

8765U

THE DISCIPLES OF THE LORD

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study #1 Peter - 'Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now?'

Reading: John 13: 31-38

Over the course of the week-end, God willing, we're going to look at the life of a number of different disciples, and I think one of the benefits of that is, of course, that all of these people were different. They had different characters and different personalities, and I suppose, if we look around the room here today, we'll probably find that that's pretty much the same today, isn't it? We have tall people and short people, and thick people and thin people, we have quiet people, and we have confident people, we have retiring people, but the funny thing is, that we've all been called to a knowledge of the truth. And obviously, what we learn from that is that despite the fact that we're all different, God has seen fit to draw us into His purpose, because obviously He is able to make use of us for the advancing of His purpose in the earth.

And so it was with the disciples of Christ because here's what happened; the Lord had chosen together men and women, who were, in fact, exceedingly diverse, one from the other, and yet He saw that they all had the potential to grow in the truth. The key with all these people, with the exception of one of them, of course, that we're going to look at later on, is that they were all prepared to allow the truth to change them; and I think, perhaps, that that's the greatest key to the life of all the disciples, that they were prepared to allow the truth to change them; that's the key! because what we're going to find is that they all had problems. None of them were perfect, but you see, if we're prepared to allow the truth to overcome our problems, then in fact, we can become useful in the truth. And the lesson we're going to learn from the life of Judas, was not that really his problems were any worse or any greater than anyone else's, but the real problem that Judas had was, he wasn't prepared to allow the truth to change him! that's what made Judas different.

And so we're going to find that hopefully by the time that we've finished the studies, I hope that everyone here in this room will say, 'well, you know, I reckon I'm a bit like.....well that's good, because I think it's encouraging for anyone of us, to feel that amidst the disciples there was someone a little bit like us; 'fancy, that person being there, I'm quite like them and if they were called to the truth, well, maybe there's hope

for me after all? 'And I think, in fact, to be fair, we probably will find out that at times, we're like all sorts of different disciples.

Well, here's our first one! good old Peter, and you have to do Peter first because Peter was always at the front of things wasn't he? You know, it's a bit like that when you go to school, you know how there's always some kid that always have their hand up first with the answer; you know, I guess we've all had someone like that in our class; maybe it was you or maybe it was me! in that class! That was Peter, he couldn't help himself, he had a character that was enthusiastic and at times a little impetuous. Peter always wanted to put his foot out and jump, and then looked where he was actually jumping afterwards; that was Peter! that was the way he was made; there was nothing wrong with that! You see, one of the things we have to learn about all the disciples was, although they always matured in the truth, they always remained who they were! Peter would never ever become Philip, and Philip would never ever become John! he would always be Philip, he would always be Andrew but they were able to mature in the truth, so that their personality could now be put to work for the best interests of the truth. So there was nothing wrong with Peter as a person, just that he had to have certain corners rubbed off him, and that's what we're going to look at in the course of this study.

Well then, in John chapter 13, the reason why we're starting in John 13, which seems a little bit late in the record, because we're now at the last night of the Lord's life; you think, well, there can't be much left to do with Peter now. We've got far too much material haven't we? to cover in Peter's life, so all we've done is taken one night of his life, which is perhaps actually enough, because it happens to be the most important night of Peter's life, in which he was to learn the lesson, we believe, that would forever change him! And here in John 13 and verse 31 it says, 'When he was gone out (that's Judas, of course) Jesus says, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him'. You know, if you read this record carefully, you can just about sense the sigh of relief that Jesus breathed when Judas went out! Can you see that? Judas goes out, the door closes and you can just about see the tension go out of the shoulders of Christ that Judas is gone; 'Now is the Son of man glorified', and He turns to the ones that are left and He says, verse 33, 'Little children, yet a little while I am with you', you know, that was the only time that Christ ever used that phrase! He only ever used it once, 'little children'; they took that phrase up by the way, John was, of course, to use that later on, wasn't he? in his epistles, and John never forgot that moment in the Upper room, never ever forgot that! That was a very tender expression from Christ; Judas was gone, the tension was out of the story and Jesus turns with a smile to those that were left and says, 'My little children', a very tender expression.

