

Peter's Rebuke of Christ

by John Murray

The sermon explores the nature of sin, the contrast in Peter's behavior, and the lesson of faithfulness, highlighting the importance of reliance on God's grace.

Duration: 50:56

Scripture: Luke 6:20

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the contrasting reactions of Peter and Jesus to different situations. He emphasizes the importance of responding in truth and faithfulness, as Jesus did. The preacher highlights the contradiction in Peter's actions, between his noble confession of Jesus as the Son of God and his presumptuous rebuke of Jesus. Jesus responds with a devastating reprimand, showing the power and authority he possesses. The sermon concludes by urging the listeners to recognize the disclosure of God's will and to be transformed by renewing their minds.

Transcript

Let us pray. O Thou eternal and ever-blessed God, from everlasting to everlasting God, who dwellest in light that is unapproachable and full of glory, who art holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, whose glory fills the whole earth, may we draw near unto Thee with that reverence and godly fear without which our professed approach unto Thee is but mockery and abomination in Thy sight. Blessed forever be Thy great and holy name, that though Thou dwellest in the high and the lofty place, Thou dost condescend to dwell with him also that is poor and of a contrite spirit who trembles at Thy word.

And O grant unto us that as we come here into the place where Thou in honor dwells, into the place that can properly be called Zion, of which Thou hast said, This is my resting place forever. Here will I dwell for I have desired it. O grant that we may find in this place Thy manifested presence, Thy presence manifested by the Holy Spirit through Thy holy word and Thy presence manifested in the face of Thine own Son Jesus Christ, the Lord, that we may behold His glory, the glorious of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, that we may come to admire Him, come to adore Him in that identity that is His as the Son of the living God, as the brightness of Thy glory and the express image of Thy being, who when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty of Thy.

And O grant unto us that we may have that true conviction of sin in its gravity, in its guilt, in its defilement, and in its power, so that the gospel of Thy redeeming grace may be precious unto us and that Christ may

be precious unto us as the one who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. O may the light of the knowledge of Thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ shine into our hearts and may we by that glory be so transformed that we shall have in our own consciences the assurance that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, having the sealing witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. O grant this inestimable grace unto us and therefore also have the outreach of hope that as heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ we wait for Him for His glorious appearing when He shall be manifested in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory and when He will come to be made manifest in His face and to be admired in all them that believe.

Bless, O Lord, all Thy people. Bless them in their affliction. Bless them in their doubts and fears and grant that these may be dispelled by the power of Thy grace so that they may be able to rejoice with confidence that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.

O grant that Thy church might be built up that there may be added unto the church daily such as are being saved that in the desolation that characterizes our time in the apostasy that is so rampant O let the gospel go forth with its power, with its regenerating, sanctifying, converting power bringing sinners from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God and grant, O Lord, that this church may be instrumental in this community of bearing a consistent and faithful and effectual witness to the end that Thy great name may be honored that the gospel may be proclaimed in purity and fullness and power and that multitudes may be drawn irresistibly by the Holy Spirit into the fellowship of Christ and into the fellowship of Thy people bless us now as we wait upon Thee and may we have

Thy presence and Thy blessing for Jesus' sake, Amen The gospel according to Matthew chapter 16 at verse 22 we read, Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee But he turned and said unto Peter Get thee behind me, Satan thou art an offence unto me For thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of man It was sin that brought contradiction into this universe If there had been no sin there would be no contradiction and no occasion for contradiction for everything would have been after the pattern of that perfection that God, that characterized God's handiwork when he created it Now this contradiction is the contradiction between good and evil between truth and the lie between love and hate between mercy and

