

Luke 22:54-71
September 20, 2020

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: When do you think Christians are most tempted to either distance themselves from Jesus, or even deny Jesus? What might those scenarios look like? [Let people engage]

Transition: The fact is that all of us at times fail the Lord badly. And as you can guess, Peter will be a major character in today's storyline. Luke draws a stark contrast between Peter's failure to confess Christ under pressure and Jesus' faithful confession under pressure. Jesus confessed that He is the Messiah and Son of God before the powerful Jewish Sanhedrin, but Peter failed to confess Christ before a lowly servant girl. When you place Peter's earlier confession, "You are the Christ of God" (9:20) next to "I do not know Him," you wonder how the same words could have come out of the same mouth within the space of a few months.¹

But this same story is filled with great news! Even when we fail the Lord badly, if we will repent, God will restore us and use us in His service. Let's read the text.

BOOK:

Peter Disowns Jesus

⁵⁴ Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵ But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. ⁵⁶ A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."

⁵⁷ But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

⁵⁸ A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."

"Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

⁵⁹ About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."

⁶⁰ Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ 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."

⁶² And he went outside and wept bitterly.

The Guards Mock Jesus

⁶³ The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. ⁶⁴ They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" ⁶⁵ And they said many other insulting things to him.

Jesus Before Pilate and Herod

⁶⁶ At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. ⁶⁷ "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us."

Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, ⁶⁸ and if I asked you, you would not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

⁷⁰ They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?”

He replied, “You are right in saying I am.”

⁷¹ Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

The story of Peter’s denials is recorded in Scripture to underscore these two great facts: the weakness and sinfulness of even the most prominent saints; and, the greatness and abundance of God’s love and grace toward those who fail. For those who are walking with the Lord, this story warns us to take heed lest we fall. For any who have fallen, the story holds out the hope of pardon through God’s abundant grace if you will turn back to Him.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 270-272). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

A Crowing Cock (Luke 22:54–62)

Our Lord endured six different “trials” before He was condemned to be crucified, three before the Jews and three before the Roman authorities. First, He was taken to Annas, the former high priest who was an influential man in the nation and retained his former title (John 18:12–13). Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, his son-in-law, who was the official high priest (Matt. 26:57). Finally, at daybreak, He was tried before the Sanhedrin and found guilty (Luke 22:66–71).

The Jews did not have the right of capital punishment (John 18:31–32), so they had to take Jesus to the Roman authorities to get Him crucified. First, they took Him to Pilate (Luke 23:1–4), who tried to avoid a decision by sending Him to Herod (Luke 23:6–12), who sent Him back to Pilate! (Luke 23:13–25) When Pilate saw that he could not escape making a decision, he gave the Sanhedrin what they asked for and condemned Jesus to die on a Roman cross.

It was during the second Jewish “trial,” the one before Caiaphas, that Peter in the courtyard denied his Lord three times. How did it happen? To begin with, Peter did not take the Lord’s warnings seriously (Matt. 26:33–35; Luke 22:31–34), nor did he “watch and pray” as Jesus had instructed in the Garden (Mark 14:37–38). For all of his courage and zeal, the Apostle Peter was totally unprepared for Satan’s attacks.

Jesus was led out of the Garden, and “Peter followed afar off” (Luke 22:54). This was the next step toward his defeat. In spite of all the sermons that have been delivered on this text, criticizing him for walking at a distance, Peter was not intended to follow at all. The “sheep” were supposed to scatter and then meet Jesus later in Galilee (Matt. 26:31). In fact, when He was arrested, Jesus said to the guards, “Let these [disciples] go their way” (John 18:8–9), a clear signal that they were not to follow Him.

Peter and John followed the mob and gained entrance into the courtyard of Caiaphas’ house (John 18:15–16). It was a cold night (though Jesus had been sweating!), and Peter first *stood* by the fire (John 18:18) and then *sat down* with the servants and officers (Luke 22:55). Sitting there in enemy territory (Ps. 1:1), Peter was an easy target. While he was thinking only of his own comfort, his Master was being abused by the soldiers (Luke 22:63–65).