But do you really know what it means? I think what Jesus was saying here in verse 33, was that it was expressing the inability of the disciples to stand alone without Him. You're only little children yet, so it was a tender expression but a warning that they were not yet grown enough to stand quite alone without Him. So He goes on to say in verse 33, 'Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I

give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another'. Now what was the newness of the commandment in verse 34, because the Old Testament said to love one another, to love one's neighbour as one's self? So how could Christ say that that was a new commandment? Let's read it again, it's funny you know, good bible study, and I really believe this, good bible study is all about good bible reading, isn't it? More than anything else, more than textbooks and lexicons and concordances, it's about good bible reading, and it's all in the way that we read the story. So verse 34, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved', that's what was new, wasn't it? there never ever had been love like this before; oh, there had always been an Old Testament requirement for love, but they had never ever seen an example of loving one another such as has now and was now to be set before them on the next day! That ye love one another as I have loved you, that was new, and that was the love of self sacrifice for one another, wasn't it?' By this shall all men know, verse 35, that ye are My disciples, if you have love one to another', they were to follow His example.

Well, here's our friend, Simon Peter in verse 36, 'Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards'. So Simon pops up and says, 'Look, where are you going, Lord?' well, where was Jesus going? well, of course, He was going to the Father, but the way that He was going involved the way of sacrifice, didn't it? It involved the way of submission to His Father's will; it was a way which was going to involve the total surrender of His life in obedience to the Father. So He says to Peter, 'Look, Peter, whither I go thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards'. You know, the word 'follow' in that verse means to 'be in the same way with, or to accompany, especially as a disciple'(190); to be in the same way with, or to accompany especially as a disciple. Jesus says to Peter, 'Look, the way I'm going, which was the way of obedience and of sacrifice, He says, you can't come on that way now'. See that word 'now' verse 36, 'Peter, but thou shalt follow Me **afterwards**'. Do you see that word 'now', He says, 'but you shall follow me AFTERWARDS', and the word 'afterwards', by the way, is the Greek word 'husteron' (5305) and it means 'eventually' that is, 'at the last of all', so it doesn't just mean, oh, you'll follow Me afterwards', in other words, first Me and then you, Peter; it means 'you'll follow Me eventually', in other words, not until Peter had reached a certain stage of maturity, would he be able to follow Jesus in this particular way. What would that be? what would have to change in Peter before he could follow the Lord, to accompany Him as a disciple? Well, once Peter had learnt to do the Father's will in the same way that Christ had! and he hadn't learnt that yet!

Now the interesting thing about this story, you see, is that Peter felt that of all the disciples, he was the most enthusiastic and the most loyal to Jesus. Peter said, 'Look, I may have my problems, and I know I speak up too much, but no one could ever doubt that I'm the most loyal of all the disciples to Jesus; he was upset that Jesus had said you can't follow Me now, Peter. Oh, you'll follow Me later on eventually, but not now! So Peter wants to argue, verse 37, Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee

NOW'? Rotherham says, 'even now', 'why can't I follow you even now, says Rotherham's, 'I will lay down my life for thy sake'. Oh, now hang on a minute, Peter, those are pretty strong words, isn't it? I'll lay down my life for thy sake, that's being very dramatic, isn't it? You know, sometimes we say things about how terrific we're going to be in the truth, how loyal and what we're going to do, that maybe we've chosen words that are just a bit big for what we're actually really going to be able to accomplish, and that's what Peter does here!

And Jesus turns round to him in verse 38, and look at this, 'Jesus said, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?' How do you think Jesus said that, by the way? how would you read verse 38? 'Jesus said, wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? What mood do you think Jesus had there? Was He sarcastic? was He rebuking? how would you read verse 38? Yes, I think there was a definite challenge in what the Lord was saying; so you can just see this, Peter said, 'why can't I follow you even now, I'll lay down my life for thy sake!' Jesus turned around and said, 'Wilt thou? laid down thy life for My sake? Then He turns around and He says, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow until thou has denied me thrice'. And in verse 38, the word 'denied' is a very strong word in the Greek and it means not just to deny but 'to utterly repudiate' (533). Now that seems to be a very strong reaction of Jesus, you see! Peter says, 'look, why can't I follow you even now? I'll lay down my life!' Jesus turns round and says, 'Do you think that you'll lay down your life; I'll tell you, Peter, before the cock crows three times, you will **utterly deny Me**'. I can just see Jesus looking quite sternly at Peter, in fact, Peter was probably quite taken back! Fancy the Lord speaking to him like that, of all people! Me? and the Lord turns round and challenges me on the basis of my loyalty, everyone, all the people here know that I'm loyal to Christ, how could Christ do that to me? Well, you see, the key to all that is, verse 18 says, 'I know whom I have chosen' and that's the key you see, because the Lord knew **all His disciples**, and He knew their weaknesses. The Lord meant exactly what He said that night when He warned Peter that he would deny Him, because He knew everyone of His disciples inside out, and He knew what Peter's problem was! and the problem was that Peter didn't know what his problem was! So here we have the warning of Jesus, 'before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny Me three times'. Now that's the first time that Peter is warned by Jesus on this occasion. Whereabouts are we in John 13 by the way? We're at the Last Supper and we're in the Upper Room still, aren't we?

