



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- **Matthew 26:30**

**And when they had
sung an hymn,
they went out into
the mount of Olives.**

- **Matthew 26:31**

Then saith Jesus unto them,

- **All of you shall be offended because of me this night:**
 - **for it is written,
I will smite the shepherd,**
- **and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.**

- As they began that lonesome walk to the

Garden of Gethsemane.

- Must they not have been filled with sorrow.
- Who was this vile disciple Jesus had just mentioned.

- What disciple could stoop so low as to betray their Lord?
- But before we get ahead of ourselves, let us take a closer look at this story.

- As the disciples follow their Master to the Mount of Olives they share His company, but hardly His thoughts.

- Much is seen by Him which is hidden from them.

- This is brought out in two principal ways:
- First, with the general warning which He addresses to them all;
- Secondly, with the special warning which He addresses to Peter alone.

- I. The first warnings is to all.
 - His words reveal how much He knew of what was to happen that night.
- “All of you shall be offended in Me this night”
(**Matthew 26:31**).

- Nothing looked less likely this thing of which He spoke.
 - Had not these disciples followed Him through many trials (**Luke 22:28**)?
 - And at very great cost (**Matthew 19:27**)?
- Had they not shown their loyalty?
 - And now Jesus gives such a dire warning!

- How strange that in a few hours, they would be acting inconsistently with all this!

- Ashamed to be seen in His company!

- Scandalised at the accusation of being his disciple.

- Still more strange to hear it said that this had been predicted of old.
 - He was to be “smitten,” and they were to be “scattered”
(**Zechariah 13:7**)

- ◆ Not only was
His accusation
regarding their actions true

- ◆ But those very words
ring true in our ears.

- ◆ Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep
have gone astray;
we have turned every
one to his own way;

- In the mind of Peter there is no need of this warning.
 - No matter what the Master may think, Peter is confident that he will never forsake Him.
 - In fact he is willing to die to defend Him.

- Why else was he wearing that sword?
(**John 18:10**)
- Peter was willing to cut a man's head off if need be.
- So don't talk to Peter about deserting his Lord!
(**Matthew 26:33**).
- He is confident in his ignorance.

- How definite are the words of Christ.
 - Declaring confidently that Peter himself shall be an example of what He has said.
 - That he shall not only be “offended” with Him,
 - But so much as to “deny” that he had ever known Him at all.

- And then to add insult to injury that he shall do this three times in succession.
- That he shall do it also, before the sun comes up in the morning

- Peter was extremely shocked that His dear friend thought so little of him.

- Had not Jesus just given a warning to all, but now a warning given directly to Peter.

- A warning that Peter vehemently denies

- Matthew 26:35

**Peter said unto him,
Though I should die with thee,**

- **yet will I not deny thee.**

- **Likewise also said
all the disciples.**

- The disciples are thinking that the Teacher has always been right but this time he this wrong.
 - “*The Teacher is wrong,*”
they say,
“*and the disciple is right.*”
 - Never before have they contradicted the Master,
but this time they must stand their ground.

- Was there ever such a close comparison of darkness and light?
- Of light which exceeded all the light of mankind?

- Of darkness
which thought itself
light?
- Of ignorance
which thought itself
wisdom?
- Of foolishness
which thought itself
knowledge.

- The Savior knows, the Savior feels, all that is coming upon Him!
- He may be almost said, therefore, to be crucified in anticipation, as well as in fact!

- Yet He is far from having the sympathy of His own disciples.
- He cannot even persuade them that there is any necessity for it.
- None needed it more, none was farther from it, than He was at this time.

- How **instructive** is this story!

- How difficult it is to teach those

- who think that they know!**

- **Proverbs 26:12**

- Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a **fool** than for him.**

- **Proverbs 26:12**

**Do you see a man
who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool
than for him.**

- Of all things to be **distrusted**,
is trust in ourselves!
- Of all gifts to be coveted,
that of a teachable heart!

- There's no doubt that Peter truly loved the Savior.

- It was through Peter that God had given the church its

- '*great profession*' concerning its Lord.

- **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"**
(Matthew 16:16).
- It was that profession that Jesus said would be the **"rock"** upon which **He would build His church**
(v. 17-18).

- No follower of Jesus was more privileged than Peter.

- No believer is more worthy of our love and esteem.

- And yet,
Peter's denial would have to be considered among the greatest moral failures in all of sacred history.

- What a horrible turn of events this was.
- And yet, I say this with the utmost love and respect for the great apostle Peter:

- I'm very glad that
the story of his tragic failure
is recorded for us in Scripture.
- I draw comfort from
the fact that it happened.
- There's some
very good news of hope
in it for the rest of us
imperfect followers of the Lord Jesus
who like Peter often fail Him!

- Dear brothers and sisters in Christ;
have you ever failed the Lord Jesus?
 - Have you ever, in some say,
denied Him?
 - It's a pretty stupid question;
isn't it?
 - Of course you have! more times
than you would want to admit!
 - And so have I.

- **"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"
(Luke 6:46).**

- Peter's denial of the Lord is surely the most noteworthy example in the Bible of a follower of Jesus **who failed Him miserably.**

- But if we were honest, we have to admit that we have each one of us failed Him and denied Him **again and again.**

- Tucked away in this story of Peter's failure is the good news that, in our Lord's kingdom, such failures do not ever have to be fatal.

