

EATING THE BREAD OF HEAVEN

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 20 February 2022

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Introduction

Today, we will continue to look at the subject of how we eat the bread of heaven.

It is important to note that the way in which we engage with this bread determines whether it is to us the fruit of the tree of life or the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We will continue to look at how this food is fed to us to deliver us from iniquity. It is helpful to make the point that this is only one aspect of the eating of the bread.

We will look at the wound in which Jesus was bruised for our iniquity. That is just one element of eating that bread.

We can actually see this principle of Christ coming alongside us as part of Him feeding His body and blood to us, in all of the wounding events. But iniquity is a particularly important one.

Once we get this principle clear, we will see how it applies across the other wounds that we experience in our fellowship in Christ's sufferings, from day to day.

I will begin with some foundational statements on which we will draw as we look at the experience of Peter and Judas.

There is no expression of sonship outside of fellowship with Christ

The first point I want to make is that our access to the *agape* meal begins by *receiving the word that calls us to abide in Christ, and for Christ to abide in us.*

The *agape* meal is where we eat from the tree of life. To access that food, which is the bread of heaven being ministered to us by Christ from the cross, in order for it to be to us the fruit of the tree of life, we must receive the word that calls us to abide in Christ, and for Christ to abide in us.

Jesus made this point when He spoke to the Jews about the bread of heaven, the manna. Joh 6:56.

The implication of the statement that 'you must abide in Me, and I in you', which is what we must receive and believe, is that it means that we have no life or enduring expression as a son unless we are in that fellowship.

There is no expression of your sonship, and no life, outside of that fellowship. That is what Jesus is calling us to believe.

Christ intercedes for those with even a little faith

Like Peter, the basic response of a believer to the proclamation of this word is, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Joh 6:68-69.

A person who has received that word does not understand all of the content, and does not even exactly know the condition of their heart; but they have come to know and believe that Jesus is among us, speaking the words of eternal life.

If you believe that, and that is the reason why you are here today, even if you cannot comprehend all that is being said, you have received 'the little faith' that Christ can pray for you, so that you will not fail in the day of trial.

Christ is *forever interceding for those who have that faith.*

If you have not received the faith that is demonstrated in the expression, 'I belong to this place, and this is where the word is being proclaimed to me, to wash me', then He is not interceding for you.

He prays only for those who have that faith. That is what He said to Peter.

'I am praying for you, that your faith may not fail.' Luk 22:32. What faith was it? It was the faith that was articulated, 'Lord, where will I go?'

'I have no idea what you are talking about. It sounds gross, and a little confronting, but I don't know where else I would go. You have the words of eternal life, and I have come to know and believe that You are the Son of God.'

We are clean by the word that calls us to abide

We know that Judas rejected that very word. He rejected the invitation to eat Christ's flesh and to drink His blood.

At the end of Jesus' discussion about the fact that He is the bread of heaven, the explanation of the

man, and that we have to eat His flesh and drink His blood, He said, 'But there are some of you who do not believe.' Joh 6:64.

This discussion was after the great multitude of disciples had left Him. He was talking to only the twelve; His followers.

'There are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.'

On the one hand, Peter had this basic belief, this seed of faith. Jesus said to him, 'Peter, because you believed that word to abide in Me, and I abide in you, all that you need is for your feet to be washed, as an ongoing reality, for you are already clean.' Joh 13:10.

That is amazing, isn't it? We are clean by the word that calls us to *abide*.

How do we know that? We know it because He said that if we do not receive that cleansing of our feet, we have no part with Him. Joh 13:8.

The word that calls us to *abide* is a cleansing that we continue to receive so that we continue to have a part with Jesus.

Judas rejected the call to abide in Christ

Judas, on the other hand, would not believe nor accept that his life and expression as a covenant person depended on his *connection to a community of faith*.

His view was that he had an expression that was irrespective of his connection to Jesus and that, because he had that expression, he could connect to Jesus.

He was unclean because he rejected the word to abide. In the same way that Peter was clean, because of that simple confession of faith, Judas was *unclean* because he rejected that word.

Amazingly, every time that Jesus spoke to Judas, after the events of John Chapter 6, Judas was being polarised *away from* Jesus, even at the point when Christ actually washed his feet at the last supper.

What happened to Judas? Satan entered into him. He was completely captured and taken.