Now if you'll come to Luke 22, we come to the next part of the story, because Luke 22 now gives us the next part of the narrative, whilst they are still in the Upper Room. So we're still in the Upper Room in Luke 22, but we've moved a little further on in time, to the words that we've had in John 13. Now in Luke 22 then it says in verse 28, 'Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto Me; That ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat'. So here we come now to the next episode, only a short while later in the Upper Room; and you see that phrase, and the Lord said in verse 31, most manuscripts actually don't

have that phrase, it doesn't matter too much because what's going to follow on is what the Lord's going to say anyway, but it just seems to make it more abrupt if we take those words out. So the phrase, **and the Lord said**, is not in most manuscripts, so what happens is, the Lord is talking to the disciples and all of a sudden it would appear, without warning, He turns round to Peter all of a sudden and says, (well do you notice what He does say, because He doesn't call him Peter, does He?) He says, '**Simon, Simon**', now why do you think that Jesus called Peter, Simon? because 'Simon' means 'hearing' (4613G + 8095H) yes, I agree with that! anything else? I'll give you a clue to it, (you don't need to turn this up, but just listen to these words) 'and he brought him to Jesus (this is Andrew bringing his brother to Jesus) and when He saw him, He said, 'thou art Simon the son of Jonah; thou shalt be Cephas', that's John 1 verse 42, now what does that tell us? Simon is the man in his raw state, isn't he? Simon the son of Jonah, at the beginning, before he's matured, before he's developed; but Jesus when He first saw him, He said, 'I know you, you're Simon the son of Jonah, but you will be called Cephas'; one day when you are grown up in the truth and you're mature, you will become the rock, but you're not there yet, you're still Simon! How long has Peter been with Jesus now, by the time we get to Luke 22? he's been with Christ for 3½ years, this is the end of the ministry of Christ, isn't it? He's been called Peter throughout the whole story, and on this last night when he said, 'why can't I follow you now? Jesus turns round and says, 'Look, before the cock crows, you'll deny Me three times!' and then a little later on Jesus turns round and looks at Peter and He says, **Simon, Simon!** oh, ho, ho, that would have hurt, wouldn't it? Why is He calling me, Simon, again? that's the old man, isn't it? not the new one! Simon's the undeveloped, the raw, the immature disciple!

What does He say in verse 31? He says, 'Satan, has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat'. Now you see, (it doesn't quite show in the AV here, but we actually have to look for the text here which says) 'Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee', and in the Greek of the text, the word 'you' in verse 31 is in the plural, and the word 'thee' of course, in verse 32 is in the singular; now let me just explain what that means, if we just read that again, this is how it should read: Simon, Simon behold, Satan hath desired to have you **all**, (all of you, all the disciples) 'but I have prayed for **you** (singular), Simon'. Is that what the Lord was saying? Actually, there's a very good comment and you need to take a note of this, (Nazareth Revisited page 453, brother Roberts has a very good note on this particular moment) '**Satan has desired to have you all, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for you individually, Peter!**'

Well, this is what brother Roberts says in Nazareth Revisited, about that phrase 'Satan has desired to have you all'; what do you think that means, by the way before I read Robert Roberts? Remember how that whenever we're explaining to someone outside what Satan is, we say that the context always determines what Satan is, doesn't it? so who or what was the Satan do you think, on this occasion? **fleshly aspects of their life**, yes, that could be right; but notice that it says that Satan desires to have all of them, so it wasn't just Peter; **a testing time**, yes; **the rulers of the Jews**, oh, now we're getting more specific, yes; well, that's pretty good actually! This is brother Roberts says

in Nazareth Revisited, he says, 'Christ probably meant that **the authorities who were plotting His destruction**, would try to corrupt the fidelity of the disciples, one by one, should Judas fail them; and that Peter would be in special danger from such a process'. That's interesting, isn't it? 'Satan has desired to have all of you, that he might sift you as wheat, but out of all you disciples, Simon, I've prayed for you, that your faith fail not'.