First, it was one of the high priest’s servant girls who challenged Peter. She accused him of being with Jesus and of being one of His disciples. Peter lied and said, “Woman, I am not one of His disciples! I don’t know Him and I don’t know what you are talking about!” He left the fire and went out to the porch (Matt. 26:71), and the cock crowed the first time (Mark 14:68). This in itself should have warned him to get out, but he lingered.

Peter could not escape notice, and a second servant girl told the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth! He is one of them!” For a second time, Peter lied and said, “I am not! I don’t know the Man!”

The bystanders were not convinced, especially when one of Malchus’ relatives showed up and asked, “Didn’t I see you in the Garden with Him?” Others joined in and said, “Surely you are one of them, because the way you talk gives you away. You talk like a Galilean.” (The Galileans had a distinctive dialect.) At this point Peter used an oath and said, “I don’t know the Man! I don’t know what you are talking about!” It was then that the cock crowed for the second time and the Lord’s prediction was fulfilled (Mark 14:30).

At that moment, Jesus, being led away to the next trial, turned and looked at Peter; and His look broke Peter's heart. While the bystanders were watching Jesus, Peter slipped out and went off and wept bitterly. It is to Peter's credit that all the Lord had to do was *look* at him to bring him to the place of repentance.

For one cock to crow at the right time while the other birds in the city remained silent was certainly a miracle. But the crowing of the cock was much more than a miracle that fulfilled our Lord's words; it was also a special message to Peter, a message that helped to restore him to fellowship again. What encouragements did the crowing of the cock give to the Apostle Peter?

First, it was an assurance to him that Jesus Christ was still in control of things even though He was a prisoner, bound and seemingly helpless before His captors. Peter could recall witnessing his Lord's authority over the fish, the winds, and the waves, and even over disease and death. No matter how dark the hour was for Peter, Jesus was still in control!

Second, the crowing of the cock assured Peter that he could be forgiven. Peter had not been paying close attention to the Word of God. He had argued with it, disobeyed it, and even run ahead of it, but now he "remembered the word of the Lord" (Luke 22:61), and this brought him hope. Why? Because with the word of warning was also a promise of restoration! Peter would be converted and strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:32).

Finally, the miracle of the cock told Peter that a new day was dawning, for after all, that is what the rooster's call means each day. It was not a new day for Judas or for the enemies of the Lord, but it was a new day for Peter as he repented and wept bitterly. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17). On Resurrection morning, the angel sent a special message to encourage Peter (Mark 16:7), and the Lord Himself appeared to Peter that day and restored him to fellowship (Luke 24:34).

Each one of us, at one time or another, will fail the Lord and then hear (in one way or another) "the crowing of the cock." Satan will tell us that we are finished, that our future has been destroyed, but that is not God's message to us. It was certainly not the end for Peter! His restoration was so complete that he was able to say to the Jews, "But you denied the Holy One and the Just!" (Acts 3:14) Peter did not have 1 John 1:9 to read, but he did experience it in his own heart.

A Glorious Throne (Luke 22:63–71)

Jesus had not yet officially been declared guilty, and yet the soldiers were permitted to mock Him and abuse Him. Here they mocked His claim to being a Prophet; later they would mock His claim to being a King (John 19:1–3). But their mockery, sinful as it was, actually fulfilled Christ's own promise (Matt. 20:19). He is an example to us of how we should behave when sinners ridicule us and our faith (see 1 Peter 2:18–25).

It is generally believed that the Jewish council could not vote on capital offenses at night; so the chief priests, scribes, and elders had to assemble again as soon as it was day. Whether this ruling was in force in our Lord's day, we are not sure, but it does explain the early morning meeting of the Sanhedrin.

This was the climax of the religious trial, and the key issue was, "Is Jesus of Nazareth the Christ of God?" They were sure His claims were false and that He was guilty of blasphemy, and the penalty for blasphemy was death (Lev. 24:10–16).

Jesus knew the hearts of His accusers, their unbelief, and intellectual dishonesty (Luke 20:1–8). It was futile to preach a sermon or enter into a debate. They had already rejected the evidence

He had given them (John 12:37–43), and more truth would only have increased their responsibility and their judgment (John 9:39–41).

