the disciples that night that one amongst their number, was a **trader**.

At the end of the meal Jesus says... "By the way, **ALL** of you are going to fall away on account of me."

In a sense... Jesus is saying, "Because of what I'm doing, and who I am, and what my mission is all about, and the way the culture will interact and respond to me right now... **all of you are going to bail out on me**. It's not just Judas... **ALL** of you to some degree are going to fall away from me."

Then I want you to notice now, how Peter responds to these things... that we can only characterize as his **missteps**, as some **bad choices**, or perhaps some **character issues** that take Peter to this place of heartbrokenness in having denied Christ.

Step 1: **Pride**

The **first** step we see in Peter's fall (**denial**) was his **PRIDE**.

Jesus had just **warned** them... "That **ALL** of you will fall away from me." And Peter responds by saying, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "This very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." Matthew 26:33-35 (NIV)

Proud, self-confident Peter... convinced of the strength of his love for Jesus, presumptuously proclaimed himself to be the "*truest of the true.*"

What we see here, is Peter's **PRIDE** is connected to his **self-reliance**... trusting in his own strength. **PRIDE** is this un-godly self-reliance (self-confidence)... it's **self-reliance** as Peter says to Jesus in essence, "*Everybody else will fall away, but not me... I'm willing to die for you!*"

It's **self-reliance**, that draws us away from **God-dependent** living... from a trusting, dependent kind of living.

In the book of **1 Corinthians** it says... "*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" 1 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV)

Peter did not take seriously the **voice of the living God**... like many believers since, he proudly refused to submit himself to **God's Word and Spirit**.

PRIDE led Peter to this next step in his fall...

Step 2: Prayerlessness

The **second** step we see in Peter's fall (**denial**) was his **PRAYERLESSNESS**.

We see in **versus 40 & 41** when Jesus was in the **Garden of Gethsemane** when He was praying... it says, "*Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'*" Matthew 26:40-41 (NIV)

Now, this is the way it always goes... when we have this un-godly self-reliance... this puffed-up PRIDE that doesn't place ourselves under God's Word and heed the "**warnings**" God gives us... **self-reliance** (self-confidence), always leads to **prayerlessness**.

This is the opposite of **God-dependence**, which leads to **prayerfulness**... "*God I need you*" ... "*God help me*" ... "*God strengthen me*" ... "*God carry me*" ... "*God keep me from temptation*" ... "*God keep me from evil*"

And **prayerlessness** is the evidence of **PRIDE**. One of the ways that we know if we have some sort of un-godly self-reliance happening... is through our lack of prayer. We need to think about this... and ask ourselves; *Is that happening in*

my own life?... Is there a lack of dependency upon God?

If this is true for us... What we are essentially saying is, "God I got this" whether we are aware of it or not.

You may remember in the **Garden of Gethsemane** when Jesus took Peter and the boys and left them to "**watch and pray**" and **warned** them that "**The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak**"

But, because Peter didn't take seriously the Lord's "**warnings**" about his own deficiencies and frailties... Peter did not take seriously Jesus **admonition** to be prepared and strengthened... "**Peter... Watch and Pray**"

Like his boasting and insubordination, Peter's **prayerlessness** was a manifestation of sinful **self-confidence**... which is **PRIDE**.

So because of Peter's **PRIDE** he didn't think he needed to **PRAY**... and then because of his **prayerlessness**... this leads to the next step in his fall...

Step 3: **Acting in the Flesh**

So, the **third** step we see in Peter's fall (**denial**) was his **Acting in the Flesh**.

Look what happens next... versus 50 & 51, "**Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested Him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.**" Matthew 26:50b-51 (NIV)

John 18:10 tells us this companion was Peter. Peter was the one who **drew his sword** and cut off his ear.

Peter at this moment is **Acting in the Flesh**. Sensing no need to ask for Jesus' advice or help... Peter has taken things into his own hands. He is acting and living and thinking out of his own resource... his own independent, self-generated... **impulsiveness**.

Basically all he knows how to do is wrangle this thing... just "cowboy up"... wrangle this thing and "get ur done"... as soon as the officers laid hands on Jesus, Peter, "**Reached for his sword drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.**"

One thing is certain... Peter is a better fisherman than a swordsman. He manages only to lop off the ear of the high priest's servant.