There could be no recovery for Judas unless he came back to that original word. The word that he heard, when he began to depart from Christ, was

the point that he had to come back to in order to find recovery.

If he did not come back to that word, and obey the word to abide, nothing else that Jesus said to him could do anything but send him away.

That is the effect of the word of the cross. We cannot get past the point of our disobedience.

The only way of deliverance for Judas was to come back to this point, and to make the same confession as Peter: 'Where else will I go? You have the words of eternal life. And I have come to know and believe that You are the Son of God.'

Prayer is fundamental to the way we feed one another

Over the last weeks, particularly last week, we made the point that *prayer* is fundamental to the way in which Jesus feeds the fruit of the tree of life to us.

It is actually the way that we feed one another, as well, because we are to be the body, the bread, to one another. And we are to be a cup that is poured out on the sacrifice and service of another. Fundamental to that fellowship, that communion, is prayer.

'If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask [or, he will pray], and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.' 1Jn 5:16.

Some sin leads to death, and some does not

John opened his letter by saying that we are *all* sinners. 'If *anyone* says that they have no sin, they are a liar and the truth is not in them.' 1Jn 1:8.

So, we can all go 'tick'. We all know that.

But John noted that *some sin does not lead to death*, and *some sin leads to eternal death*.

Now, I don't know about you, but I am very keen to know the difference between those two.

The imagery of these sins is actually evident in the account of the *agape* meal with Peter and Judas. Remember, Jesus prayed for Peter, but He didn't pray for Judas.

We need to understand the distinction between *a sin leading to death*, and *a sin that does not lead to death*.

Wilful sin is a sin leading to death

So, let's get the sin that leads to death out of the way first - the one that is probably making us nervous, as we are hanging over hell.

The apostle Paul described the sin leading to death as 'wilful sin'.

Teenagers, if you are writing notes, write that down. The sin leading to death is wilful sin.

A person who sins in this manner determines, or chooses, to proceed in their own way, and according to the sight of their own eyes, *after they have received the knowledge of the truth*.

That is, it is an active rejection of the truth and those who minister this message.

'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.' Heb 10:26.

Jesus, who was being made a sin offering, a sacrifice for sin, ministered His body and blood to us through prayer. He was praying as He was being wounded.

If you are sinning wilfully, after having received a knowledge of the truth, Jesus is not praying for your deliverance.

His sacrifice for sin is not availing for your recovery or deliverance from iniquity, and your cleansing from sin.

However, He is still praying. He is now praying that the indignation of the Father would be poured out on you.

I am not saying 'you', particularly. I am referring to the general 'you' of the spirit of the world.

'If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.' Heb 10:26-27.

The outcome is *being forgotten by God*. We are not to pray for that.

Receiving a knowledge of the truth through the word of the Father

So, how does a person receive a knowledge of the truth? A person who sins unto death receives a knowledge of the truth, and rejects it.

A person who commits sin not leading to death, receives the same knowledge of the truth, but they

have a different walk; a different approach to the word.

The beginning point is the knowledge of the truth, which is obtained through the word of the Father.

Jesus said that the word of the Father is truth and that, by this word, a person is able to be sanctified. Joh 17:7.

Sanctification firstly means that you are made aware of what is not true. *Sanctification is the word is truth*.

It comes and, as that flash of lightning happens, you see the distinction between light and darkness in a very vivid way.

That darkness is a lie. It is a delusion, a projection.

The Father's word, firstly, highlight to us what is *not true*. Then it reveals to us the truth of our name and participation in fellowship, which is called 'the ground of truth'.

The word is doing this so that we can put off what is not true, and can 'put on Christ', or *walk in our sanctification*.

'Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.' Jesus prayed this just before He commenced His offering journey. This occurred right on the top of the Mount of Olives.

The word of the cross is a sanctifying word

Paul admonished the Galatians: 'O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth.' Gal 3:1.

Sanctification means deliverance, from the lie, to the obedience that belongs to walking in the word that has been proclaimed.

If we are not obedient to the truth, it means that we are 'bewitched', and are under the delusion of Satan.

'O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?'

The point is that the sanctifying word is *the word of the cross* that is being proclaimed to us.

Where that sanctification is not delivering us from darkness to light, it is because we have embraced another word that is keeping us in a deluded state and under the bondage of Satan - bewitched.