'And when thou art converted', why did Christ pray for Peter? the most loyal, the most enthusiastic of all the disciples, why would Jesus say that Peter was the one in greatest danger of that process? I'll tell you why, now you've got to listen to this, because what Peter thought was his greatest strength, **his loyalty to Christ**, was actually his greatest weakness! because you see, Peter's loyalty to Christ was based on **confidence** in his own ability, just that Peter didn't realize that yet! He thought that was his greatest strength, his loyalty to Christ, but Christ knew whom He had chosen and He knew that what Peter thought was his greatest strength was actually his greatest weakness because it was all based on confidence in himself, not confidence in God. Peter thought, 'I can do it!' Jesus knew he couldn't! and of all the disciples, strangely enough, Peter was the one who was most at risk of the authorities being able to break him down.

So Jesus says in verse 32, 'I've prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art **converted**, strengthen thy brethren'. Fancy saying to Peter, 'now Peter, when you're converted', oh, that would hurt, wouldn't it? fancy saying that, 'strengthen your brethren!' Now just imagine if you were Peter, and knowing what Peter was like, how would you react to that? how would you react to the Lord turning around and having that little chat with you? Well, here's how Peter reacted in verse 33 of Luke 22, just about how we would expect him to react being Peter: 'And he said unto Him (and I think this is through clenched teeth, you see), Lord, **I am ready**'. Now what do you think the word 'ready' (2092) means there? 'I've prayed for you, Peter, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted to the truth, Peter, you help strengthen the other disciples. And Peter says, 'Look, I am ready', now what does the word 'ready' mean in this context? 'I'm ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death'. Remember what's happened in John 13 as well, only a few minutes before! You see, Jesus said, Peter, you can't follow Me **now** but **afterwards, eventually**! Peter says, 'you're quite wrong, Christ, **I am ready NOW**!' Isn't that what he's saying? He was absolutely certain that his loyalty to the truth could never be challenged, and he was very upset with what Christ had done on this occasion; that the Lord should see fit to warn him, you know, and to suggest that he might fail in that way! Therefore, what he's suggesting, of course, is that the conversion that Jesus was talking about in verse 32, is already happened; 'when thou art converted', **I am already ready**. Oh, he didn't like this at all, did Peter? did he?

Jesus says in verse 34, (and here it is for the second time), He said, 'I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before thou shalt **thrice deny** that thou knowest Me'. 'So you think you're loyal, I'll tell you what, He says, the very matter of your loyalty will be called in question this day! and you'll find that you're not as strong as you thought you were!' Now that's twice the Lord has said that phrase in verse 34, isn't it? 'before the cock shall crow, thou shalt thrice deny Me'. That's two times! Matthew 26; the Lord

actually said it three times, fancy saying it three times to Peter on the one night; imagine how Peter would have felt hearing that warning coming from Christ three times on the one night!

Well, remember what happened when they had finished the time that they had spent in the Upper Room. We're told in Matthew 26 verse 30. it says, 'that when they had sung an hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives', and so they've left the Upper Room now, and they're on the way to the garden of Gethsemane. Verse 31 then said 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. But after I am risen again I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto Him,(you can see Peter still smarting over what's gone on in the Upper Room) and he says, 'Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, **yet will I never be offended**'. Haha! you have to admire Peter in a way, he was really upset that Jesus had called into question his loyalty; so here's Peter again having another crack on the way to the garden. But, you see how unwise Peter was, because he says, '**Though all shall be offended because of Thee**', imagine that impact on the other disciples! so Peter says, 'Though all shall be offended including this lot here, I WILL NEVER BE OFFENDED'. Jesus said unto him, 'Verily, I say unto thee, This night before the cock crows, thou **shalt deny Me thrice**'. That's three times that the Lord has warned Peter in that very phrase; three times on the one night Peter was warned about that, you will deny Me three times!

