

Winning God's Approval - Part 8

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores the contrasting lives of Peter and Judas Iscariot, emphasizing the importance of humility, prayer, and prioritizing God over material wealth.

Duration: 55:18

Scripture: Matthew 7:23, Matthew 16:13-20, Luke 5:3, Luke 6:12

Topics: "Approval"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the contrasting attitudes and actions of Peter and Judas. He starts by discussing the story in Luke 5 where Jesus teaches from Peter's boat and then asks him to go fishing despite a previous unsuccessful attempt. The preacher emphasizes Peter's humble obedience to Jesus' command, even though it went against his own reasoning. He then highlights Judas' response to Jesus' words in Matthew 26, where he immediately goes to betray Jesus for personal gain. The preacher concludes by discussing the importance of accepting correction and appreciating others, using examples from his own life and encouraging the audience to do the same.

Transcript

We've been looking through a number of characters in the Bible who either won or lost God's approval. And today we're in study number eight out of a series of nine. We were looking at Old Testament characters, most of whom won God's approval.

We only looked at Adam and Eve, who lost it. And last evening we looked at the New Testament, at three Marys. And today we want to look at a contrast between two of Jesus' disciples.

One was Peter, and the other was Judas Iscariot. Now, when the Lord called them, we read, it's the only time in the Bible where we read that Jesus spent all night in prayer. He probably did that at other times as well.

But this is the only time recorded in Scripture, in Luke chapter six, verse twelve, that he went into the mountains and prayed all night. And that must have been something serious. I mean, even in Gethsemane he didn't pray all night.

But he was praying concerning whom he should select out of all the many disciples. He had at least seventy or more disciples whom he was sent out to preach. From among them, he was to select twelve.

And one mark of Jesus' humility was the fact that he prayed. Only humble people pray. The prouder we are, the less we pray.

The more humble we are, the more dependent we are on God. I'm not speaking about being on our knees. I'm speaking about more of an attitude of dependence upon God in prayer, which is more important than how many hours we spend on our knees.

But it also shows Jesus' total lack of confidence in himself as a human being and dependence upon the Father. This is what faith really means. Faith is to depend upon the Father.

And the less confidence we have in our own wisdom and ability and power, the more we will lean upon the Father. And when Jesus wanted to select twelve out of the many, his mind was so pure. He could have, you know, selected without prayer.

But he prayed. Not just prayed. He prayed all night and said, Father, make it clear to me.

Remember, Jesus had come with the limitations that you and I have as human beings. I mean, if he had come here with all his inherent power as God, he wouldn't need to pray at all. God doesn't need to pray.

The very fact that Jesus prayed showed that he was a man. He had limited himself. He was like a millionaire who wouldn't use his credit card so that he'd be an example for us.

He was a millionaire, but he wouldn't use his credit card. He was God on earth, but he wouldn't use those powers so that he could be an example for us. And he prayed.

The more serious the decision, the more he prayed. And at the end of that time, it says in the next verse, in the morning, he called all his disciples and from them he chose twelve. There was no mistake there.

And I want to say this, that God did not give Jesus, the Father didn't give Jesus the name of Judas Iscariot merely to get somebody to betray Jesus. I mean, that would be terrible to accuse God of selecting someone and damning him to hell. No, Judas was as wholehearted as Peter when he was chosen.

It's those who don't believe that a believer can backslide who think that he was a traitor from the beginning. But scripture says Judas became, verse 16, a traitor. He wasn't a traitor to start with.

That's clear. Otherwise, he wouldn't have become one later. It says he was selected.

Later on, he became a traitor. And so here were two equally wholehearted, zealous young men. I believe they were all under 30.

The Jewish rabbis never chose anyone older than them to be their disciples. They were all under 30, young men selected by Christ after a whole night of prayer. And yet their end was so different.

They were with the same master, listening to the same message for three and a half years. And yet their end was so different. And that's where you and I have a warning.

We can go to the same church, go for years to the same place. And two people sitting here, their ends can be as different as Peter and Judas Iscariot. And that's why it's good for us to look at them so that we make sure we end where Peter ended.

That's where God wants us to end. So when we look at Peter, I want to just mention two things particularly. One was his attitude to money, material wealth.

Now, this is very important because when Jesus was saying that you could serve two masters in Luke chapter 16, we would think the two masters are God or the devil. Now, everybody knows that you can't serve God and the devil simultaneously. You choose one.