The knowledge of the truth is to walk in a dialogue with those who proclaim it

The knowledge of the truth is obtained by *hearing* the word of God, and through *dialogue* that is based in this word.

John said, 'These things we declare to you, that you might have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father and His Son.' 1Jn 1:3.

And he said, 'If you walk in the light of that word, you have fellowship.' 1Jn 1:7.

The knowledge of the truth is that you have to hear the word, but then you have to *walk in the light of the word*, with those who proclaim it.

That discussion is not theological, and if you come with your theological misgivings, you are completely in the dark.

Your concerns about 'this' or 'that' are the evidence that you are not illuminated to the sanctifying work of the word.

This is not a theological discussion. Rather, it is *fellowship in the light of present truth*, through which a hearer is appropriating faith for their personal fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

Only in this fellowship are they able to obtain their sanctification. The fellowship in the light is where the blood is cleansing.

'If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Christ cleanses us.' That is the blood that was being shed as Christ was an offering for sin.

Prayer is a discussion in the light

The discussion in the light is prayer.

When James said, 'Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him,' he was encouraging them to 'entreat that dialogue'. Jas 5:14.

Entreat that dialogue. Don't go and ask for someone to pray for you, to 'zap' you, so that you feel better about yourself. Rather, go and walk in the light so that the darkness is passing away, and behold, the light is dawning in you!

This dialogue is the prayer to which James referred when he said, 'Is any among you sick, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the

Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.' Jas 5:14-15.

Remember, Jesus prayed for Peter *that his faith would not fail*. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

Peter had to be raised from the depths of his iniquity, but it was because he had the faith to believe that this was the place where the words of eternal life were for him.

Nobody can go past their disobedience

It is important to note that, if a person has rejected the word of a messenger, and is becoming weak and sick, their recovery requires them to return to the discussion, or word of truth, that they originally dismissed.

If they come to an elder without addressing this fundamental disobedience, without humility and repentance, they come with an idol in their heart.

You might be aware that your condition is weak and sick, and that you are dying spiritually, but if you come and ask for a connection, or a dialogue, with an elder, to be delivered from that condition, *without* returning to the point of your disobedience, then you are *presenting your iniquity as truth* to them.

That is an idol in your heart.

No-one can get beyond their disobedience.

Rather, when the eyes of the Lord are piercing your heart, and the thoughts and intents of your heart are revealed, you should remember what your disobedience was, and you need to come and say, 'I am sick and weak, because I said "this", and did "this".'

If it does not come from there, you are 'holding on for dear life', wanting someone to bless your sinful condition, and to sustain your life, even though you are dying because of your disobedience.

When someone comes, an astute elder should say, 'I am not telling you what your disobedience is, and I am not going to pray for your condition.'

'I want to hear your confession of faith. What is the word that has brought the illumination of your condition, so that I can pray that that faith won't fail, as you now go and walk out its implications.'

That is exactly what happened to Peter, and that is also what happened to Paul.

Disobedience is rejection of the truth

If an elder or a brother receives one who comes seeking for some sort of assurance, without their having illumination on their disobedience and a commitment to a process to be restored from their disobedience, both the one who has the idol and the one who presumes to minister the blessing to them in prayer, come under the same condemnation. Eze 14:1-11.

If an elder seems a little naïve or blasé about it, it is probably because the person is not illuminated to their condition, and the elder is not to engage a conversation where there is no illumination and no basic faith, which is the evidence of an awareness of the depths of iniquity.

If the elder does engage with this conversation, they come under the same condemnation, and they too will grow weak and sick, and may die before their time.

It is very important to become clear about the dialogue that is actually sin leading to death, because it has not returned to the point when incorrigibility began.

Disobedience is the rejection of the truth and, until we get back to the point where we rejected the truth, no other word will bring blessing to us. It is, actually, taking us out.

That is the effect of *the word of the cross*.

Praying for sin that is not unto death; not praying for sin that is unto death

The distinction between praying for a brother who is sinning a sin not unto death, and not praying for a person whose sin is leading to death, was evident at the last supper.

Jesus said to Peter, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me [or are converted], strengthen your brethren.’ Luk 22:31-32.

Peter’s iniquity was sin. He was saying that what Jesus had said about his condition was not true. He was full of his own expression.

It was sin, but it wasn’t unto death, because Peter fundamentally identified himself as *belonging to the community of faith, established by the word that called him to eat and drink Christ’s body and blood*.

