

**Turn Your Eyes  
Jesus' Arrest  
Luke 22:39-62  
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"It's Friday, but Sunday's comin'!" That statement powerfully captures the heart of Lent. On the day we now know as Good Friday, Jesus was crucified, but on Easter Sunday, all of the disciples' pain, disillusionment, and sense of loss turned to joy as it became clear Jesus was alive. During these 40 days of Lent, as we anticipate celebrating Jesus' resurrection on Easter, we're reminded of Jesus' suffering and of the incredible sacrifice He made in giving his life for us on the cross. During our Lenten series, "Turn Your Eyes," we're intentionally slowing down to focus on the events of Jesus' last week.

In his book, "The Jesus I Never Knew," author Philip Yancey points out that our tendency is to rush through Holy Week in our haste to get to Easter. Yancey notes that while typical biographies give most of their attention to the events of the subject's life and focus only briefly on the person's death, nearly a third of the Gospels are devoted to telling the story of Jesus' last week and of his death. In the church, we seem to favor Christmas and the events leading up to it over Holy week, but only two of the Gospels, Matthew and Luke, even mention the events of Jesus' birth, while Jesus' last week and death is prominent in all four Gospels.

The season of Lent is also a poignant reminder of our mortality. We prefer to ignore death, and the improved living conditions and medical advancements that we're blessed with allow us to dismiss death as a daily reality, but in Lent, we're reminded that our life here on earth and our bodies in their present form are temporary. Focusing on our mortality during Lent isn't meant to be morbid. Instead, we're reminded that this present life isn't all there is. In celebrating Easter, we declare God's power over death and sin and proclaim the truth that because Jesus conquered death, there is life beyond the grave for us as well.

This year, we began Lent here at McBIC by receiving ashes as a symbol of our mortality. On the second Sunday of Lent, we explored the implications of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Last Sunday, Pastor Cody preached on the Last Supper, and we received Communion. Today we're focusing on Luke 22:39-62. These verses recount Jesus' time with his disciples on the Mount of

Olives, also known as the Garden of Gethsemane. As I read this passage, I encourage you to follow along and note your observations about Jesus and the disciples. I'll begin reading at verse 39 of Luke chapter 22.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." <sup>41</sup> He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." <sup>43</sup> An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. <sup>44</sup> And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

<sup>45</sup> When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. <sup>46</sup> "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

<sup>47</sup> While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, <sup>48</sup> but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

<sup>49</sup> When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" <sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

<sup>51</sup> But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup> Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns."

<sup>54</sup> Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. <sup>55</sup> And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. <sup>56</sup> A

servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.”

<sup>57</sup> But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said.

<sup>58</sup> A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.”

“Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

<sup>59</sup> About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.”

<sup>60</sup> Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup> 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.” <sup>62</sup> And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:39-62)

What did you notice from this passage as I read? Two general observations jump off the page at me—one about Jesus and the other about the disciples. First, the passage highlights Jesus’ humanity. Jesus was both divine and human. He was simultaneously God, and He was a man. Jesus’ divinity is evident throughout the Gospels, but his humanity is especially evident in his birth and his death. Jesus was born of a woman in very common circumstances, and the hours prior to his arrest and his crucifixion are full of painful reminders that Jesus was one of us. In these verses, we see Jesus’ vulnerability; his loneliness, anxiety, frustration with his disciples, and his physical anguish are obvious.

The second observation that strikes me, the one I’ll spend the most time on, is the disciples’ weakness—especially Peter’s. Jesus was hurting, and He longed for the support of his friends. He went off by Himself to pray, and when He returned, He found his disciples asleep. He urged them to wake up and pray that they would not give in to temptation, because He knew how difficult the next hours would be. Mark’s Gospel gives even more detail about what took place in Gethsemane. He records Jesus telling his disciples, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch” (Mark 14:34). After returning to find his disciples sleeping again, Jesus pleaded with them, “Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour?” (Mark 14:37). After Jesus found his disciples asleep for the third time, a mob approached Jesus

to arrest Him, and he was identified to his captors by the betrayal of one of his own disciples, Judas. Judas was one of the 12, the one who kept the money, and he had followed Jesus for three years, but in this decisive moment, he turned traitor.

As Jesus was being arrested, Peter, always the impulsive one, took his sword and severed the right ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus rebuked Peter with the words, "No more of this!" Hours later, just as Jesus had predicted, Peter denied three times that he was one of Jesus' disciples, and the last time he cursed and said, "I don't know the man!"

The disciples' fallibility and weakness were nowhere more obvious than in the last hours of Jesus' life, and later we read that all of them, with the exception of John, deserted Jesus when He was crucified. "It's Friday, but Sunday's comin'!" was a reality Peter looked back on with great thankfulness after the events of Jesus' resurrection, when He appeared to the disciples on multiple occasions and then restored Peter as part of his team over a breakfast of fish cooked over coals on the beach.