But Jesus, when he spoke about the two masters in the world, he didn't say they were God and the devil. He said they were God and material wealth, which he called mammon. That's where a lot of Christians can have a doubt.

A lot of Christians think you can serve God and material wealth. No Christian feels you can serve God and the devil. But there are lots of Christians who think you can serve God and material wealth.

But Jesus said, no, it's not possible. He said in Luke 16, 13, no servant can serve two masters. And he said the two masters were God and mammon.

And when one calls you and the other calls you, you know which one you're serving. I mean, if there's a man here, there are two of us calling him. You'll discover pretty soon whose servant he is.

And when God calls you and money calls you, you discover pretty quickly whose servant you are. Now, don't misunderstand me. It's not a question of having money or using it.

Jesus had and used money. There's nothing wrong in savings. Judas Iscariot had a bag and that was like a savings bank.

There's nothing wrong with that. It was a question of loving it, pursuing it, living for it. And this is where both these men were tested.

And that's where one passed and the other failed. In Luke chapter 5, we read, Jesus got into Simon's boat in verse 3. And stood in it and he began teaching the multitudes from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, I want to give you a little reward for lending me your boat.

Let's go out deep into the water and let down your nets for a catch. And Simon Peter said, we worked hard all night. There are no fish out there today.

We caught nothing. But since you told me to do so, I'll do it. See, that's the attitude of a humble person.

Lord, my reason says there's nothing there. But since you tell me to do it, I'll do it. Have you had an experience like that? Where your reason said, no, don't do that.

Don't do what scripture says. It won't work. But you say, Lord, your word says that, I'll do it.

It always works. I found it in 47 years. If you go by your reason, you'll miss God's best.

It's not because reason is contrary to God's word. No. Reason is inferior to God's word.

It's like saying a student in first grade, that's reason, doesn't understand a lot of things a student doing Ph.D. understands. That's the scriptures. So, the word of God is not against reason.

But it says if you lean on it, you'll miss God's best. Yeah, Lord, I'm an expert fisherman. I've tried all night to catch fish.

Couldn't get anything. But since you say so, I'll go and try and catch some. And when he went, they enclosed such a great quantity of fish, that their nets began to break.

It says in Luke 5 verse 6. And they signaled their partners to come. And they filled the boat. And suddenly, Peter realized what a sinful man he was.

I mean, Jesus wasn't preaching about sin. But there was such a revelation that came to his heart at that moment. Of how proud he was.

How proud he was of being a fisherman who was capable. And he saw his sin. And then Jesus told him, don't fear.

From now on, you'll be catching men. And it says here, when they brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. Now, when your business is booming and prospering, like the catch they got.

They never got a catch like that in all their life. Is that the time to quit your business? I mean, that's the most crazy thing to do, humanly speaking. And that's the time to stick on for some more time.

And to say, Lord, this is wonderful. Just keep doing this for the next few days. And I'll be the richest fisherman around here.

I promise you, I'll pay my tithes regularly. And support your work everywhere. Just keep doing this every day, Lord.

You know, like people pray. It's right to pray that God will bless our business. But he never wants us to love our business.

However much he prospers it. Does God prosper our business? He certainly does. Who prospered Peter's fishing business that day? That was the Lord.

It's good to have the Lord with you in the boat. I'll tell you that. There's no doubt about that.

But when he prospers your business, make sure you don't love that more than him. And you know, one test wasn't enough. We read in John 21 that Jesus had to repeat it.

Sometimes he has to repeat a lesson. Because in John 21 we read that Simon Peter, he was pretty discouraged. The Bible reveals the failings of God's servants as much as their successes.

And Peter was discouraged because he had let down the Lord. He had denied him three times just a few days earlier after boasting that he would never deny me, die for him, etc. And he felt so rotten that he said to his fellow disciples in John 21, he said in verse 3, I'm going fishing.

What he meant was I finished with being an apostle. I'm going back to fishing permanently. I've had enough of this.

I mean I tried, but I'm a failure. You guys may be okay. And they said, no, we're failures too.

We'll join you. It's amazing how one man who's discouraged can drag other people down with him. If you're discouraged, don't express it to others.

Keep it to yourself. And they went out. And it's as if the Lord said, okay, Simon.

Simon said, well, I'm useless as an apostle. I mean, I've discovered that. But if there's one thing I can still do, it's fishing.