In contrast, we know that Jesus did not pray for Judas. The disobedience of Judas was completely incorrigible. Every time that the word came to him, he had a reason why it wasn’t true for him - a complete rejection of the need to receive that word, and to receive its washing effect in his life.

Peter’s sinning was overt; Judas was duplicitous

The other distinction to note regarding the difference between sin that leads to death, and sin that does not to death, is that while Peter believed in his own zeal - he believed in the integrity of his heart, that he was going to lay down his life - he was upfront about it.

He was right up in Jesus’ face”, saying, ‘“No way, José!” I am absolutely laying my life down here.’ He was fully on the ground, established by the word that was washing his feet; he was fully open.

He was sinning, but was not sneaky.

In contrast, Judas professed to be Christ’s friend but, having been progressively polarised by the word, he began to court another conversation with the Jewish leaders who were sceptical and jealous of Jesus, and who hated His message.

Both Judas and Peter professed to be the friends of Jesus.

Peter was overt in defending his integrity, whereas Judas, as he was being progressively polarised away from that fellowship, said to Jesus, ‘I am Your friend’. However, at the same time, he was courting, or engaging in, a conversation with those who hated Jesus.

Judas was duplicitous. That was sin leading to death.

Judas – outside the fellowship of faith – sin-sick unto death

Judas was an entrepreneurial thief, stealing from his brethren. This stealing did not involve only money, did it? It was stealing the *resources* that *belonged to that fellowship*.

None of the disciples knew that he was doing this.

This is an amazing statement by the apostle John! Writing as an old man looking back on the event, in his account of Jesus’ feet being anointed with precious oil by Mary, the sister of Martha, John said, ‘But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, who would betray Him, said, “Why

was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.' Joh 12:4-6.

It is interesting how opinionated Judas was. 'This should be done *this* way! We should have more word in this place about caring for the poor. We should do *this*! We should do *this*!' How come we don't hear about *this*?'

Do you see that that is a person who does not believe that *Jesus* has the word of eternal life?

The fruit of it was that he was *sin-sick*, caught in thieving. He could not help it.

Then, motivated by a need to try to retrieve some 'righteousness' out of this 'muck', he said, 'What we should do is sell that, so that we can give it to the poor.' In truth, however, he wanted to 'line his own pockets'.

This was 'sin leading to death'.

The bread of life fed to us for deliverance, in every wound of Jesus' offering journey

We will now consider how *deliverance from iniquity* happens.

I made the point at the beginning that this is just *one aspect* of how the bread, which is the word, is fed to us in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

This is just one wound. We see this 'feeding principle' in *every wound* that Jesus endured, as He comes alongside us in each of those wounds.

Jesus spoke a word 'in remembrance' to Peter, to 'prove' him into the kingdom

Last week, we noted that, after washing Peter's feet, Jesus revealed to him that Satan had asked for him, so that he might 'sift him as wheat'. However, Jesus said to Peter, 'I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' Luk 22:31-32.

In response, Peter declared his readiness to lay down his life for Jesus. Luk 22:33. Joh 13:37. Jesus prophesied, saying, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.' Joh 13:38.

A crucial point is that *that word*, which Jesus spoke specifically to Peter, was *His body and blood being broken to Peter*, 'in remembrance'.

Jesus had said, 'Break this bread and share this cup in remembrance of Me.' 1Co 11:24-25. Luk 22:19. That word was, then, the manna from heaven – the bread of life.

What did Moses say that the bread of heaven was to the Israelites? He said that He fed it to them to 'test' them. Deu 8:16. He fed them the bread of heaven to 'prove' their *connection* to His firstborn company.

Jesus broke this word to Peter as a *remembrance* for Peter, to 'prove' him *into the kingdom*. That is awesome, isn't it!

When Peter remembered that word, it tried, delivered and sanctified him

When that word did 'try' him, it exposed the condition of his heart, delivering him from the iniquity that kept him *apart* from Christ; and it then *connected* him to his sanctification.

That is when he *remembered* the words that Jesus had spoken to him. That *food*, which was a *word spoken to him*, became *life* for him, or a 'food lived', when that remembrance happened.

Today, we will fill in the gap between 'hearing the word' and 'remembering'.