Peter said verse 35, '**Though I should die with Thee**, yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise said all of the disciples', of course, they thought they all really ought to join in, once Peter had been so strong! In fact, Mark's gospel record says, in Mark 14 verse 31, when he says the words of verse 35, 'But **he spake the more vehemently saying**, though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee'. This is how the Diaglott translates verse 35; who wrote the Diaglott, by the way? it's general knowledge, the Jehovah Witnesses! Benjamin Wilson! who was Benjamin Wilson? was he a Christadelphian? it has been said that he was for a period of time, hasn't it? I remember mentioning it to a Jehovah Witness because they had actually mentioned about the Diaglott, and I said, 'yes, it's quite a good translation, and you realize that it was written by a Christadelphian? then they proceeded to talk about all the mistakes in the Diaglott, so! and by the way, there are mistakes in the Diaglott too, so we have to be careful; but this is how the Diaglott translates verse 35 of Matthew 26, 'Peter said unto Him, If it may behoove me with Thee to die, not, not, Thee, will I deny'. It's actually a double negative! if it may behoove me with Thee to die, **not, not, Thee, will I deny**. You see, he was very upset that Jesus had called into question the matter of his loyalty.

In fact, by the way, I think this explains the whole matter of the sword in the garden; because who whips out a sword in the garden a few minutes later? Up comes poor old Malchus, and remember they said that they had two swords? obviously one of them was Peter's and Peter's in the garden breathing fire and smoke, that the Lord could have questioned his loyalty, then all these guards and soldiers come; right! 'so the Lord thinks I'm not loyal, well, I'll show Him!' Out comes the sword, whack, whack, and off

goes Malchus's ear spinning to the ground, because Peter was upset! Do you see how all of that fits properly, doesn't it? because Peter's upset that night that Jesus has called into question his loyalty and out comes his sword. But Mark says, and by the way, only Mark says, (I'm pretty sure this is right) that 'finally they all forsook Him and fled'.

You know, by the way, who was the driving influence behind the gospel of Mark? The gospel of Mark was inspired by Peter, wasn't it? that's another story, we can't go into that now. It was written by Mark but we believe, that the gospel of Mark was narrated to Mark by Peter. Interestingly enough, it's in Mark's gospel that the record just quietly adds another phrase, 'and they all forsook Him and fled'. Can you imagine Peter saying that, as he writes this story later on? Ah, how humble he would be, that after all these professions of loyalty, that they had all run away including him, but at least he came back, didn't he? that night; he must have felt bad, because at least Peter came back. Now he came back to watch what was going on, now come and have a look at John 18!

Just a couple of interesting things in John 18, as we see what actually therefore, went on in this story. I just want to pick up one verse in John 18 and then we're going to see what was actually said that night. It says in verse 18, 'And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself'. You see that phrase, 'Peter stood with them', do you know that's the very same phrase used of Judas in verse 5, 'And Judas also which betrayed Him, **stood with them**', oh, fancy that! The very phrase now that's used to describe the betrayer himself, Judas, and it's now taken up in the life of Peter, 'and Peter **stood with them**', not the same way, of course, because he wasn't standing with them in the way that Judas did, but there's something dangerously close here between the two that night, isn't there? One man betrayed his Lord that night, and the other man came very close to following in the same steps, very close!

Now Peter made a very bad mistake that night, because you see what verse 18 says, it says, 'they had made a fire of coals' (I want you to take note of that phrase and just tuck it away in your memory for a minute) 'they made a fire of coals', and so what had happened was, Peter had tip-toed back into the shadows because he wanted to see at least, what was happening in the judgment hall, if he could just see through the window at the back there, he could see what was going on, but he wanted to keep in the shadows. But he felt bad that he had run away, didn't he? so he said, 'I want to be there'. Then they lit this fire, and it was a very cold night and Peter thought, 'well, maybe I could mingle with the crowd and just edge forward a bit and get a bit of the warmth, but he forgot that flames not only warm, they also give light, and the light flickered into the face of this man and a maid passing by, saw the face in the firelight and she said, 'I know that face!' and Mark 14 tells us what happened as he made the fateful mistake of stepping forward into the light. He should never have done that!

So we're told in verse 66 of Mark 14, 'And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he

denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. He went out into the porch; and the cock crew'. So you see, Peter was there watching the Lord on trial, but there were actually two men on trial that night, weren't there? Peter was on trial as well; and the problem is that this had been a very bad night for Peter, he had been told off three times by Christ that he would deny Him; he'd been told off in the garden of Gethsemane about going to sleep; he'd been told off in the garden about using his sword; he was cold, he was hungry, he was tired, he was upset, and he was bewildered. Now someone said, 'and you were with Jesus of Nazareth'. That wasn't a good time for Peter to make a stand for the truth, was it? His defenses were all at the lowest ebb that night, and that's the moment when the trial struck. There were two men on trial that night, One in the palace, one out of the palace and here's the one out of the palace!