And the Lord said, okay, go ahead and try. Once the Lord's called you for something, you're useless for everything else. I hope you remember that.

Once the Lord's called you for something, you can try everything else in the world. And if God loves you, you'll be a failure everywhere else. Because he wants to call you back to what he has originally called you for.

And so, Peter didn't understand God's ways. Peter didn't understand that God would... He didn't realize that God, even if a man fails, will still pick him up and use him. And when he went back to his fishing, God was the one who made sure that not a single fish came near Peter's boat that night.

God does amazing things, doesn't he? Makes your business fail, no matter how much you try, no matter how much you pray. Because he's trying to teach you something. Things go wrong.

You thought you prayed for success, and you got failure. Are you like that today? Well, Peter went through it, and he was the greatest apostle. So, there's something ahead of you.

Don't get discouraged. It says here that they tried all night, John 21, and they caught nothing. And Jesus, who knew exactly what was happening, stood on the shore, and who said he doesn't have a sense of humor? He says, well, boys, have you caught anything? He knew very well they hadn't caught anything.

And they said, no, Lord. I noticed this when Jesus would always ask people questions. Because he wants us to acknowledge our failure.

Very important. He knows all about it. He knew they had not caught nothing.

Why does he ask them? Because he wanted them to acknowledge their failure. And that's what he wants us to do. In fact, that's the first step to success.

To acknowledge we have failed without him. When we went off in some direction that we chose ourselves, we failed. The Lord says acknowledge it.

And said, okay. Now, I'll give you success. Do what I say again.

This is the second time. And they cast the net on the right side of the boat, and they got such a huge catch again, just like the previous time. And there was such a great number of fish, they had to drag it in.

It says in verse 8. And when they put the fish on the land, they counted. It says in verse 11, there were 153 large fish. It's very specific.

153 large fish. Now, I don't know how much a large fish weighs. Maybe 20 pounds or whatever it is.

How much would a fish like that cost? I don't know how much it costs here. Let's say \$40 for a large 20-pound fish. 153.

That's \$6,000 in one day. See, this is what's going on in Peter's mind. Don't forget.

Boy, that's fantastic. Okay, I pay \$600 tithe. How much is left? \$5,400.

Boy, I think this is better than being an apostle. I'll support God's work. I mean, I made a mistake last time trying to be an apostle.

But this time, I think I'll do this. And I'll support God's work. And I'll be faithful.

I'll be a millionaire in a couple of months. And while all these thoughts are going on in Peter's mind, Jesus says, Peter, verse 15, do you love me more than all these fish? It's quite a question. Jesus knew exactly what he was thinking.

And he says in verse 15, Simon, do you love me more than these fish? It was a pointed question, just like Jesus in his earthly ministry would often ask people a question concerning thoughts they were thinking. You know, like once in the house of a Pharisee called Simon, and a sinful woman was washing Jesus, wiping Jesus' feet with an ointment. And Simon was thinking, this guy can't be a prophet.

Because, I mean, this woman's a prostitute. And it says in Deuteronomy 23 that the wages of a prostitute must never be brought into the house of the Lord. And how could this person be a prophet if he doesn't know Deuteronomy 23? Because Jesus wasn't a legalist.

He didn't live by literal laws. He saw the love of that woman's heart. She had no other money other than what she had earned as a prostitute.

And she gave that to the Lord, and the Lord accepted. It's amazing how God doesn't go by silly little laws. His laws are meant... God didn't make man for the laws.

He made the laws for man. Jesus said that. But Jesus knew what Simon was thinking.

And he said, Simon, I want to say something to you. That was Jesus' way, you know. He'd answer the thoughts that were going on in people's mind.

And that's what we see here in his talking to Peter. Simon, do you love me more than these? And in a very weak way, he says, Lord, I love you. And three times he has to ask him.

And he says, Simon, I want to tell you, I have a far greater ministry for you than just making money and supporting my work. Now, it's true that some people are called to earn money and support God's work. In fact, in Romans chapter 12, if you see the gifts, gifts of prophecy, one of the gifts is the gift of giving money.

Did you know that? It's one of the gifts which hardly anybody seeks for. But anyway, it's one of those gifts which are mentioned in Romans chapter 12. And so, I don't despise that.