Jesus' prayer sustaining Peter's faith in the day of his trial

Peter's response to the words of Jesus was self-righteous zeal, wasn't it? He was relying on the sight of his *own* eyes, and his readiness to act according to the dictates of his own heart.

They were iniquity within him.

Although Peter did not believe Christ's word, he had been 'washed' by the word that granted him *faith* to follow Jesus.

It was *this* faith that Christ could pray would not fail in the day of his trial.

Jesus did not pray for Peter to be 'a better person' or to be delivered from his iniquity. Jesus prayed that the *faith* that was evident in the simple response, 'I believe this word', *would not fail* in the trauma of when Jesus came alongside him.

That is the 'prayer of faith for the sick', so that God can raise them up. Jas 5:15.

Hands literally laid on Him as the scapegoat – all our iniquity laid on Him

We will proceed slowly here, and I will try to lay it out – but you will need to give this consideration.

Jesus was taken by the cohort down to the court of Caiaphas. Here, Jesus was beaten so severely that the bruising of His face caused His face to be disfigured more than any human's, ever. Isa 52:14.

This was not merely 'a bit of a beating'. This was bruising that changed the shape and look of His face. Isaiah said that that bruising, causing disfigurement, was *for our iniquities*. 'He was bruised for our iniquities.' Isa 53:5.

In the presence of the chief priests, elders and scribes, Jesus was questioned by Caiaphas, who asked, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' Mar 14:61.

Isn't that an amazing question – because that is who Peter had confessed that He was!

Right here, the issue of *iniquity* was being brought to the fore by the high priest's question, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'

Jesus answered him, saying, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, coming with the clouds of heaven.' Mar 14:62.

Upon this confession, Caiaphas tore his priestly garment and accused Jesus of blasphemy. And, on the basis of this accusation, the Sanhedrin used the Law to condemn Jesus to death. Mar 14:63-64.

Then, Jesus was *blindfolded*. That is what iniquity does to us. Iniquity makes us *blind*.

As all iniquity was being laid on Jesus, what was the first thing they did? Isa 53:6. They blindfolded Him! All of our blindness was laid on Him!

Do you see the point! They were doing something *to Him!*

First, they blindfolded Him. Then they repeatedly struck Him in the face *with their hands*. Mar 14:65. Mat 26:67.

They plucked His beard from His cheeks. Isa 50:6. They did this by taking hold of the hair on His head, and ripping it out.

What does this sound like? It sounds like '*hands laid on Him*', as the confession of the sins of the people on the *scapegoat*.

The scapegoat picture was not just mystical or symbolic for Jesus – they literally put their hands on Him *every time they punched Him*. Every time they grabbed His hair, they were laying on Him *reproach against the Father*. Psa 69:9. Rom 15:3.

That was *our* iniquity being laid on Jesus. Isa 53:6.

This was not symbolic or figurative or mystical – they *literally* did it to Him.

Every action was an action motivated by *the other law*, which was *iniquity* within them. This was a key element of His *offering for sin* as a *scapegoat*.

In laying hands upon Him, we were joined to His body of sin and judged

This is an amazing principle!

Through these actions, *everyone* who had gone astray because of iniquity was identified with, or *joined* to, *Christ's body of sin*.

Every touch upon Him did not *only* lay their iniquity on Him; it *joined them to Him*. It was as though, as they held on to Him, they were being formed into His body of sin, so that every *judgement* of God upon that body was now happening to *them*.

Iniquity was taken out and destroyed as Jesus suffered and exhausted the judgement of God

This is another wonderful point – instead of the abuse breaking Jesus down, so that He bowed before that iniquitous expression, Jesus *fully* suffered and exhausted the judgement of God upon iniquity, so that it was *taken away* and *destroyed*.

I tell you, they 'ran out of steam'! That is why they stopped punching Him. Their hands hurt too much!

One Gospel records that He was beaten for over an hour. Luk 22:59. They punched Him, punched Him, punched Him! Not one bone broke. His face was bruised as *their iniquity was laid on Him*. He suffered that, and *took it all out*. It was completely exhausted. The trauma associated with iniquity was *finished* in Him.

We join the fellowship of His sufferings or go out with our iniquity and judgement

It was actually *their* iniquity that was taken out; but *they* went out, *with* their iniquity, *in Him*.