That's not what God had in the moment... Jesus would say to Peter, "Don't you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:53 (NIV)

In essence Jesus is saying, "Honesty Pete, I don't need your sword... stick to fishing!!!"

Peter must have forgotten (or, **refused to believe**), that Jesus had repeatedly taught the disciples that it was the Father's plan for Him to suffer, die, and be raised to new life.

Peter's **Acting in the Flesh**... taking things into his own hands, and working from his own incorrect perspective and weaknesses and resources... was at best, Pete trying to achieve God's purposes **apart from God**... And at worst, it was ignoring God's purposes and **preferring his own**.

This was the **wrong perspective** on the situation... and the **wrong resource**... it fell short of God's purposes.

Peter was working with the **wrong sword** here. There is a **sword** Paul said in **Ephesians 6**... and that's "*The sword of the spirit*", which is the word of God.

Peter was working with the wrong sword, from the wrong place, in his own resources, with a skewed perspective... and quite honestly, Peter's made a big mess with a bloody ear on the ground.

How often that's the case in our lives!? (**WORKING WITH THE WRONG SWORD**)

We are told in **2 Corinthians** that, "*The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful...*" 2 Corinthians 10:4

And in **Zechariah** we are exhorted... '*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,*' says the **LORD**. Zechariah 4:6

David Guzik said, "When Peter moved in the power of the world (his flesh), he only cut off ears. But when he was filled with the Spirit, using the Word of God, Peter pierced hearts for God's glory."

And so now Peter... ignoring Christ words to him, being full of himself, failing to pray, and acting in his own wisdom and resources (the flesh)... Peter finds himself... taking the next step in his fall...

Step 4: **Following Jesus at a Distance.**

So, the **fourth** step we see in Peter's fall (**denial**) was his **Following Jesus at a Distance.**

Verse 58, "But Peter followed Jesus at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome."

Matthew 26:58 (NIV)

Now this is a **switch**... back in **Mark Chapter 3** Jesus called Peter along with the others... And it says back in **verse 13**, "Jesus chose those He himself wanted so that they might be with Him."

Jesus had called them to **relationship**... to "**WITHNESS**". Christ's call on us is always unto **relationship**. We are, through the work of the cross... are restored into **relationship** with God. And that **relationship** is meant to be one of **closeness**... it is meant to be one of **intimacy**... that's what we are **restored** to.

It's not just that our **sins** are forgiven. Our **sins** are forgiven so that we might engage in a **relationship** with a holy God... a loving relationship with God.

And that is what Peter had been restored too... and that's what Peter had known... Peter had walked with Jesus and had spent time with Jesus... Peter was always with Jesus... and now there is this very real distance between Peter and Jesus... **Peter followed Jesus at a distance.**

There is this **drifting** happening now... there is this **falling away**... there is this **slide down the slope**... there is now a distance.

Intimacy has been forsaken... Peter is not as tight as he once was with Jesus.
Now, I want us to think about our own lives?

Now there is this distance. Peter is **drifting**... I have known so many people (even close friends), who have slowly but surely **drifted away** because they began **to follow Jesus from a distance**. At one time, they had a strong desire and passion to **know the Lord** and to **walk with Jesus**... But then something happened... **a switch**.

That is why it says in Hebrews 2... verse 1, "We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not **drift away**."

As we sail along spiritually, the danger is not that a torpedo will sink us, but that we will slowly drift away... and **drifting** happens when we fail to "Give heed to the things which we have heard."

In other words, we **drift** when we fail to read and **heed** to the compass of **God's Word**. When we fail to allow **God's Word** to be the plumb line by which we live our lives.

Was there a time in your life you enjoyed the pure milk of God's Word?... When you hungered for the meat of God's Word?... When you needed to get your bearings by reading God's Word?... But, eventually you began following Jesus at a distance, and the Word of God was no longer important?

When that happens to me, I find myself **drifting** slowly and gradually until suddenly I wonder... *Where Am I?... How in the world did I get here?* My faith didn't just sink... I just started drifting away.

We can end up **shipwrecking** our faith and our lives when we don't take heed.