I believe there are people whom God has called to, were not called to be apostles, but they're equally important in the body of Christ, who have got a specific gift. I've met people like that, amazing people, whom God has given a specific gift to earn a lot and to give a lot for God's work. But Peter was not called

for that.

He was called to be an apostle. And you need to understand what your calling was. Your calling is.

And Peter responded. He said, Okay, I'll do what you say. He had the right attitude that when his business was prospering a second time, he said, No, Lord, if you call me, Jesus said, You know what you've got to do? You've got to look after, take care of my flock, tend them, take care of the little lambs, shepherd them.

That's what I want you to do. And he responded. And he knew that from then on that he had to be detached from money, from any attachment to it.

This has been the biggest failure I have seen in particularly full-time Christian workers, pastors, and preachers in particularly in the last century, the last 50 years. They have not understood what it is to be detached from the money God gives them. We read of a time when Peter, the same Peter, at a time when people were coming, selling their houses and lands and putting all their money at his feet.

He wouldn't touch it. A beggar who had sat outside the beautiful gate of the temple in Jerusalem for 40 years asks Peter for some money. And he said, I don't have any.

He could say, Well, you remember the days when I was a fisherman and I used to come by and you'd be here and I always had some money to give you. But I'm not a fisherman now. I'm an apostle and I don't have anything.

Oh, how different from many today who have made it big as apostles and not like the poverty they had when they were fishermen. Things have changed. It's like the story I heard of some great so-called Christian leader who said, You know, today we're not like Peter.

You know, showing somebody his wealthy church saying, We're not like Peter. We don't have to say silver and gold. I have none.

And that man said, Neither can you say like Peter. In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk. See, that's the condition of Christendom today.

Because they have tried to serve God and money. There are very, very few people who have learned to receive money and not get attached to it. Peter was one of them.

And there's a great example for us to follow. And I believe that all the books that are available in Christian bookshops today that tell you how you can trust God and become rich are allowed by God to test Christians today to see who's interested in me and who's interested in the 153 fish. The test is still the same.

Do you love me more than these? And you are being tested. And I'm being tested. And we pass or we fail.

Judas was also tested in the area of money. We know that he was the one who had the bag. And people were giving large amounts of money out of gratitude to Jesus for they were healed, they were blessed.

They were rich women. We read that Herod's business manager, his wife would give large amounts of money. We read in Luke chapter 8, verse 3 to Jesus' ministry.

And Jesus would say, give it to Judas. And Judas would collect all that money. And there was so much money in that bag that he could pilfer and pilfer and pilfer.

And people didn't even know something was missing. He was being tested to see whether he'd be faithful. When so much was coming in, what are you going to do with it? When God gives us money, I don't know whether you realize that he's testing you.

What are you going to do with it? What's going to be your attitude to it? There's nothing wrong in having it. There's nothing wrong in buying a house or clothes or the gadgets you need for your house and many, many things. It's not a question of what you buy.

Standards of living are different. I know in India, we have more than a thousand different standards of living. And no one can tell another at what standard of living they should live.

Unfortunately, many Christians, instead of judging themselves, judge others. And I never want to do that. I'm not here to judge anybody else.

God's given me only one person to judge, and that's myself. So we're not here to judge somebody else, to decide whether he's extravagant or he's wasting money. It's not my business.

God can judge people very well without my help and without yours. So we can leave him to do that part. But we need to see ourselves, whether when we get an abundance of money, whether we get attached to it.

Are we still faithful? Do we still know how to live in a way that would please God? Or does our heart get attached to it? The Bible says, set your mind on the things that are above. And that's the pull that the Holy Spirit is always trying to put in our mind. And we have to be very, very careful that money, which is the biggest power on earth, just like grace, is the biggest power in God's kingdom.

Money, which is the biggest power on earth, has got a tremendous ability. God's grace is always trying to pull us up and money is always trying to pull us down. Peter pulled away from that pull of money.

Judas Iscariot didn't. And that's what made him finally sink into hell. It's pretty heavy money, I'll tell you that.

It made him sink into hell. And so, Judas was tested like this. And he failed.

Peter passed. And that was one of the things that made the big difference between Peter and Judas Iscariot. Today, you and I are on probation with our money bag, just like Judas was in his day.

You know, we can ask, why didn't Jesus immediately expose Judas Iscariot? He knew. The Bible says in John chapter 6 that he knew that one of them was the devil. He knew that Judas was, you know, stealing.