judgment between justice and injustice and this contradiction began with the sin of the devil and his angels and the sin of the devil and his angels preceded the sin of the human race because this contradiction appeared first of all on the scene of this world when the serpent as the instrument of the devil said to the woman first by way of insinuating doubt yea, hath God said thou shalt not eat of every tree of the garden and then it appeared in blatant contradiction when the serpent said thou shalt not surely die for God doth know that in the day you eat thereof your eyes will be opened and you shall be as God knowing good and evil you see how sin appeared in the contradiction of God and it entered into the human race when the woman acceded to that contradiction and believed the tempter

rather than God now this is the essence of sin the contradiction of God it is implied of course in that definition that is given of sin in the scripture sin is transgression of the law the law of course is the transcript of divine perfection and it is therefore the transgression of that which is the transcript of divine perfection and therefore the contradiction of God and because sin offers contradiction to God God must offer contradiction to it and that belongs to the very holiness the perfection of his being to offer

contradiction to that which is the contradiction of himself now this contradiction which sin offers to God appears in our text we might not suspect it but it appears in the very indictment that our saviour brought against Peter when he said thou savourest not the things

that be of God but those that be of man that is, thou mindest not thou hast concern for not the things of God but the things that be of man and that is what our first parents did when they fell at the beginning they began to mind the things of the creature rather than of the creator they became preoccupied with human things instead of being completely absorbed in the divine will now here is the question what is the governing pattern of all thought it is a question that each one of us must ask it is a question that the most sanctified of you must ask of yourself what is your paramount interest what is your paramount interest is it the things of God is it the interest of his glory of his kingdom is it the interest of his counsel or is the governing pattern of thought that which is dictated

by your own imagination is the governing pattern of all thought that which is dictated by human things or is it dictated by the supreme entity God's glory and kingdom this is a question that comes to me and here my friends is after all a criterion by which we must interrogate our own consciences our own hearts and our own minds do we mind the things of man or do we mind the things of God you see our savior was holy harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners there was no sin in him and because there was no sin in him he was completely governed by the things of God and it was just because of that contradiction that there was between himself and between sinful men that he brought the indictment against Peter thou mindest not the things of those that be no contradiction appears in this

chapter in another way or in other ways and appears in most striking ways or most unbelievable ways contradiction Peter had made the great confession to Sariah Philippi thou art the Christ the son of the living God and there was the corresponding benediction blessed art thou Simon Barjona for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my father who is in heaven and there is not only the corresponding benediction on Jesus part but there is also the corresponding investiture I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven just observe the elements of the situation the confession the benediction and the investiture and then what a contrast a very

short time after Peter began to rebuke Jesus rebuked the person whom he had confessed a very brief period a very brief time before then began to rebuke the person whom he had confessed thou art the Christ the son of the living God and when he confessed him as the son of the living God he confessed him in his divine identity as equal with God and as himself God and is it possible you might say that in a very brief period of time Peter began to rebuke to rebuke the Savior be it far from thee this shall not be unto thee presumptuous rebuke and then you have the corresponding response on the part of the Savior and what a contradiction between the benediction that Jesus had uttered a little before then blessed art thou Simon Barjona and now get thee behind me Satan thou art an offense unto me

because thou savorest not the things that be of God but those that be of men so you see these two elements we may focus attention upon for a little while first the contrast in the case of Peter between noble confession and presumptuous rebuke and then second the contrast between Jesus' benediction blessed art thou Simon Barjona and the devastating reprimand get thee behind me Satan what a stumbling block well then first of all you have the contrast or the contradiction in the case of Peter between confession and presumptuous rebuke it might seem impossible for Peter to entertain such contradictory sentiment and remember the word separated by a long period of time because we read in this chapter you see after the

great confession of Peter of Tizares at Philippi from that time forth began

Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed then Peter began to rebuke him so there was not much of an interval and we might think it impossible for Peter to entertain such contradictory sentiment within such a brief period of time and then there is even the more staggering the staggering question or apparent impossibility the different sources from which Peter derived his inspiration when he said thou art the Christ the son of the living God it was from God the Father that he was inspired and actuated and when he said this shall not be unto thee it was from Satan he was inspired and actuated and could there be within such a brief period of time the inspiration and the actuation of