Verse 68, 'But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest'. (do you see what he did?) I've got to get back in the darkness, so he went out into the porch. 'Blow, I've been seen!', so he melted back into the darkness a little further away from the light. But if you compare all the records, you'll find that one of the problems is that it sounds as if two maids have a chat together, one inside passed the message to one outside, 'see that chap over there, I reckon he was one of the disciples of that bloke there!' and verse 69 says, 'A maid saw him again and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them'. Have you ever heard a ripple going around a room of a little conversation spreading? and then what happens when it starts to spread? eyes start to turn and you feel uncomfortable, you feel a prickle at the back of your neck; people are looking, people are watching, have you ever felt like that? they're all watching me! Peter really felt under pressure here, and they said, 'this is one of them, verse 70, and he **denied it again**'. But Matthew 26 verse 71 adds, '**with an oath**, saying, I do not know the man!' A little after verse 70, 'they that stood by said again to Peter, 'surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean and thy speech agreeth thereto'. And John adds a phrase (that only John has) he says, 'that a kinsman of Malchus said, 'didn't I see you in the garden?' Oh, ho, ho, he'd really feel under pressure now! a kinsman of Malchus! 'didn't I see you with something in your hand?'

Verse 74 says, 'Then Peter the disciple, all of a sudden, became Simon the fisherman, and he began to curse and to swear all the old fishermen's oaths came pouring out of his mouth and he began to curse and to swear, saying, 'I know not this man of whom ye speak', and the second time the cock crew, and Peter recalled to mind, the words which the Lord had said, 'before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. When he thought thereon, he wept'. In a moment of time he found, that what he thought was his strength, his loyalty to Christ had fallen flat on its face, because it was all based on confidence in himself. That night, his own confidence had been badly battered.'

Now Luke, of course, adds something that Mark doesn't, because something else happened at that precise moment of time, and only Luke tells us, of course, what happened. This was the worst thing of all! because Luke 22 tells us, that at that same time as the cock crew and Peter thought about the words of the Lord and about what

He'd said, well, Luke 22 says in verse 60, 'And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest, And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew'. And verse 61 says, 'The Lord **turned** and **looked upon Peter**'; and the word 'looked' (1689) there, means 'to observe **fixedly**'. So through the window, Peter's observing the trial of Jesus, and Jesus is in there being tried, and under trial for His own stand concerning the truth. All of a sudden the cock crows, the sounding of the change of the watch, and through the window, Jesus in the midst of His trial suddenly turned around and looked out through the window straight at Peter. Now what sort of a look do you think that was? describe the look to me! sadness! compassion! it certainly wouldn't have been triumph, would it? you can't imagine Jesus saying, 'you see Peter, I told you so!' No you wouldn't imagine Jesus doing that, would you? It was a very special look this, I'll guarantee you that Peter never forgot that look, never, ever, ever would he forget that look! You're quite right, I think it would be sadness, wouldn't it? and sorrow, but do you know what else it would have been? understanding, yes, 'Peter, I understand', can you feel that in the eyes of Christ? Now if you were Peter, could you have stood the look of Christ on that occasion? You would rather that someone look at you accusingly, wouldn't you? or that someone said, 'well, there you are, you see!' but to have the look of a man who had sadness, but also a warm compassionate look, 'It's alright, Peter, I understand'.

No wonder the record says in verse 62, 'Peter went out and **wept bitterly**'. When a grown man went out in the shadows and bent over the ground and wept long salty tears, in the knowledge that his Lord had been right all along and you see what verse 61 says, 'and Peter **remembered the words** that the Lord had said', you know, the word 'remembered' there is the Greek word 'hupomnesis' (5280) which means 'to recall to memory', it flashed back into his mind what the Lord had said. You know, that the greatest thing in the truth is to try and recall scriptural principles at the time that we need them rather than afterwards. It was too late to remember what the Lord had said now, because he's already fallen; the greatest challenge of the truth is to try and remember scriptural principles so that we can recall them **when the problem arises**, not afterwards.