None of the other disciples knew, but Jesus knew it. Why didn't he expose him immediately? Why didn't he take away the money bag from him? The Lord is very patient. He gives us one opportunity and another and another and another and another.

I remember once when, you know, one of the difficult things we have to do as elders in the church is sometimes to discipline people. And there are a couple of occasions in my own ministry in the last 30 years where I've had to do that difficult task. And once when we had to discipline a brother who had been

unfaithful with money for quite some time, I said, Lord, why didn't you reveal that to me earlier? Why after such a long time? We could have dealt with this earlier.

And the Lord said, it's because I'm more long-suffering than you are. If you had known it, you would have come down on him immediately. And so I hid it from you.

I learned something there that God is so long-suffering. And just because He hasn't come down on us yet doesn't mean He's not watching. He's seen our unfaithfulness and He's waiting, hoping that at least after a hundred failures we will learn.

After a hundred times of cheating, at least we will repent. He's waiting. He waited with Judas.

I don't know for how long. And finally, Judas exposed himself and fell away. God's mercy and patience doesn't endure forever.

There is a time limit to everything. In Noah's time, he waited a long time and then he judged. And so with man, God waits, but finally Judas was exposed and judged.

But he waited a long, long time. And I see that is the reason why God is waiting a long, long time with many who are making money in the name of Christianity today. Don't be deceived by them.

Don't think that because God hasn't judged them, that because His blessing is on their labor that He's happy with them. Remember, when Moses disobeyed God and hit the rock twice in Numbers 20, the water still flowed and two million people were blessed. But that didn't mean that Moses did what was right.

Two million people were blessed and after that God called Moses and said, now I've got to deal with you. You're not going to enter Canaan. He was punished.

So, God punishes people after they have blessed two million people. And that's the lesson we learn. And you will see that one day that when many stand before Him and say, Lord, we cast out demons in Your name.

We healed the sick. We prophesied. People appreciated our ministry.

So many were healed. So many were delivered. Say, that's all true.

I won't question that. But you, you live for money. You love sin.

Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. That was the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 7. And one day, believe me, you will see that happen before your eyes. And that day you will see that God does settle His accounts even though He may take a long time to settle it.

And so that's what we learn with Judas Iscariot. The second area where Peter and Judas were tested was in the area of being corrected. Now we know that there are very few human beings who can accept correction in a good way.

Very few Christians. We know that children get offended when they are corrected. It's very difficult.

Correction is an area where God tests us to see what is our attitude to correction. It's a very important area. As important as money because there are so many things wrong with us, children of Adam.

So many things. So many unchristlike attitudes in our behavior, in our speech, in our conversation. We need correction all the time.

But so many believers are offended when God corrects them either directly through His word or through a servant of His. Sometimes God can correct us if that's up to Him. He chooses to correct us sometimes directly through His word, sometimes in a sermon like this as you're listening, sometimes through a servant of God who may come to you and say to you, if you read the Old Testament, you read a number of occasions where God would send a prophet to a king and say, Thus said the Lord.

A very few people like David would accept what the prophet said. Most of them would get so angry with the prophet and lock him up in the jail or kill him or something like that. It was David who, when Nathan said, You're the man.

Thank God for such prophets who can stand before kings and tell them that they're guilty before God. David humbled himself and wrote Psalm 51, accepted it. So our attitude to correction is a test of whether God can promote us.

You know, it's like a child fails in a test, he doesn't get promoted to the next grade. It's like that. I wonder whether we have failed many a promotion in our past life because when we were corrected, we got offended.

Now Jesus loved people so much that he corrected them. We correct our children. Why? Because we love them.

Why don't you correct your children, your neighbor's children whom you don't know? We don't love them as much. We don't have as much responsibility for them. The ones we correct are the ones we love.

It's the same with Jesus. It says in Revelation chapter 3 and verse 20, 19, sorry, Revelation 3, 19, Jesus says, Those whom I love, I rebuke and I discipline. When I was a young Christian, if you had asked me, How do you know that Jesus loves you? I would say, Well, he died for me.

Shed his blood for my sins. Today, if you ask me the same question, I'd say, Yes, one, he died for me. But I'd say one more thing.

He rebukes me when I go astray. He disciplines me when I do something wrong. Have you come to that place of maturity? Or are you still a child who can only say, Jesus loves me because he died for me.

That's the proof of it. Have you gone beyond that to say, He rebukes me. He corrects me.