This is where we need to understand the juncture point between *joining the fellowship of His sufferings*, by which He was being *raised up* at this point, and *going out with* that judgement.

Jesus' obedience was the antidote to all our lawlessness and rebellion

By the life of the Father in His blood, Jesus was *brought back from death* as the Lamb of God, because of His *obedience*.

In this regard, the obedience of Christ was the *antidote* to the rebellion and lawlessness that characterise iniquity.

All of our *lawlessness* and *rebellion* are the *iniquity* that was hitting Him. However, because He suffered it in obedience, *exhaustion* caused Him to *exhaust that judgement* upon Him, so that it all petered away to nothing.

His *obedience* was the antidote to our rebellion, which had been laid on Him.

Peter's iniquity was laid on Jesus as his denial connected him to those abusing Him

What has this to do with Peter? Peter was not in with the Jewish council, striking Jesus, was he? He was out in the court, warming himself by the fire. Mar 14:54.

How was Peter *delivered from iniquity* through what those people did to Jesus?

Following Christ's arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter followed at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. The Gospel of Matthew has a beautiful turn of phrase. It recorded that Peter went in 'to see the end.' Mat 26:58.

I love that, because the desire to 'see the end' is the evidence of *faith* – he had heard the word, and he was going to see it *right to the end*.

It was Peter's commitment to *not draw back*. He was going to 'see the end'.

As Peter observed the abuse of Jesus over a period of about an hour, he became increasingly agitated and ardent in his denial of Jesus. By the third time, he cursed and swore at those who queried, saying to them, 'I do not know this Man of whom you speak' Mar 14:71.

This was the zealous man who had avowed, 'I will lay down my life for Him.' As he saw, to the end, this abuse happen to Jesus, he became increasingly the *opposite* of what he had professed from the basis

of his own *belief in himself*. He became more ardent in his *disconnection* from Jesus.

He cursed and swore to emphasise his *denial* that he was a disciple and friend of Jesus. In doing so, he was saying, 'I am not *with* that Man whom you are beating! I do not *know* that Man! I'm with the blokes who are hitting Him!'

His zeal, his iniquity, was in the *denial* which *connected* him with those who were *laying their hands on Jesus*.

The whole world – everyone – is laying their iniquity on Jesus; deliverance or damnation

Every time that we express iniquity, we are *denying* that we are *with Jesus* – that means that we are *with those who are beating Him*. Our iniquity is then being *laid on Jesus*.

What happens in that moment will either be for our *deliverance* or for our *damnation*.

Significantly, Peter was laying *his hands* on the head of Christ, as his sin offering. Through the abuse of Jesus, *Peter's iniquity* was being laid on Jesus.

Do you see the point that *everyone is doing this*? The *whole world* is being made to eat this bread. In doing so, everyone is *laying their iniquity on Jesus*.

We choose to be taken out with our iniquity or to be delivered from iniquity to join His will

The *judgement* of God that was on *Jesus* because of this, brought an *end* to iniquity.

If we will not be delivered *from iniquity*, we will be taken out *with* our iniquity.

The alternative is that it is being *taken out of us*, and we are being joined to a will that *we are not the source of*.

The process of deliverance from iniquity – coming to nothing – bankrupt in spirit

How does this transaction happen? How was Peter being *delivered* at this point?

Each time that Peter denied Jesus, the zealous iniquity within him was *dying*.

He had said, 'I will die with You.' Every time he denied Jesus, that assertion was *coming to nothing*. It was actually melting away to nothing!

Do you see that his *denials* were iniquity within him, *dying*? His self-proclaimed resolve to lay down his life for Christ's sake was *coming to nothing*.

Iniquity was dying in Peter, as it was being *laid on Jesus* through Peter's denial.

Peter was very zealous for the Lord. But as he was abusing Jesus by saying, 'I'm with *them*, not with *Him*', that zealous capacity in him was dying.

Where was it going? It was going *onto Jesus*!

By the time that Peter had denied Jesus for a third time, he had *totally failed*. His zeal had been *totally fruitless*. His iniquity had merely led to the abuse of the only righteous Person in the entire universe! The zealot was dead – gone, right at that point! His zeal had been completely snuffed out, exhausted.

The *circumcision of this iniquity* within him was complete. It had been fully *taken from him*, and fully *laid on Jesus*.

That is what the circumcision of Christ 'looks like'.