- In this passage **certain characteristics of Jesus** are clear.
- (# 1) We see the **realism** of Jesus.
 - He **knew** what lay ahead.
 - Matthew actually sees the flight of the disciples **foretold in the Old Testament.**
(Zechariah 13:7).

- Jesus was no easy optimist, who could comfortably shut his eyes to the facts.

- He foresaw what would inevitably happen and yet he went on.

- (# 2) We see the confidence of Jesus.
- "After I have been raised,
" he says, "I will go
before you into Galilee."
- Always Jesus saw beyond the Cross.
- He was every bit as certain of the glory as he was of the suffering.

- (# 3) We see the sympathy of Jesus.
 - He knew that his disciples would abandon him in the moment of his deepest need;
 - but he does not upbraid them,
 - he does not condemn them,
- he does not heap reproaches on them,
 - or call them useless creatures.

- So far from that, he tells them that when that terrible time is past, he will meet them again.
- It is the greatness of Jesus that he knew men at their worst and still loved them.

- He knows our human weakness;
- He knows how certain we are to make mistakes and to fail in loyalty;
- But that knowledge does not turn his love to bitterness or contempt.
- Jesus has nothing but sympathy for the man who in his weakness is driven to sin.

- This passage shows us something about Peter.
- Surely his fault is clear; over-confidence in himself.
 - And he thought that all by himself he could face any situation which might arise.

- He thought that he was stronger than Jesus knew him to be.
- We shall be safe only when our confidence knows its weakness.
 - And that Christ is our strength.
"Therefore, LORD, strengthen my hands!"
(**Nehemiah 6:9**)

- No one can read this passage without being struck with the **staggering honesty** of the New Testament.
- If ever there was an incident which one might have expected to be **hushed up, this was it**
 - And yet here it is told **in all its stark shame.**

- So far from suppressing this story, **Matthew made it an essential part** of his gospel; and did so for the very best of reasons.
 - Every time the story is told, he is saying, **"That is the way that Jesus can forgive"**.
- He forgives me even when I failed him **in his bitterest hour of need.**
 - That is what **Jesus** can do.

- But, before we condemn Peter too severely let us note a few things.
 - It is Peter the coward!
 - It is Peter the brave!
 - It is to be or not to be!
 - Which is it?
 - Or is it both?

- And yet it is quite wrong

to regard Peter with nothing but unsympathetic condemnation.

- The fact is that the disaster which happened to Peter is one which could have happened only to a man of the most heroic courage.

- All the other disciples
ran away:

Peter alone did not.

- For Peter to enter
the courtyard
of the High Priest's house
was to walk into the lion's den
and yet he did it.

- ♦ The first denial happened in the courtyard;
 - ♦ No doubt the maid-servant had marked Peter as one of the most prominent followers of Jesus and had recognized him.

- ◆ After that recognition anyone would have thought that Peter would have fled for his life;
- ◆ A coward would certainly have been gone into the night as quickly as he could.
 - ◆ But not Peter; although he did retire as far as the porch.

- He was torn between two feelings.
- In his heart there was a fear that made him want to run away;
- But in his heart, too, there was a love which kept him there.

- Again, in the porch he was recognized;
 - And this time he swore he did not know Jesus.
 - And still he did not go

- But Peter's second denial had given him away.

”I do not know the man”

(Matthew 26:72)

- From his speech it was clear that **he was a Galilean**

- **For a third time**

Peter was accused of being a follower of Jesus.

- **Peter went further this time;**
not only did he swear that
he did not know Jesus;
 - He actually
cursed his Master's name.
- But still it is clear that Peter
had no intention of
leaving that courtyard.
 - And then the **cock** crew.

- What happened to Peter after that we do not know,
- For the gospel story draws a kindly veil over the agony of his shame.

- But **before**
we condemn him,
- We must
remember very clearly
that few of us
would ever have
had the courage
to be in that courtyard
at all.

- And there is one last thing to be said
- It was love which gave Peter that courage;

- It was love which riveted him there in spite of the fact that he had been recognized three times;

- It was love which made him remember the words of Jesus.

- It was love which sent him out into the night to weep

- 1Peter 4:8

And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves:

for love shall cover the multitude of sins.

- **The lasting impression**
of this whole story
is not of
Peter's cowardice,
but of Peter's love.

- **John 13:34**

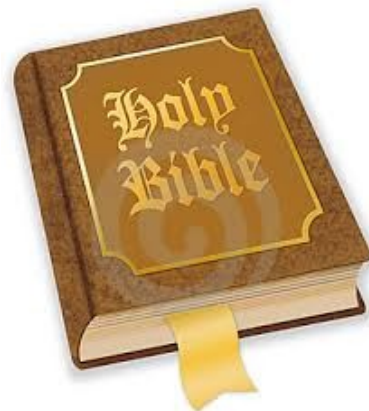
**A new commandment
I give unto you,**

- **That ye love one another;**
 - **as I have loved you,**
 - **that ye also
love one another.**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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