Now you see, there's a turning point in Peter's life this night, isn't there? a real turning point! Because, what the Lord had shown him was that it's no good to have confidence in the truth based upon your own abilities, because your own abilities will inevitably let you down. You might not think that and it's especially hard when we're young because we feel sure that we're loyal to the truth, and we feel sure that we can do it; but time and circumstance and experience suddenly places us in situations when we find that we can't do it. This Peter had to learn, it wasn't that he oughtn't be loyal to the truth, but that his loyalty had to be built on confidence that God can do it, but not me! That was his problem, it's not me that can do it, but I believe God can through me, if I learn to trust in Him. Not many of us have had a look like that! and I'm sure if we'd received it through the window, we wouldn't have forgotten it either!

Now come and have a look at John 21. So remember the story of John 21 when they all went fishing and they're waiting for Christ, and they caught nothing and they heard the

voice of this stranger standing on the shore, verse 5, saying, 'Children, have ye any meat?' and they call back across the water, 'No'. Then He says, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes'. Then verse 7 says, 'Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked) and **did cast himself into the sea**'. Doesn't that sound like Peter? good old Peter, you know! it was John who figured out who it was, but it's Peter who leaps over the side of the ship and away he goes splash, splash, splash into shore because he wanted to be the first to be with Christ again; but you see what happened when he got there, verse 9.

'As soon then as they were come to land, here's Peter and guess what he sees? Oh, ho, ho! **a fire of coals**; you know, the only other time that phrase is used, is in chapter 18 verse 18, when he warmed himself at the trial. Peter had walked up all dripping wet in front of Christ standing on the beach, and looks into the fire again! But this time it's Jesus standing there watching, and Peter was about to go on trial, but this time it was going to be with Christ, of course, not with the authorities. Same phrase; anytime the phrase is used, 'anthrakia'(439) it's the Greek word for 'fire of coals' in John 18:18 and here in 21:9.

Jesus said, verse 12, 'Come and dine. So they did, and when they had dined, verse 15, Jesus said, (now you all know this little story but you see now, that it all has power on the basis of what has gone on in the background of the previous night). You see, when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonas', (you see, He deliberately uses that again, because Peter was saying all along, I'm Peter, I'm Peter, I'm ready. Jesus said, no you're not, you're Simon, and you're not ready.) By the time that Peter's been through the last night's experiences, he now knows the wisdom of what the Lord said, and there's no room for confidence in one's own abilities. So when they'd dined (and by the way, I'm sure this conversation probably took place a little privately, perhaps just a little ways off) Jesus says, 'come with Me, Peter; now Simon, son of Jonah' (and He gently reminds Peter that there was still development to take place). Now you see what He says, verse 15, 'Lovest thou Me more than these?' what's the **more than these**, do you think? but isn't this the man who said just the previous night. **'though all these be offended, yet will I never be offended'**, isn't that what Peter said? Hadn't Peter claimed to have a loyalty better than any of the other disciples? So now the first question is, Simon, son of Jonah, do you have an agape love for Me, a really sacrificial love for Me, more **than all these**? because that's what you promised! So what does Peter say in return? 'Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I have an affection for you!' Now why does Peter use 'phileo' (5368) and not 'agape' (26) in his reply? because he now knows, that's right, that even though he said, 'I will die for Thee', that he really couldn't do that, and he now knows that this is the lesson of the difference between the **agape** and **phileo**; has anyone got that marked in, by the way, does anyone have those two different words marked? Right, well, the key here is that 'love' is different in verses 15, 16, and 17, so I'm just going to translate the first word 'agape' as sacrificial love, and the second word 'phileo' as affection. So what Peter's learning here, by giving the reply that uses 'phileo', is that he realizes now that, one can only profess

loyalty to Christ, to the extent that we've actually developed in the truth. We must learn not to profess loyalty beyond that!

Well, Jesus said verse 15, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you have a sacrificial love for Me, more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I have an affection for Thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him the second time, Simon, son of Jonah, forget about all these others then, do you have a sacrificial love for Me? Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I have an affection for Thee; Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah (now watch this) do you even have an affection for Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, do you have an affection for Me? and he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I have an affection for you. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep', which of course, is really the same as saying, 'when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren', that's the same idea! 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou was young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shall be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God'. So the man who had professed loyalty to the point of death, would ultimately seal his life in death, but only when he matured.