Peter failed in his iniquity. It was taken from him and left on Jesus. What was Peter left with? Nothing! He was left with *nothing*. He had become *bankrupt in spirit*! 'Blessed are the bankrupt in spirit.' Mat 5:3.

Peter touched that blessing right there – bankrupt in spirit because his iniquity had failed as it was laid on Jesus.

At the point of his utter failure, Peter stayed connected to Jesus in the fellowship of faith

Then, when Jesus looked at Peter, meeting him *eye to eye*, Peter joined the *fellowship of faith* that Christ had prayed 'would not fail'. Luk 22:32,61. 'Peter, I am praying for you that your faith may not fail.'

Peter thought that he had failed – and he had. His iniquity had failed, but the *faith had not*. Why was that? It was because Peter was *still looking at Jesus*. He was still *seeing the effect* of his iniquity on Jesus.

Peter had *joined the prayer of faith* now, even though his righteousness had become completely defunct.

Do you see that your righteousness is not because you did well or 'good'? That is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The fruit of the tree of *life* is that you *stay connected to Jesus when He comes alongside you*. When Jesus looked at Peter, meeting him *eye to eye*, Peter *joined the fellowship of faith* that Christ had prayed would not fail.

By receiving the washing of the word, Peter had chosen this fellowship of faith

Under the convenient grace of God at the last supper, Peter had *chosen* this fellowship. We will consider 'choosing' further in the weeks to come.

Peter had chosen this fellowship by *receiving the washing* that was necessary for his part in Christ's offering journey.

Judas *never chose that fellowship of faith*. Do you see the point? Judas had to go back to the word that was calling him to eat Christ's flesh and to drink His blood – to *join the community of faith* where the *words of eternal life* were being proclaimed.

Joining Christ's prayer-faith

Through this interaction with Jesus in the court of Caiaphas, Peter was joined to Christ's prayer-faith. This was the *only prayer* to join.

This is important. We need to be very clear that none of our prayers that are *outside of that prayer* avail anything.

When we are suffering, in the midst of our trauma, if we are praying for ourselves to be delivered from it, we are not joining the prayer that Christ prayed for us. There is only *one prayer*.

We could probably do with a lot less of that style of 'praying', and know, simply, that we have a great High Priest who is *forever interceding* for us, *simply because we believe His word*.

Through this interaction with Jesus in the court of Caiaphas, Peter was joined to Christ's prayer-faith; this was the *only prayer* to join. Through *fellowship in this prayer of faith*, his iniquity was taken away, and his sin was purged.

Moreover, he became obedient to the word of his sanctification, which was to strengthen his brethren. Luk 22:32.

In the faith to simply believe the word and to belong, we are no longer ashamed

I love the fact that Jesus' prayer for Peter, because of that faith simply to *believe* and to *belong*, was 'Let not those who wait for You, O Lord of hosts, be ashamed because of Me.' Psa 69:6.

Peter had been *completely ashamed*. But when that all came to nothing, and Peter let go of his zeal, and was left with *only the faith that Jesus was praying for*, he was *no longer ashamed*.

Jesus was praying for him to be delivered from that shame. 'Let not those who wait for You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me; let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel. Because for Your sake I have borne reproach.' Psa 69:6-7.

The outcome of Peter's iniquity being laid on Jesus was that he no longer had in him that iniquitous propensity that had made him ashamed of the Lord in the first place. It was all finished. It was all taken away. That *prayer* of Jesus was *delivering Peter* from his iniquity.

Do not draw back from looking on Jesus – His word is proving our sonship

Christ's prayer in Caiaphas' house availed for Peter, because he *did not draw back from looking on Jesus*. Remember, he was going to *see* it to the end.

I encourage you today, if you are a believer, like Peter, but you are not understanding everything, simply believe the point that there is a *word* that is being *proclaimed* to you, today, to *prove your sonship*.

And I exhort you to *pray in the Spirit* so that He will guide you into all truth, and you will *see that word to its end*, proving your sonship. See it to the end.

It will not happen through large amounts of discussion. It will happen when you, in your daily walk with Jesus, have the 'mess'. But when your heart is *exposed* at that point, you will know what your iniquity is; and *then* you can have the discussion.

In the weakness of Christ's offering and sufferings, Peter was able to strengthen his brethren

Remember that Jesus came and talked *again* to Peter. He talked to Him about his friendship, his iniquity. Even Peter had to go back to the word that Jesus had first spoken to him.