Our Lord called Himself “Son of man,” a messianic title found in Daniel 7:13–14. He also claimed to have the right to sit “on the right hand of the power of God” (Luke 22:69), a clear reference to Psalm 110:1, another messianic passage. It was this verse that He quoted earlier that week in His debate with the religious leaders (Luke 20:41–44). Jesus saw beyond the sufferings of the cross to the glories of the throne (Phil. 2:1–11; Heb. 12:2).

That our Lord is seated at the right hand of the Father is a truth that is often repeated in the New Testament (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55–56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1). This is the place of honor, authority, and power; and by claiming this honor, Jesus was claiming to be God.

Only Luke records the direct question in Luke 22:70 and our Lord’s direct answer, which literally was: “You say that I am.” They would use this testimony later when they brought Him to Pilate (John 19:7). Some liberal theologians say that Jesus never claimed to be God, and we wonder what they do with this official trial? The Jewish religious leaders knew what Jesus was talking about, and this is why they condemned Him for blasphemy.

The “religious trial” was now over. The next step was to put Him through a civil trial and convince the Roman governor that Jesus of Nazareth was a criminal worthy of death. The Son of God was to be crucified, and only the Romans could do that.

Referring to the Jewish authorities, William Stalker wrote in *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*: “It may be said that they walked according to their light; but the light that was in them was darkness.”

“None so blind as those that will not see,” wrote Matthew Henry, the noted Bible commentator.

“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light” (John 12:36).

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 261)

a. *At the house of the high priest (22:54–65) (Matt. 26:57–75; Mark 14:53–54, 65–72; John 18:12–18, 25–27).*

22:54. Jesus was taken **into the house of the high priest**, who was Caiaphas (Matt. 26:57; John 18:13; cf. comments on Luke 3:2 and see the chart on Annas’ family at Acts 4:5–6). But Jesus first was taken to Caiaphas’ influential father-in-law, Annas (John 18:13). **Peter**, remaining true to his word up to this point (Luke 22:33), **followed** the Lord even though it could have meant death for him.

22:55–62. Within several hours **Peter** denied Jesus three times, as He had foretold (v. 34). Peter’s denials got progressively more vehement (vv. 57–58, 60). After **the rooster crowed**, Jesus **turned and looked straight at Peter**. The combination of events along with Jesus’ look caused Peter to remember the words Jesus spoke earlier in the evening. Peter realized what he had done. His bitter weeping showed he was heartbroken over the fact he had **denied** Jesus.

22:63–65. While at the house of the high priest, **Jesus** began to be mistreated by **the men who were guarding** Him. They mocked Him and beat Him. Blindfolding Him, they mockingly asked Him to **prophecy** by telling **who hit** Him. Apparently, they knew of His claims, but they had a misunderstanding of true prophecy.

b. *At the council of the elders (22:66–71) (Matt. 26:59–66; Mark 14:55–64; John 18:19–24).*

22:66–67a. **The council of the elders** (also known as the Sanhedrin) was the Jewish nation's official judicial body. This council was their final court of appeals. If the council found **Jesus** guilty, it was the last word—the nation found Him guilty. They met **at daybreak** since it was illegal to assemble at night. The council wanted to know **if** Jesus was **the Christ**, that is, if Jesus was truly presenting Himself as the Messiah. At this point they were not interested in other charges. Since the council knew that Jesus had been presenting Himself as the Messiah, they may have been giving Him an opportunity to recant. Or perhaps they were trying to shame Him in front of His followers.

22:67b–70. **Jesus** affirmed His authority as Messiah, the One who, after His death, resurrection, and Ascension, would **be seated at the right hand of the mighty God**, the place of honor (cf. Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:33; 5:31; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22). Also He plainly told the council that He is **the Son of God**.

