

Reconciliation Sees The Sin And Forgives

John 18:15–18, 25-27; 21:15-17

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Every conversation has the opportunity for a few things to happen. We can either talk about nothing, or we can talk about what's important. Jesus gives us opportunities to be with specific people and to talk about Him. There is a moment in every conversation when the sinner sees their sin and are ready to hear your story about the grace of Jesus. If you start talking about Jesus before that moment, the other person will miss Jesus. They won't hear about Him, because they won't be listening.

I am convinced more than ever that people want to be forgiven. Regardless of how hard their outer shell, Jesus can crack it open and offer His grace, mercy, love, and power. The most effective way to talk about His grace, is to share your experiences with Jesus. But, you have to wait for the right moment, the moment they see their sin.

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?" "No," he said, "I am not." Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself. John 18:15–18 (NLT)

Every sinner needs to know that Jesus is aware of your sin and is ready to forgive you. This passage takes us to the last hours of Jesus' life. Jesus has been arrested and taken to be interrogated. He has been aware that these things would happen. Jesus knew these things before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. He knew what would happen when He prayed for God's will to be done and not His. Before He washed His disciples feet, Jesus was aware of what was coming next. While He shared His last supper with the disciples, Jesus already knew what was coming. When Jesus told His disciples one of them would betray Him, He knew who it was. As Peter boldly proclaimed his unyielding faith, Jesus knew how it would unfold before the rooster crowed.

Jesus, the man, knows these things because Jesus is God. He knew He would come to earth and die before He spoke the world into creation. Before He called forth the light, set the stars in the sky, created the first two people, Jesus knew. His knowledge doesn't keep us from making choices. In the greatness and magnitude of His knowledge, Jesus allows us to make choices. He knows the choice we will make. He allows us to make those choices so we can see our need for Him and so He can bring us to the place of trusting Him.

Too big for your brain to handle? It is for me also. I can look back over my life and see how true it is, that Jesus was allowing me to make up my own mind, even though He knew where I was going. Jesus used everything He allowed me to experience to draw me to Him and to make me into the person I am today, and will be tomorrow.

There are no coincidences, accidents, or luck. But, we are not in a trap of a controlled life. We can make the choice to give our lives to Jesus and to trust Him.

Simon Peter was on the outside, when he is on the inside he and Jesus could see one another. Peter is a hard working fisherman. He and his brother have their own boat and they make the choices about where to fish. Peter's life is filled with boldness, he rarely has a thought that doesn't cross His lips. He is right all the time and is unwilling to admit defeat. These personality traits have kept Peter moving everyday.

But Jesus entered His life, gave Him a choice, and Peter followed. Before Jesus called Peter to Him, Jesus knew what Peter would do. Jesus knew that Peter would need to make certain decisions. As Jesus was being interrogated Peter was about to make a choice that would change His life.

Jesus knows the choices you and I will make before we make them. Jesus sees that we are walking toward temptation and sin. Jesus lets each one of us make our own choice. Jesus gives us this freedom because He loves us. When we are ready to sin Jesus loves us. When we are ready to call out to Jesus, He loves us. Did you know this? Do sinners know this?

Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, "You're not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."

Even when their sin is obvious people will still deny needing Jesus to save them. Everyone who was just at the Garden of Gethsemane is now in the courtyard. If this weren't such a serious situation, it would be comical. It might have been dark, but these people recognized Peter. He can't hide in plain sight. The glow of the fire was on his face. They are being polite by asking Peter if He is a disciple.

I would like to think that they continued to ask Peter about his identity because they were curious about Jesus. They had followed the soldiers to the garden and back. Now they are in the courtyard of the priest. Is it possible they are curious about this man that was just arrested?

Peter feels defensive at their requests. Peter has heard the Word of God pour out of the mouth of Jesus. He has witnessed Jesus make people walk, take away leprosy, cast out demons, and raise the dead. Peter saw Jesus glorified on the mountain top. He saw his mother-in-law healed. He felt the touch of the Savior's hand as he was sinking into the sea.

Now Jesus has been bound. He is being abused verbally with false accusations. He's been struck in the face. Peter's human instincts jump in and he replies that he isn't a disciple. Is this not the way the guilty often react? Even though we are caught, exposed, unmasked we deny. It's the hand in the cookie jar, denying that you're thief. It's the paint can in hand, denying you're the graffiti artist. It's being covered in mud, denying you've played in it. It's Adam saying to God, the woman made me eat the fruit. Every sinner ever born believes lying to themselves is a great idea. Peter just happened to be speaking out loud. But make no mistake Peter knew Jesus. He was guilty of being one of His disciples. He had claimed he would never let this happen. But, he denied Jesus.