But there was a *difference*, now, in the way that Peter interfaced with Jesus. He did not confess to be able to love with God's love - *agape*. He could not even love as a friend.

And, because of that, Jesus said, 'Obviously, there has been a *turning*. Now, Peter, you are not going to go your *own* way, as you did when you were like a baby. Now that you are becoming mature, you will go in a way that you *did not choose*. Joh 21:18. And it will be in the *fellowship in living and dying, through which* you can strengthen your brethren.'

The point is that Peter's capacity to *strengthen his brethren* was not because he was 'a really enthusiastic guy'.

His capacity to strengthen his brethren, according to his name, was because he was *joined to where the strength was* – that is, he was being made perfect in *the weakness of Christ's offering and sufferings*.

Jesus prays for us as we live only by the faith He gives us in His word

Peter did not draw back, because he had faith that Jesus prayed for, so that the work of His offering would be completed in Peter, and he would not be lost.

The book of Hebrews declares, 'The just shall live by faith.' Heb 10:38. This does not mean 'heaps' of faith; though, eventually, there *will* be heaps of it! But it begins with a *seed*.

'The just [the one who becomes justified through this offering process] shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back [so that they cannot abide 'looking' anymore], My soul has no pleasure in him.' Heb 10:38.

This means that He is *not praying for us*. His 'soul has pleasure in us' when we *live* by the *faith* that He gives us in His *word*.

'My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition.' Heb 10:38-39. What is perdition? It is destruction! Judgement! We are not of those who draw back to destruction, 'but of those who believe [by faith] to the saving of the soul.' Heb 10:39.

In contrast, Judas, who had only *his* faith, continued to walk by the sight of his *own* eyes. While Christ probably looked at him, *he did not look at Christ*. Rather, he looked at and assessed the situation from the basis of *his own self-centred law*.

Seeing the evil outcome of our actions, but not the iniquitous heart that motivated them

'Then Judas, His betrayer, *seeing* that [Jesus] had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went [out] and hanged himself.' Mat 27:3-5.

The point that I want to emphasise is regarding what Judas '*saw*'. Both Peter and Judas were at that

event. Jesus was praying for one of them, because he was not sinning a sin that was 'unto death'.

He was not praying for Judas, because Judas had 'sinned unto death'.

What was the mark of Judas' sin unto death?

The Scriptures record that he was '*seeing* that Jesus had been condemned'. Mat 27:3. Judas saw that the *outcome* of his projection was evil.

He did *not* see *the evil in himself*.

On the contrary, Peter saw the outcome of his iniquity being laid on Jesus - and what did he *see*? *He saw the depths of his iniquity*.

Do you see the difference? Judas saw the evil outcome of his projection, but did not recognise that it was *his heart* that was evil.

Peter's heart, on the other hand, was fully exposed as Jesus looked at him, and he was able to see the depths of his iniquity.

Recovered to the treasure of our sonship as we know the depths of our iniquity – and continue to hold the Lord's gaze

When we see the depths of our iniquity, and we *do not draw back*, but continue to hold the Lord's gaze, what do we see in His face?

We see *the heights of our inheritance*.

I have said a number of times in the last couple of weeks, that we need to know the *treasure of our sonship*.

And we will never know the treasure of our sonship until we know the depths of our iniquity, because that treasure is the *great heights of the love of God*.

Peter found that blessing.

Judas never did! Judas was condemned by his own lie, and he was right. His actions and his projections were evil, but he did not equate the outcome of his behaviour with *what was in his heart*. He did not 'see'.

But Peter did! And then Peter was *able* to be *recovered to his sanctification*!

We *all* have to find that, so that we do *know* the great *treasure* that belongs to us. We all have to be delivered from our iniquity.

But that is not happening to us every day. There is a *whole journey* by which Christ is *coming alongside us*;

and most of the time we are spending our time doing the will of the Lord in front of us.

Faith that will not fail - I belong here and I believe this word

But we do need to have that *fundamental faith* that says, 'I *belong* in this place, and I *believe* that these are the words of eternal life'.

Then, when the word comes and tries us, we are able to endure *to the end*, because we have a High Priest who is forever *interceding* for us that *that faith* will not fail in the day of our trial. Praise the Lord!