22:71. The council decided they had received all the **testimony** they needed. In their view Jesus was guilty of blasphemy. So they were ready to hand Him over to the Roman authorities. The council could give a guilty verdict, but the Jews at that time were not allowed to impose the death penalty. Only Rome could sentence to death. Even though Jesus had performed messianic miracles, the leaders of the nation refused to believe. They acted on behalf of the nation in rejecting Christ.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (pp. 1558–1559). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

22:58 Although in Mt 26:71 and Mk 14:69 the second denial was initiated by a woman, Luke recorded Peter responding to a man. This is easy to explain. Perhaps the bystanders began to press Peter as a result of the woman's actions, and Peter could have been responding to one of them. While Mark said that the first woman who questioned Peter was also the one who identified him to the bystanders, Matthew said a second woman did so. The best solution is to assume that the women together stirred up the crowd and Peter responded both to the women and to the men in the group. The point remains the same, however, namely that Peter denied Jesus several times, as Jesus had predicted he would.

22:61 On the various accounts of the rooster crowing, see note on Mk 14:30, 68, 72.

22:66–71 This is a second, more official trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin. The preliminary hearing is recorded in Mk 14:53–65 (Mt 26:57–68). See note on Mk 15:1. Jesus' statement did not imply that the council would see His second coming but rather would see Him sitting at the right hand of the Father when the Spirit would be poured out and the church would begin its inexorable expansion from Jerusalem.

Butler, T. C. (2000). *Luke* (Vol. 3, pp. 374–379). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

E. Denying the Glory: I Don't Know Him (22:54–62)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *The strongest disciple of Jesus can fall prey to Satan's temptation and deny him, but such denial brings bitter sorrow and guilt.*

22:54. The arrest was made. Jesus stood at the house of the high priest. What should have been holy ground, keeping the leading religious official in Judaism holy and pure, became the scene of the most evil deed in history: the mockery of a trial that convicted the Son of God. Again, a disciple followed Jesus (see v. 39), but this time at a distance. He followed with curiosity to see what would happen, not with devotion to identify himself with the Master.

22:55. This disciple did not follow Jesus for long. He distanced himself from the Master until he had joined the crowd around a comfortable campfire. He had quietly shifted identities. No longer a follower of Jesus, he became one of the crowd, curious to see what was about to happen and eager for a good time around the fire.

22:56–61. The rugged Galilean fisherman could not hide among the group at the Jerusalem court. He stood out from the crowd. A slave girl quickly noticed him. She took a second and third look. Yes, she was sure of it. This man had been with Jesus.

Without thinking, Peter went into a defensive mode. “No way! Not me! Woman, I am not acquainted with him.” Peter had denied Jesus, but what he had done did not sink in. He had successfully defended his right to enjoy the warmth of the campfire.

Another passerby noticed Peter. Same results. “You are one of them, too.”

“Not so, man. Not me.” Peter again moved away from Jesus and joined the crowd more intimately. A defensive reaction changed his identity without him being aware of the immensity of what he had said and done.

An hour passed, still the devil’s hour. Another face in the crowd spoke up, recognizing the Galilean accent: “This man was certainly with him, since he is also a Galilean.”

“I don’t know what you are talking about.” Peter was completely distant from Jesus. He had denied three times any knowledge of or relationship to the man. He now belonged to the crowd and to the devil. Satan had sifted him and found him wanting.

A rooster’s crow, not a human voice, made Peter realize what he had done. Reinforcement came in one glance from Jesus. Jesus’ words stabbed their way into Peter’s memory: “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.”

22:62. The brashly self-confident man disappeared. Now he distanced himself from the crowd. Outside by himself, he wept bitter tears. Grief overwhelmed him. Follow Jesus to prison and to death? He could not even follow him to a mockery of a trial. The grief was as deep as Judas’s later proved to be, but the response and subsequent actions would be quite different. Guilt led Judas to suicide. It led Peter to Pentecost.

F. Sentenced to Glory: Mockery of Justice (22:63–71)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *Jesus was sentenced to death not because he deserved it, but because religious leaders were determined to have him dead at any price.*

22:63. Luke’s trial report begins on an ironic note: guards beat and mocked Jesus. Guards should protect the prisoner and ensure fair treatment and justice. Instead, they turned on Jesus. *Mockery* is a key term in Luke’s passion predictions (18:32) and in the trial (23:11, 36). The justice system of Israel decided the verdict even before Jesus’ trial.