You and I need to **set our anchor deeply** in the "things which we have heard"... the truths, doctrines, and principles of Scripture. Otherwise we too, like Peter, will be vulnerable to **drifting away** and **following Jesus from a distance**.

This is not an alien concept to the Scriptures... they say **Don't Drift**... Christ is the "anchor of your soul..." and "hold fast to the end" the **Scriptures** tell us.

It would be important for us to check ourselves... *Is there a distance between you and Jesus that might be spoken of in terms of relational intimacy?... Like your devotional life with Him? Or, It might be spoken of in terms of obedience?*

Is there a distance now in either of those places that there wasn't once? Than you like Peter, are on the **slippery slope**. You like Peter, may find yourself in **the fall**... in the drift.

So we must check ourselves at this point... and reflect... and ask ourselves honestly at this point... **Am I drifting?** If so, is the reason due to **pride**, or a **lack of prayer**, or **being in the flesh**, or not reading and heeding to the **Word of God** due to **following Jesus at a distance**?

Hey, If that's you today... **today is the day**... to turn your boat around "so to speak", and head back to port and **stop drifting** – and let Christ be your anchor... the "**anchor of your soul**..."

Peter is now in a frightening place... taking his **fifth step** towards heartbreak...

Step 5: **Seeking Warmth at the Enemy's Fire**

So, the **fifth** step we see in Peter's fall (**denial**) was his **Warming Himself at the Enemy's Fire**.

We pick it up in **Luke**... Luke adds a detail that **Matthew** didn't give us. **And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.** Luke 22:55

Look at this fall... the very ones who had arrested Jesus, accused Jesus... the very ones who had mocked Jesus, scourged Jesus, spit upon Jesus, nailed Him to the cross... **shout crucify Him!!!** Peter is now sitting with them warming himself at their fire.

Now lets think metaphorically here for a bit... Lets see them as the enemy... we have an enemy - **Satan**. Lets see them as a metaphoric picture of the **enemy of Christ**.

When our relational connection with Jesus and our obedience to Jesus is distant... then we find ourselves attracted too... wanting to connect ourselves with... **wrong people**... **wrong places**... **wrong things**. We end up in **wrong spaces** looking for **wrong opportunities**... We find ourselves wanting to seek warmth from Strange Fires.

So, I want us to think about... what might be sort of the proverbial **Enemies Fire** in our lives?... Or within the culture that we live in?

I think the reason why we get attracted to **Strange Fire**... and I think the reason why Peter was willing to make himself comfortable with the opposition here (with the enemy)... and seeking warmth from their fire...

Was because he was lacking in what Christ is always promising and calling us into... that is the peace, joy and satisfaction that comes from a **relationship with God**.

Many of us know and have experienced this... when we choose to go our own way and go away from Christ... then we forfeit the "Peace of God" in our lives and miss that "Joy in the Holy Spirit" and that "Abiding Satisfaction" that comes from an intimate relationship with God.

And when we through, distancing ourselves from Christ... from disobedience... or from lack of devotion... or whatever that might be... when we begin to distance ourselves... and we experience a **void** in that **peace**, that **joy** and that **satisfaction**... then Strange Fires become attractive to us.

Trying to draw **warmth**, **satisfaction**, and **comfort** from wrong places.

This might speak to some of our addictions... this might speak to our secret habits... this might speak to what we do with our computer or smart phone... this might speak to our spending habits... this might speak to our broken relationships or marriages... **Strange Fires**... Or, **False Fires**.

The enemy will always make sure to present us with **fires** that seem as though they will bring warmth, joy, peace and satisfaction... but they never deliver... only Jesus delivers. **Peter was never more cold, than sitting by the enemy's fire**.

And now Peter's fall is almost complete... and what we see at the cusp of his heartbreak... is his **final step**.

Step 6: **Denials and Disassociations**

So, the **sixth** and final step we see in Peter's fall (**denial**) was his **Denials and Disassociations**.

We read again at the close of the Chapter, "Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed." Matthew 26:69-74 (NIV)

At this point Peter hit rock bottom... still refusing either to claim or to rely on Jesus, he dug himself still deeper into the **denial** as he began to curse and swear, **"I don't know the man!"**

Call down curses and swore to them means in that culture... **not** that he used foul language, or said **"I promise"**, it means he said something akin to in that culture... **"May God kill me and damn me if I'm lying, I don't know Jesus."**

Not hours before Peter said... **"Even if all fall away on account of you, I will never fall away... I'm willing to die with you."** And now... **"May God kill me and damn me, I don't know Jesus."** Wow... so heavy!!!