Now do you see the lovely balance that's in this story. How many times does Jesus say to Peter that he would deny Him? He tells him that three times that night, doesn't he? How many times does Peter deny Him that night? three times in the palace and outside he denies his association with Christ. Now of course, in John 21, three times Jesus makes Peter confess that! There's a lovely fullness to that story, and do you know what happened? because of that, because the Lord had warned him three times and because Peter had let himself down three times, you know what happens when they get to this episode here! Can you imagine the first time when Jesus said, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you have a sacrificial love for Me more than these?', you can imagine Peter saying, 'yes, I have an affection for you', and the moment Jesus said the second time, 'do you have a sacrificial love? guess what? Peter knew it was coming the third time! He had to know that, in was in the fitness of things that that should be worked out now three times. Three times Jesus had to question his heart on that matter, but what he didn't know was that the third time, He was going to change the words. The third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah (here I come again the third time, well I deserve this) 'do you even have an affection for me? There was a purging here, wasn't there? of confessions. It had to be done that way!

Look at this phrase here! end of verse 19, 'And when he had spoken this, Jesus said unto him, 'Now, Peter, follow Me'. Now where did that come from? Well, I'm sure that first of all, Peter's mind went back to the previous night, you can't follow me now, Peter, but you can follow Me afterwards; and now he's been through this experience whereby he's learnt not to trust in the flesh, Jesus turns to him the next day, and He says, follow Me'. But it takes him back further than that, it took him back 3½ years to the shores of a sunlit light, with the ships slapping in the water on the sand, and a man walking down

the beach who he'd already met once and been amazed by the power of this man, 3½ years before Peter had been standing on the beach, the same man walked up to him and said, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. That's what Peter's mind went back to! 3½ years had disappeared but now in John 21, Peter knows that he's ready to follow Jesus, in a way that he certainly wasn't 3½ years before.

So the lesson, I suppose of Peter's life, is learning to overcome the spirit of impetuosity and confidence in one's own ability. Have a look at 2 Peter 1 verse 12, it says, 'Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be **established** in the present truth. You see the word 'established' there, that word is the same word translated in Luke 22 verse 22, 'when thou are converted **strengthen** thy brethren, 'sterizo' (4741) 'to establish or confirm'; so he says, 'I know that you are strengthened now in the present truth', why? because that's what Peter's work had been in writing these epistles, to strengthen the brethren of Christ. I know that you've been strengthened in these things, he says, 'Yea, I think it meet, verse 13, as long as I'm in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance', and that word '**remembrance**' there is the same word translated in Luke 22, when it says, 'the Lord turned and looked on Peter and Peter remembered the words that the Lord had spoken', same word here. Peter says it's terribly important to get to know the principles of the truth so that we can recall them to memory at any time; don't be like me, that's what he's saying, don't be like me, I recalled the principles too late; I remembered what I ought to have remembered about faithfulness too late that night, don't be like me, he says, you recall them to memory on time, at the right time! You know, in the truth, we're all a bit like this, aren't we? that we all believe we're Christadelphians and we know the truth and we love the truth, but you see, the real test is when the moment of trial comes, and you know what? sometimes when we've got a problem in life, the principles of the truth go out the window. You say, 'well I might be a Christadelphian but I've got a problem here to solve'; it might be a problem at work or at school, whatever. It might be pressure from a person or pressure of a deadline or a pressure of something we've been asked to do, that we don't want to do whatever it is. Somehow the last thing we think about is, are there any divine principles that should affect what I do here? That's the last thing we think about; Peter says, 'don't be like that, you've got to be strengthened in the truth, so you can bring these things to memory at the vital time to make the right decision, because I didn't!

Verse 14, 'Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me', where did the Lord Jesus show Peter that he must put off his tabernacle? John 21, 'when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee and carry thee forth whither thou wouldest not. This He spake signifying by what death he should glorify God', so from John 21 onwards Peter knew that he would always seal his love for the truth by death; because the Lord had showed him that one day he would put off his tabernacle.

Verse 15, 'Moreover I will endeavour that ye may, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance'. This time the word 'remembrance' is a different word;

the word 'remembrance' here means 'a memorial or sepulchral monument' (3418), an epitaph on a tombstone. Peter says, I'll be happy even when I die, if on my tombstone it says, that I **strengthened** the brethren, to be able to recall the right principles of the truth when they need it in time of trial. If I can have that engraved on my tombstone, I'll be a happy man, he says, because that's what Christ asked me to do, once I was converted; and to learn the lesson that, if we're confident in ourselves, our own abilities will inevitably let us down. That loyalty in the truth is based on **trust in God** and not in ourselves, and learning to appreciate the experiences of life, that is able to bring that lesson to bear upon us.

Well, I think we'll leave it there! in terms of the story of Peter. Then after the break, we look at another man who is really quite different, the man called John.