22:64. Children’s games replaced legal maneuvers. They blindfolded Jesus and asked him to indicate who hit him, just as children would do—but children would hit, not beat. Jesus was supposed to use his God-given powers in a game. The Prophet without parallel was ordered to prophesy who had hit him. What lack of respect for who Jesus was and for what God did in sending Jesus to earth.

22:65. The ultimate charge against Jesus would be blasphemy. The accusers practiced before accusing. They called Jesus names and tried to anger him. Their opinion of Jesus was formed before the trial began.

22:66. Daylight came, opening the way for an “official” meeting and conclusion by the Sanhedrin, Judaism’s official council. Note that Mark 14:53–64 and Matthew 26:59–66 appear to describe a nighttime trial, certainly a violation of Jewish legal practice. The site in the high priest’s home is irregular, for the temple was the center of Jewish justice. Jesus was not allowed to defend himself. Jesus never used the name of God and so could not be technically guilty of blasphemy. Jewish death-sentence trials were supposed to last two days, not the one day given Jesus. The trial came during the Passover festival, when no trials were allowed. Jesus’ accusers allowed contradictory evidence but listened only to the part that agreed with their predetermined verdict. Jewish practice let the least experienced members of the council cast votes first, with the high priest casting the final vote. In Jesus’ trial the high priest immediately pronounced a guilty verdict. Nothing can cover the fact that justice was not served, that the justice system became pure mockery.

22:67. The trial opened with one major question: Are you the Messiah? Jesus was clever enough to avoid the trap. He turned the charge back on the council. If I told you, how many would really believe me? he said. You are not asking for information. You are seeking a way to indict me and kill me.

22:68. What is more, if I had the position to ask the questions so that you had to give the answers, he continued, you would do just what I am doing. You would not answer. Why should I do any differently?

22:69. Jesus made a claim no one expected. He used the term for himself that he had consistently used: *Son of Man* (5:24; 6:5, 22; 7:34; 9:22, 26, 44, 58; 11:30; 12:8, 10, 40; 17:22, 24, 26, 30; 18:8, 31; 19:10; 21:27, 36; 22:48). He placed himself in an unexpected position: next to God in heaven. He claimed to be planning to leave the earth, presumably through death, and to occupy heaven’s throne. Moreover, he made the claim in the language of Scripture (Ps. 110; cf. Luke 20:41–44). The claim was not for some far distant time (cf. 21:27), but for the immediate present. He would get the chance to ask questions. He would be the judge. These people now asking questions proudly and presumptuously would be reduced to standing before Christ’s judgment seat.

22:70. The Jewish religious leaders were outraged. Has he claimed divine prerogatives for himself? they asked. Does he have a privileged position with God that no one else shares? No one else can walk into the presence of God. Only the high priest once a year can enter the inner courts of the temple, much less the heavenly throne room.

Jesus’ response was intentionally ambiguous. He did not give his own opinion. He simply quoted them and let their statement stand without denying it. They could take the answer any way they wanted to.

22:71. Of course, they took it in the worst possible way. They claimed he had made divine claims for himself, had put himself on equality with God, and had accepted the title Son of God from the Psalms. Jesus was given no opportunity to defend himself. No witnesses were called. Jesus was allowed to condemn himself on their interpretation of what he meant by an ambiguous statement. Human Jewish judges, not knowing they actually stood before the one who would judge the universe, rendered the verdict. They sought to humiliate and abase him. Instead, they were on the way to exalting and glorifying him on the cross and in the heavenly throne room.

MAIN IDEA REVIEW: *Jesus experienced the unfair, unjust nature of earthly existence in his betrayal, arrest, unfair trial, in his denial by the leader of his band of disciples. Still, he showed the world that he was the Son of God.*

III. CONCLUSION

Unswerving Loyalty to the Father

Jesus was betrayed by the kiss of a greedy friend. This friend was controlled by Satan, but so was the leader of Jesus' faithful followers, as he denied the one whose body would be broken and whose blood would be spilled in the new covenant. Jesus never submitted to the will of man, not even to his own will. He submitted only in prayer to the Father's will and so was willing to drink the cup of death, the cup of the new covenant. Arrested and tried in an unfair, illegal, unjust manner, he endured mocking, beating, game playing, and an unfair trial. In so doing, he revealed that he was the Son of God who would join the Father in exercising rule and judgment over the entire world. The hour of darkness had come. The power of darkness appeared to be in control, but only because this was the Father's plan. Nothing is done outside the Father's plan. No one exercises control but the Father. The unjust trial and conviction of the Son of Man and Son of God occurred because this was the Father's will.