Denials and Disassociations of Jesus... you know the invitation of Jesus is to **deny ourselves**. And anytime that we refuse to **deny ourselves** whether its an issue of temptation, or an issue of forgiveness, or an issue of the flesh... whenever we refuse to **deny ourselves**, we are in effect denying Christ.

When God has called us to **live His way**... and we choose to **live our way**... then those are small (or maybe big) **denials** and **disassociations** from Jesus.

And again... when we don't like the way where **Christ Word intersects** with our lives, **in the way we want to live**... which was going on with Peter here. We say, **"Well, that applies to someone else but perhaps not me..."** these are small (or maybe big) **denials** and **disassociations** from Jesus.

We probably wouldn't say it the way Peter said it... and it will most likely look different for us. We have our own situations and our own opportunities... where we can either **confess** Christ, or **deny** Christ. We **confess** Christ in our following of Him... in our obedience toward Him... in our worship of Him... in our witness for Him... Or, like Peter... **denials** and **disassociations**.

And really what was happening for Peter all the way along... was this **slippery slide**... this denial that went back to Jesus when He said, **"Hey Peter, I just want to warn you about this?"** And Peter basically said, **"Nah, that doesn't apply to me."**

That denial has been this **slippery slope**... and this is the full expression of it, right here. Remember, there is a progression to **sin & sorrow**.

And then we have **The Outcome**... details from Luke. **Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter**

remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.
(Luke 22:60b-62)

I just want us to see **very clearly** the end result of Peter's choices... **he went outside and wept bitterly.** This wasn't just any kind of weeping... but a deep, gut-wrenching lamenting, weeping.

Peter's perspective was skewed the entire time as he was **sliding downward** through his pride, through his prayerlessness, through his following Jesus at a distance... **he is at the enemies fire**... he is not seeing things clearly.

Peter is obviously **not** seeing things well when he says, **"May God kill me and damn me if I'm lying, I don't know Jesus."** Peter is way off track here.

But then there is this thing... **that rattles him back!!!** He hears the **rooster crow**... he remembers what Jesus had said... he has that moment where he says, **"What am I doing?"**

"Please God give us those moments more soon in our lives, where we are quick to heed to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the warnings of God."

Where we are brought to clarity like the prodigal son and we say, **"What am I doing?"**... **"What am I doing right here?"** God help us to see our sin more clearly... **"What am I doing?"**

Peter finally has this **"What am I doing moment"**... and he goes out and there is nothing for him in that moment but **despair**. It says, **"He wept bitterly."**

I just want us to think about our own lives... Peter's choices led him to heartbreak. **Are their any choices that we are making now... the end of which is heartbreak?**

Jesus said in **John 10:10**, **"That Satan came to steal and kill and destroy."** But Jesus came... **"That we might have life, and have life more abundantly."**

And there are two paths in which you can go by... the narrow path that leads to **life** and the broad path that leads to **destruction**. And are there any choices... Are there any roads that we are traveling... that we somehow, with the help of the Holy Spirit right now... **know that the end of that road is heartbreak?**

From these roads we must change course... we have to learn from Peter.

Now, I want us to now **zero in** on what caused Peter to weep bitterly?
According to **Luke's Gospel** the moment Peter began to call down curses and said, "I don't know the man!" at this time... "**The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.**" Luke 22:61

Just as Peter was speaking Jesus was within earshot of His buddy Peter saying, "**May God kill me and damn me if I'm lying, I don't even know the man.**" Jesus was within earshot... and Jesus turns and looks at Peter.

The look must have penetrated the disciple's very soul, burning deep into his heart and conscience the evil of his **sin**. Seeing his Lord standing there with His hands bound and His face covered with spit and bruises was more than Peter could bear... And yet, **the look** was not one of anger; but of understanding... not one of condemnation; but one of sympathy.

I would like to suggest as Peter looked and his eyes **met** the eyes of Christ, he saw the **deepest compassion**. He saw **endless love**... the eyes of Christ said, "**I love you!**" ... "**I still love you!**" ... "**I will always love you!**" ...