such diverse sources God the Father in all his immaculate holiness and majesty and Satan in all his unspeakable malignity and iniquity it is well for us to consider this and I fear that my limitations are such that I cannot elicit from this or even by way of exposition or by way of suggestion all that is involved in it but I shall I don't think it's useless to mention a few lessons that we should derive from this the contradiction in the case of Peter between holy compassion and iniquitous rebuke and the first lesson is this that in the people of God and Peter was a man of God in the people of God there is the morally and the religiously contradictory and that's the explanation of it that's the only explanation of this apparent impossibility that there is even in the people of God the

morally and religiously contradictory and because there is in them that which is morally and religiously contradictory you have, can have contradictory sentiments you can have contradictory actions and you can have contradictory sources of inspiration and instigate it is for our warning and also for our consolation that the Apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give us his own autobiography and you find it in Romans 7, 14 through 25 I say warning but also consolation what does the Apostle say I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing for to win is patent with me but how to perform that which is good I find not I live light in the law of God after the inward man but I find another law in my members O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of

this dead and even in the final word of that autobiography is placed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit on record so then with the mind I myself heard the law of God but with the flesh the law of sin there is the explanation of Peter's contradiction and the Apostle Paul has given us in very brief summary his own autobiography of this contradiction for our warning but also for our consolation that when we find this contradiction in the people of God and when we find it in ourselves we must remember that it is a necessity arising from the fact that there is a two-fold law in our membership that we are warring against but a second lesson is this, that Peter on this occasion when he took our Lord aside apparently and began to rebuke him was actuated by what he considered as very high and

noble and worthy motive to a certain extent he was actuated by love for Australia and as far as he was concerned he was actuated by what he considered to be the highest and noblest and worthiest motive and oh what a warning these very motives however high and noble and worthy they were in the esteem of Peter himself these very motives induced diabolical opposition to the counsel and will of God think of it offered diabolical opposition to the highest wisdom the highest counsel the highest will of heaven and it teaches us this great lesson not to measure by our motives but to test our motives by that which alone is perfect revealed will of God the law of God oh what a lesson we are so liable to think that because our motives appear to be worthy resort to all sorts by which to force in what

a devastating against the deceit of the human heart and the third lesson that we may derive from this contradiction in the case of Peter is that we may attain my beloved friends to the summit of noblest comfort and momentarily lapse into the deepest unfaithfulness let us never put our confidence in past achievement let us never even put our confidence in the divine investiture with high office Peter attained to a great height of noble confession when he said thou art the Christ the son of the living God with Jesus corresponding benediction and also Jesus invested I will give thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven whosoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven of course Peter was the spokesman of the apostles Peter when he received the benediction received what belonged to all

of the apostles and when Peter received the investiture it wasn't for himself alone but as the representative of the apostles but what high office was accorded to these apostles but here is the great lesson that we may never trust in achievement of the past and we may never trust even in God's investiture of us with high office because our only request at any moment is complete reliance upon the grace and the wisdom and the power of God and whenever our thought gets focused upon even that which God upon that benediction that God has bestowed upon us and upon that very office with which he in that very moment in that very moment see how confident Peter was in his past achievements when he said though all should deny me yet would it was Peter that denied me with cautiousness what a lesson

for us that our reliance moment by moment now we come to the next contrast that appears in this chapter the contrast in Jesus' responses and we might well say it's impossible it's even impossible in the psychology of our Lord himself for him to have given such benediction to Peter and such investiture with Peter devastating question yet behind me Satan thou art an offence unto me for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men apparently impossible and that apparent impossibility is only accentuated in our Lord's case there's an explanation of the contradiction in the case of Peter between noble compassion and dispassionate reprimand because there was in Peter that which was religiously impolite how are we to explain this in the case of our Lord well there are one