Sometimes directly. Sometimes through a faithful servant of his. Rebuking me.

Disciplining me. Because he loves me so much and he doesn't want me to go astray. I know times in my own life when I've been in bed with a fever or something and said, Lord, what are you trying to tell me? And the Lord reminds me of some slip up in my conversation the previous week.

It's such a small, trivial thing which the world wouldn't even call sin. And which I myself would not have called sin in my younger Christian days. But you know, as we grow, we become more and more sensitive to sin.

And I was so, I've been so amazed at God's tremendous love for me. That he wants to purify me and make me totally like Christ. He's so zealous to make me totally like Christ that when I slip up, just that small, wee tiny bit disciplines me.

Knocks me down. And I have wept tears of joy before the Lord and said, Lord, keep dealing with me like this. This is the way I want to be.

Always close to you. That when I slip up even slightly, I go one degree off track, I want you to pull me up. Will you pray that prayer? I tell you, if you're serious about it, you'll make more progress in the next six months than you've done in all your Christian life so far.

If you'll accept correction, as many as I love, I rebuke and say, give freedom to the Lord to correct you any way he chooses. He may choose to correct you through your wife. Believe it or not.

Do you know that God told Abraham, the father of faith. You read that in the book of Genesis chapter 21. Listen to Sarah and do whatever she tells you.

Now, sisters, don't just quote that verse to your husband. But, you know, there are times. He also told Job not to listen to his wife just to balance it out.

But what I'm saying is, don't think your wife is always wrong. Don't think your husband is always wrong. Leave it to God.

You know, I love what A.W. Tozer, who was a real prophet of God, one of those rare prophets of God, said this. He said, when somebody corrects you, don't ever ask who is doing the correcting. Just ask, is it right or not? I mean, if there's a black mark on my face, what does it matter? If it's an enemy who tells me, Zach, there's a black mark on your face.

Oh, I didn't even know that. Thank you so much for pointing that out. I mean, he's doing me a favor.

You know, one of my, because I've been serving the Lord all these years, one of the occupational hazards of serving the Lord is we get a lot of critical letters. A lot of criticisms and emails which are not always very pleasant. People are angry with something.

Usually, it's because they're convicted about something they read in some article of mine or some message. That's what works them up. But, I have followed this principle for all these years.

I read every one of them. I read them because our enemies tell us more truths about ourselves than our friends do. Our friends are so kind.

They won't even tell us when we've got bad breath. Leave alone leave alone anything more serious than that. But our enemies, oh, they're quick.

So, I read them. I read them again. Lord, is there something you're trying to tell me? Because I know that Abraham was not only corrected by Sarah, he was once corrected by a heathen king who said, Abraham, you're supposed to be a prophet of God like God told me last night.

Why are you such a liar saying that your wife was your sister? He felt bad. He took the correction. That's one thing I like about Abraham.

He was willing to be corrected. Great man of God. He was the greatest man of God on earth at that time.

But he took correction from a heathen king. Yeah. We must be willing to take correction even from non-Christians.

The important thing is only is it right or wrong. It doesn't matter who does the correction. I'll give you a guarantee.

If from today you decide to be open to correction from anyone, you'll see the tremendous progress you make in the next few months. Peter was willing for that. I'll show you an example of it.

We read in Matthew chapter 16 that Jesus You know, Peter was this unstable type of person before he got filled with the spirit and even after he got filled with the spirit it took a little time to get a little stable. It says here in Matthew chapter 16 that Jesus said Who do you say that I am? He told his disciples and Peter said Oh, I've got no doubt. You're the Christ, the son of the living God.

And Jesus said Blessed are you, Simon Barjona for flesh and blood does not reveal this to you but my father who is in heaven. And I tell you Peter on this rock I will build my church. The rock is of course the confession that Peter just made.

You are the Christ, the son of the living God. Now on that rock I will build my church and I'll give you Matthew 16, 19 the keys of the kingdom of heaven whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven and I think Peter's head began to swell like anything after he heard all these words. And that's when we are in danger when God blesses us.

I've seen through many years that the easiest thing in the world for God to do is to bless somebody and the most difficult thing for God to do is to bless somebody and keep him humble after that. It's true. It's the easiest thing in the world for God to bless any of us spiritually, materially, any way.

It's the most difficult thing for him to do to keep you humble after he's blessed you materially. After he's blessed you spiritually. Very difficult.