I think that is the deeper source of Peter's **heartbreak**. I think he wept about his **sin** in light of **the love of Christ** for him. That when he saw the eyes of Christ, at his lowest moment... **at absolute rock bottom**... In the depths of **unutterable shame**... That In light of "**so great a love**"... Peter's heart broke over his own sin.

This was a hard night for Pete... Pete made some **wrong choices**. In the hardest of times, is when we need to pay **the most attention** to the choices we are making... that is often when we make the worst ones. But it is when we are in those most difficult and painful places... **is when Christ is most present to us**.

It's in those **deepest spaces of pain**... in the valley of trouble... is when God opens up the door of hope.

The **good news** to remember is when we are confronted with these **slippery temptations**... we have been offered **better invitations in Christ**... That lead to better places!

And here is the ultimate good news!!! Peter had said at the beginning: "**Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will... Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.**"

Peter at that moment was **all talk, no action**... But what would Jesus do for Peter?... Jesus would go and **die** for Peter. ***That's the good news!!!***

It's not that we would stick with Jesus...or that we would die for Jesus... It's that Christ has died for us... and that Jesus would say to us, "**I will never leave you, or forsake you.**" And "**I am with you to the end of the age.**"

The **good news** is even though we failed tremendously, Christ has loved us generously... **Christ died for us**. He has looked at us in the eye with His **unfathomable love** and said... "**I will never leave you...I am with you always**"

That's the hope of the gospel... that's the good news!!! The **good news** is not that we could have done better than Peter did... the good news is that Christ has done better than Peter... and Christ has done perfectly for us on our behalf.

And so maybe you have fallen, or find yourself far down this road... this **slippery slope** already... maybe this morning the Holy Spirit has revealed some steps in your own fall. Or, maybe has revealed you're on a progression to **sin & sorrow**.

I want to end by reminding us of this... Jesus said to Peter, "**After I have risen from the dead I will meet you in Galilee.**"

Now **three days later** after Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead... some women went to the tomb and they found an angel their... and the angel said to them... "**Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'**" Mark 16:6-7 (NIV)

Look at the kindness of God... he sent an Angel who said, "**Listen go tell the disciples that Jesus has risen and He is going to meet you in Galilee just like he said... and make sure you tell Pete!!!**"

Because Pete is "down in the dumps" right now... Because Peter is heartbroken right now... Peter thinks he is too far gone... **but you are never too far gone for the love of God!**

Maybe you feel like your too far gone... or you are sliding down the road and the hill is too steep and the slope is too slippery... **you are never too far gone or beyond the restoring power of Christ!!!**

Jesus wanted Peter to know through the words of this angel... that his **Great Fall** was not the end of the story... **it never is!!!** Our great failures are never the end of the story... **Christ great work on our behalf is the end of the story.**

And so Peter went... and I'm sure humbly, up to **Galilee**... and there, when he was fishing, he saw Jesus on the beach sitting there, waiting for him with a fire.

Peter in the boat... threw off his clothes and jumped into the water and swam to the beach... and he went and sat at the fire with Jesus... the **TRUE FIRE.**

(*See John 21:9)

It was a **better invitation**... and there is a better invitation for us than the road that leads to heartbreak... **Christ is calling you to Himself!**

Don't be afraid to **repent of your sins** that ultimately can **destroy** us... Remember, It's God's kindness (love) that leads us to repentance... that times of refreshment come with repentance... **Turn to Jesus... who heals us... who forgives us... who restores us...**

Don't continue in your **prayerlessness**... it's our **prayerlessness** that got us in this mess... **call out to God... cry out to God** who waits to have **compassion on high** towards us... and who loves you more than we could think or even imagine.

The invitation for us this morning is... **The Three R's.**

Remember: Remember from which you have fallen away from the **love of God** and from the love and devotion you once had for Jesus.

Repent: Repent and turn from your sins... from those worthless things that have **no value** compared to the **love and beauty of Christ.**

Return: Return to Jesus, and watch what our **loving Father** will do with the mess you've made... He will turn it around for His glory and your joy!

Close in prayer...

***Communion** = Remember

***Carpets** = Repent

***Prayer** = Return