PRINCIPLES

- The world does not operate on the rules of justice and fairness, because people are evil and are subject to control by the power of evil.
- Greed leads people to heinous acts.
- The kingdom of God will appear one day in all its fullness, and God's people will join him at the heavenly banquet.
- The Lord's Supper calls us to remember what Jesus did for us in dying on the cross and establishing the new covenant.
- Authority in God's kingdom is exercised by servants, not by self-seeking people.
- Self-confidence and dependence on human willpower lead to denial of Jesus.
- God's people need to pray for power not to yield to temptation and to remain faithful to Christ in the darkest hours.
- Jesus' kingdom is not established through physical means or human warfare.
- Jesus is God's Son who sits at God's right hand to judge the world.

APPLICATIONS

- Pray that God will not allow Satan to take charge of your life.
- Identify ways that you are tempted to betray or deny Jesus.
- Reflect on what taking the Lord's Supper means to you.
- Find ways to show servant greatness to the world.
- Pray for power to overcome temptation.
- Confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior at every opportunity.
- Beware of ways you may deny Jesus and ask God to help you lift him up at all times.
- Prepare yourself to stand before Christ's judgment seat.

IV. LIFE APPLICATION

Defeat Is Not Final

Dave Dravecky amazed the sports world, first by his catastrophe and then by his miraculous recovery. After much struggle and effort, Dave became a star pitcher, who headed the staff of the San Francisco Giants and who looked to lead them to the National League pennant. Then the news came. The muscle in his pitching arm had been invaded by cancer. This would not kill him, but it would end his baseball career. What an unfair way to end a promising career.

Dave did not complain. He told everyone he would come back. He went on a training program unheard of in the exercise rooms of the world. He trained his other muscles to replace the function of his deltoid. He began tossing baseballs. He began throwing baseballs. He began pitching baseballs. Then came the biggest test. He had to convince the team management that he could pitch effectively again. Words could not win that argument. Actions did.

The day came when he ascended the mound in San Francisco. He pitched effectively without a deltoid muscle. Cincinnati batters fought hard against him. He gave up a homer, but in the end Dave Dravecky won again in the major leagues. Justice appeared to be served, but later in Montreal, the bone made brittle by so much treatment gave way and broke. Dave's pitching days were over. Defeat seemed stronger than victory.

Or did it? Dave testified to the peace he had through the whole experience. Depression did not set in. Through it all, he said, "I learned to trust in God completely."

This is the story of Luke 22. Satan tried to take charge of Judas, Jesus, Peter, and the other disciples. He succeeded with Judas. He succeeded for a brief moment with Peter. He controlled the Jewish religious leaders, because God had granted him his hour of darkness. But Satan never succeeded with Jesus. Jesus prayed his way through the moments of temptation and the moments of wanting to do his own will rather than the Father's. He yielded his life to follow the Father's will even if that meant going through the pain and mockery of an unjust trial and being crucified. Through it all Jesus revealed the glory of God and showed that as the Son of God he would become the judge of the universe.

Jesus' example stands before you as you face the unfair situations of life. Will you give in, as Judas and even Peter did? Or will you resist the devil, pray your way through temptation, and endure the world's injustice to testify to God's goodness?

V. PRAYER

Mighty God in heaven, life on earth can seem so unfair. People mistreat us and harm us and mock us. We try to be true to you through it all, but it is tough to hang in there. Your kingdom can seem so far away. Help me endure and not yield to temptation. Help me hold fast to you, no matter what Satan and the world throw at me. You let your body be broken. You spilled your blood for me. I will live for you. Amen.

Lesson Transition by Steven J Cole: <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-103-spiritual-failure-and-restoration-luke-2254-62>

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 22:54-71). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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