The Apostle Peter's transformation from an impulsive, unsteady companion of Jesus to the powerful evangelist we see on Pentecost and the loving pastor we see in the letters he wrote, which carry his name in our New Testament, was nothing short of remarkable. And Peter's transformation is a picture of hope for us that we, too, can be transformed by the power of Jesus living in us through his Holy Spirit.

I want us to look more closely at Peter's remarkable transformation. The man we know as Peter was given the name Simon at birth. Simon literally means "reed"—the straw-like dried plant that is common around bodies of water. Reeds are thin. They don't have much substance and are easily blown and snapped by the wind. The image of a reed is fitting for the man we know as Peter prior to the Day of Pentecost, when he and other believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. Simon was impulsive and unsteady. He regularly acted and talked before he gave much thought to what he was doing. It was Simon who quickly jumped out of the boat and walked toward Jesus on the water before he was overcome by doubt and fear and began to sink. And it was Simon who, at the Last Supper, boldly declared to Jesus, "Even if all fall away from you, I never will. I'll even die for you."

In John's Gospel, we read that Jesus' first words to Simon after his brother, Andrew, brought Simon to Jesus was, "You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas." Cephas, when translated from Aramaic to Greek is Peter, meaning "rock." So as He was introduced to Simon, Jesus essentially said, "Simon, your given name means 'a reed that's easily blown by the wind,' but I'm giving you the name, Rock, because I see who you can become." I can imagine Peter's brother, Andrew, and the other disciples who knew Simon inwardly laughing when they heard Jesus' pronouncement. They knew that Simon was anything but a rock. Jesus, they probably thought, must not be a very good judge of people.

Jesus was right! After Peter's abysmal failure in denying Jesus, he was restored to relationship with Jesus. At Pentecost, Peter preached, and 3,000 men were saved and baptized. Peter became a primary leader in the early church, and in 1 Peter and 2 Peter, letters he wrote, we see a man with a deep heart of love for the people he shepherded. History tells us that Peter was eventually martyred for his faith, and when they went to crucify him, he asked to be crucified upside down, because he was unworthy of dying in the same way Jesus had died. The reed had become a rock.

My favorite verses from Peter's letters are found in 2 Peter 1:3–4, and they serve as a natural segue from the transformation Peter experienced to life change Jesus wants to bring about in each of our lives. Peter wrote:

<sup>3</sup> His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.  
(2 Peter 1:3–4)

Peter experienced the reality of those words in his life, and he communicated with confidence that Jesus' transformation is available to each of us through the power of the Holy Spirit. God has given us everything we need to live godly lives that bring joy to our Heavenly Father.

God's divine power provides us with everything we need to become the people He created us to be, and like Peter, as well as many of you, I am on a journey of transformation. An identity I've lived out and that still plagues me is insecurity. By nature, I'm a people pleaser. I care too much about what others think. I strive to meet others' expectations, because I want them to think highly of me. It can be difficult for me to receive criticism because it feels personal, and one of the ways that has played out is in a leadership setting. It's challenging for me to entertain ideas that are different than mine. Different opinions or perspectives can feel like criticism, even when they aren't meant to be. Insecurity also can appear prideful or self-absorbed. I tend to talk about myself too much and build myself up because I want to impress people.

Jesus met Cephas (his given name meaning "reed"), and He immediately called him Peter (the "rock"). I suspect Jesus' name for me, rather than my natural bent toward insecurity, would be secure—one who embodies confidence, steadiness, and humility. I still struggle with insecurity and pride as my default, but God is at work in transforming me. I've been encouraged by people who work closely with me and know me well who have shared that they notice this shifting in me. Insecurity is an area in my life where God is at work in transforming me and giving me a different name—secure, confident, steady humility.

I'm sure many of us are painfully aware of our shortcomings, failures, and sin. We know who we are and what our weaknesses are. From time to time, we catch glimpses of who God created us to be and what his transformation in us looks like, but we also know what we too easily default to. When we focus on our mortality and our human weakness and fallibility during Lent, the goal isn't for us to wallow in self-pity or to beat ourselves up. Lent is designed to help make us aware of our desperate need of Jesus' grace, mercy, and forgiveness. It's a time to embrace humility as we attune our hearts and minds to the reality that we are incapable of saving ourselves by being nicer, working harder, or striving more. We embrace humility aware that Jesus doesn't just leave us floundering with an awareness of our sin and of our inability to help ourselves. Listen to James chapter 4: "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God.

Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord; and he will lift you up” (James 4:6–7, 9–10).

Like Peter, we can be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The weaknesses and areas in which we’re prone to sin can be transformed by Jesus into becoming strengths. Cephas the reed became Peter the rock. **What’s the transformation Jesus wants to bring about in your life?** As you walk through Lent with an eye toward Jesus’ resurrection at Easter, what change does Jesus want to bring about in your life? It’s Friday, but Sunday’s comin’!”