or two lessons here and there's a grand jury what is the first lesson well it is just the lesson of our Lord's immaculate faith it is the lesson of truth our Lord you see reacts to each situation in perfect equity in faithfulness to truth because He is the faithful witness and if our Lord had been as it were had been as it were unduly sympathetic if our Lord had refrained from giving this withering reprimand there would have been a defect because our Lord responded, reacted to each situation as truth and faithfulness demanded and He said to Peter Blessed art thou silent bar Jonah for flesh and blood doth not revealed it unto thee He was responding in the perfectly in a perfect manner to that which was the fruit of the Father's grace and you could say it with all reverence because this was

the fruit of the Father's grace He could not have but responded He could not have He could not have responded otherwise and with complacency and benignity and Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him He was instigated by Satan and you see His faithfulness demanded the corresponding rebuke the corresponding condemnation the corresponding reprimand and try to catch something my beloved friends of the grandeur of the contrast in the case of our Lord it is the contrast that faithfulness demands and you can see it all along in the witness of our Lord the contrast you have it very eloquently inscribed in Luke 6 verses 20 to 24 form in which our Lord's sermon on the mount is given in the gospel according to Luke turns to His disciples and He says blessed ye poor for yours is the kingdom of heaven

the kingdom of God blessed are ye that hunger now for ye shall be filled blessed are ye that weep now for ye shall laugh then you turn uttered in what you might call the same breath woe unto you that are rich for

ye have received your consolation woe unto you that are full for ye shall hunger woe unto you that laugh now for ye shall mourn and weep woe unto you and all men shall speak well of you for so did their fathers to the false prophets you see the contrast the contradiction indeed between blessing and woe but that is what faithfulness demands this is faithfulness in the case of people blessed that there is silence that shall not get me behind this there is no compromise the faithful my friends He will be that to you if you are His whom the Lord loves remember will be Savior to you

but then there is another lesson here in this contrast that there is in the response of the Savior how different of our Lord to people when Peter denied Him in the palace of the Isles the Lord had warned Peter do you remember Peter denied Him the Lord heard it was the look of tender comfort it was the look of of the powers of the unattended of the Isles what is the reason for the difference between the loving look and the withering the devastating I think there is much here for our instruction when Peter denied His Lord it was a temptation that was directed to Peter himself and Peter succumbed no more but when Peter took Him and began shall not be unto thee what was the temptation you see Peter was now the instrument of a plea directed to the Savior Himself He was the instrument of a plea

that would have turned the Savior from the counsel and will of which He came into the world and that's the reason for the difference the contrast between the look of compassion in the palace of the High Priest and the devastating reprimand on this occasion but Jesus was now resisting with all the vehemence of righteousness with the temptation directed to Him by Peter as the instrument of temptation to turn fear my friends you have the grandeur of the Savior's coming He came down from heaven not to do His own will but the will of Him to do it He said again therefore does my soul because I lay down my life no man taketh it from me but I lay it down myself I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straightened until it be

accomplished and consequently the plea of this disciple whom He loved had to be resisted with all the vehemence of that devastating reprimand oh it was a plea to the highest counsel of God oh with such a plea get thee hence thou art an offender to me for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men and can you see can you not see in this in this very question how marvelous our Savior should be one moment of that ministry given to people in the act of the role of this particular man now in conclusion may I invite you in this particular disclosure of the glory of Christ the Apostle Paul says you know that we beholding at last the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory you and I would all let us meditate let us meditate upon the

revelation that is the glory of the Lord as we meditate prayerfully and deeply this whole more formed image we see in this chapter perhaps in an unsuspecting disclosure to an ink of relief he gave to the action O Lord our God do thou grant that Christ may be precious to us that we may see that we may get a glimpse of that which is unsuspecting who came who came into the world who is the brightness of God's glory who is the image of the invisible by the renewing of our mind that we may prove what is that good and that's in Jesus name Amen

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