He could create the world in a moment but to keep a man humble how many years it takes to break him and crush him till he finally learns humility. The most important thing to learn in the Christian life. Please remember this brothers and sisters that three secrets of the Christian life humility humility you know the third one humility.

If you learned that you've learned everything. And that's one of the most important lessons that the Lord had to teach the disciples. But you know his head got swollen and then he begins to say things where he became a mouthpiece of Satan.

Ten seconds earlier he was the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit and ten seconds later he's the mouthpiece of Satan. It's an amazing thing. He says you are the Christ, the sinner the living God inspired by the Holy Spirit.

And then ten seconds later he says to the Lord you will never go to the cross. You mean there will be no salvation for the world? Who was the one who didn't want to go to the cross? It was the devil. And Jesus turned around and said to Peter in Matthew 16 23 Get behind me Satan! It's always what happens when our head gets puffed up.

The devil gets a foothold in our life immediately. And we begin to say things which are inspired by the devil. Even if ten seconds ago you were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

It just takes that such a short time for the devil to take over for someone who was inspired by the Holy Spirit a few moments earlier. Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me. You are not interested in the things of God.

You are only interested in the things of men. Imagine if you were there. I mean and he didn't say it privately by the way.

All the others listening. That's what makes it worse. In the presence of others you are inspired by the devil.

You are a stumbling block. You are only interested in your own things and not God's. You know what Peter said? You know when you compare Scripture with Scripture it was around the same moment of time that Jesus spoke in John chapter 6 and it says a lot of disciples left him.

John 6, 66 and then he turned around to the 12 and said well all these fellows who left only 12 of you are left. Do you also want to go away? And Peter is the one who replies in John 6 and verse 68 Lord to whom shall we go? These are the words of eternal life. What are the words of eternal life? Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me.

You are interested in the things of men not the things of God. Lord to whom shall I go? These are the words of eternal life for me. That was his attitude to correction.

That's what made Peter the man he became. Judas on the other hand was very different. We read in John's gospel chapter 12 when Mary brought a large amount of perfume which cost 300 denarii 300 denarii is the wages for 10 months or 300 days and you exclude the holidays that's one year's wages.

So you get an idea of how expensive that perfume was. One year's wages. You decide how much your salary is for one year.

That's what this woman poured out of the feet of Jesus. And of course if somebody does something as stupid as that you can always be sure that some Judas is scared to say hey why this waste of money on God's work. You could use it for something like giving to the poor etc.

Pouring it out on Jesus. And Jesus I love this about Jesus. I see this throughout the gospels.

He would always rise to the defense of somebody who was being criticized especially if it was a woman. Be careful. Whenever we criticize someone who is weak you'll always find Jesus is on the other side.

You try to throw stones at a woman caught in adultery you'll find Jesus defending her. You try to criticize some disciples who are plucking grain on the Sabbath day. You'll find Jesus defending them.

And here's a woman pouring out her love at Jesus' feet and some Judas Iscariot thinks that's a waste of money. Jesus takes her side. I love that.

That's why I never want to be on the side of those who do the criticizing. Because you'll always find Jesus is on the other side. I want to be on the side of those who do the appreciating.

You know Jesus was a great appreciator. He was always appreciating people. He looked at a centurion and said I've never seen faith like this in all of Israel.

He looked at this woman and said no she's done a good thing. She's anointed my body for the burial. I mean when I go when I do get buried women will come to anoint me and they won't get the opportunity because I would have risen.

But this woman has done it in advance. And she's the only one who's going to get an opportunity to anoint my body for the burial. She's done a good thing.

Leave her alone. And I praise the Lord for that. You know that spirit of always finding something good in an action.

You know our human nature is always to attribute a wrong motive. For I know why they're doing that. We attribute some selfish motive.

But not Jesus. He was so different. And this is where we see how much like the devil we are.

You know always trying to find some fault in somebody looking at something evil, something to criticize and God is not like that. You know when he looks at a man and where men would see a thousand things to criticize God will find one thing one thing to appreciate. That's how God is.

And the more like God we become, you look at a man and you find a thousand things to criticize you'll find the one thing to appreciate and you'll talk about that. I believe this is the reason why many children go astray. Because their parents never appreciate them.

How much time do you spend appreciating your children? Do you say something? Do you write something down for them? One of the things that my wife and I decided right from the time our children were small. Every one of them. On their birthday we would write a card expressing something to appreciate in them.

Every year we've done it right from the time they were small. And when we were, in the days when my wife and I were poor, when we couldn't afford to buy a card, we'd write a card. Just on a piece of paper.

And give it to them. It's so easy. It doesn't take more than two three minutes.

But it can make such a difference. And I tell you, some of them will preserve those cards. And remember how much their dad and mom appreciated them.

You know, these are little things. And you can do that for your wife. And for your husband.

These are the little things that can make life so different. Bring people to the Lord. We see here, Jesus was like that.

But Judas was there to criticize. And when Jesus turned around and said, think of this rebuke. Leave her alone.

John 12, 7. That's all he said. He didn't say such strong words like he said to Peter. Those whom the Lord loved more, he rebuked more.

What did he call the Pharisees? A generation of vipers. What did he call Peter? Satan. And yet the Pharisees got offended and Peter didn't.

It's amazing. And what did he say to Judas? Something so trivial as, leave her alone man. She's done a good thing.

And Judas was so offended that Jesus corrected him publicly for such a small thing and supported this woman whom he, he had expressed an opinion of how that money should be spent. And Jesus disagreed with him. Have you found in some meeting, board meeting or something like that, you've expressed your clever opinion and somebody disagrees with you and knocks you down? How do you feel that time? You know what Judas did? I want to show you something very interesting.

In Matthew 26, where we see a parallel passage, it says Jesus said, leave her alone. Wherever this gospel is preached, this thing that this woman did is going to be proclaimed. Leave her alone.

And it says immediately Jesus said that in verse Matthew 26, verse 10 to 13 And as soon as Judas heard it this is very important to see, as soon as he heard these words, he got up and it says in the next verse, he went immediately to the chief priest and said, tell me how much you'll give me to betray this fellow. He was so offended. You know what triggered his going to the chief priest? This correction.

You see the difference between Peter getting a correction and saying, Lord, these are the words of eternal life. And Judas being corrected and going to the chief priest to betray Jesus. We see these two reactions among Christians even today.

Perhaps the Lord speaking to you. And that's what makes the difference between a Peter and a Judas Iscariot. You're being tested when you're corrected.

Tested to see whether you're humble enough to receive God's grace or proud so that God is compelled to resist you for he resists the proud. One last thing I want to say is both Peter and Judas Iscariot failed. Both repented, but in two different ways.

It says about Peter when he denied the Lord three times and the Lord looked at him. He wept bitterly. This strong, muscular, hairy fisherman weeping.

There are times when the strongest of men need to weep for sin. When we have dishonored the Lord. When was the last time, my brother, sister, when you wept because you dishonored the Lord? Because you slipped up? The more sensitive you are to sin, the more you will weep when you feel you've dishonored the Lord during the day.

Do you have the habit of examining yourself when you go to bed at night? It's been my habit for many years. Many times I have wept on my pillow at night because somewhere during the day I slipped up somewhere in my thoughts or a rude word somewhere or something and said, Lord, that was so un-Christ-like. Or a little bit of pride came into me because of something and repentance, repentance.

That's how we're supposed to live. Because, you know, that leads to an extremely joyful life because the Bible says, Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. They'll be strengthened.

And I've discovered through the years that if you live like this, you get victory. God sees that you take sin seriously. And He gives you grace to overcome such that you never lose your temper.

Such that you never get discouraged. You live in joy all the time. You can overcome.

You get free from fear and anxiety. The secret is repentance. Weeping bitterly before God like Peter.

The Bible also says in Matthew 27 that when Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned he felt remorse. In verse 3. And you know, he even made restitution. He returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.

And he said, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. Jesus looked at Judas too when he came to him in the garden. Just like he looked at Peter.

And he said, Friend, why have you come? Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss? It was the same compassion in his look towards Judas as in look towards Peter. But the repentance of both of them was different. Judas confessed his sin to the priests.

The first of many others who have done that subsequently. Peter repented before God. That's the difference.

When you repent, don't confess to a priest. That's the way of Judas. Go to God and say, Lord, I've slipped up.

Have mercy on me. And I tell you, you may have fallen deeper than Judas. The Lord will forgive you.

He'll welcome you and give you a ministry, just like he gave Peter. It all depends on whether you honestly come to him and say, Lord, I've failed. Let's pray.

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