Like Peter everybody quickly goes into denial. We may not lie every time we're caught red handed, but we do lie, we do deny Jesus. Saints and sinners alike lie to ourselves. We fill our heads with our own thoughts – pride or shame, fear or anxiety. We do it over and over again until we believe our own lies. I don't need to say anything more, right? We know it's true, we know how we think and how we live.

That point is only important because every saint and every sinner needs to know that Jesus loves them. He knows you are lying to yourself and to others. Jesus loves you. Jesus knows your mind, the

mind of every sinner, is filled with lies, with denial, with betrayal. Jesus loves every sinner. Jesus died and rose from the dead to forgive every sinner. Did you know this? Do sinners know this?

But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?” Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed. John 18:26–27 (NLT)

When Jesus reveals Himself, people are ready to turn away from their sin. The most unexpected person, a relative of the person Peter attacked, talks to Peter. Movie writers have to get their inspiration from scripture. This twist in the story is too good to be true. Of all the people to confront Peter next it’s someone who knows about Him. If it weren’t for bad luck, Peter would have no luck at all. I don’t believe in luck. But we’ll get to that in a minute.

Imagine your name is Malchus and you go with the Temple Guards to arrest a man named Jesus. One of His disciples, Judas, is leading the way. When you get to the grove of olives the disciples are sleeping. Judas kisses Jesus and the guards arrest Him. But, suddenly without notice one of the disciples swings a sword and cuts off your ear. Before you know it Jesus has healed your ear. It’s back on the side of your head like it had never been cut off. You can hear better than you could before. The ringing in your ears is gone.

If this happened to you, wouldn’t you tell somebody? As the crowd and the soldiers with Jesus are returning to the courtyard of the priest wouldn’t you be telling the story to everyone who saw it happen? When you get to the courtyard, wouldn’t you find your relatives – siblings, cousins, parents – and tell them the story?

We don’t know if this household slave is a sibling, a cousin, or the parent of Malchus, but that person picks out Peter. He isn’t dressed like a guard, a slave, a priest but like a fisherman, so he stands out in the crowd. You are now the third person to confront Peter. ***“Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?”***

An eyewitness confronts Peter. God is such a great writer and director of life. Nothing is an accident. There are no coincidences. God’s finger print is all over this story. All of these things are coming together at the right moment for the right purpose. In God’s bigger purpose of Jesus dying for our sins, comes the story of the sin and redemption of a man named Peter. This is the beginning of Jesus demonstrating His love for Peter, the transformation of Peter, and the commissioning of Peter to a new ministry. More on that in a minute.

As crazy as it sounds every sinner hears the rooster crow. This is the moment when we realize it’s give into sin or call upon Jesus. Peter has been giving into temptation most of His life. He has a big mouth and boasts quite frequently. The people around Peter came to expect his outbursts. Peter claimed he would never let anything bad happen to Jesus. He claimed he would never deny Jesus. Peter couldn’t live up to his word. The crowing of the rooster meant that he failed again. He fell to temptation. He sinned by denying Jesus.

Every sinner hears the rooster crow. Every sinner knows their sin. Every sinner decides to either to give into sin, or to confess their sin to Jesus and repent. Therefore, when the rooster crows it’s an opportunity to turn the conversation to the love of Jesus, His grace, His mercy, and His power over sin. Sinners who know you are a Christian are waiting to hear you speak the truth. This is the moment you proclaim how you have experienced the grace of God.

After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.” “Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him. Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” “Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.” “Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said. A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep. John 21:15–17 (NLT)

We need to love and feed people so that they will love Jesus. Peter represents all of us being forgiven and sent out on a mission. Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus witnessed it happening. The rooster crowed and Peter knew Jesus was calling him out of His sin. Peter left that scene devastated and in tears. He remembered Jesus’ words, he remembered his own pride, he remembered his own boasts, he remembered his arrogance.

After the resurrection Jesus appeared to Peter more than once. But, when Peter and some of the disciples returned to the business of fishing Jesus appeared again. Jesus stood on the shore calling to His disciples. He fixed breakfast for them. He sat and ate with them. It must have reminded Peter of other days when Jesus ate with them.

Jesus asks the same question three times, “do you love me?” Peter responded three times “Yes Lord.” There are not accidents. This was an intentional moment for Jesus to forgive Peter and send him out with a new mission. Each time Peter responded “yes Lord,” Jesus gave him a mission. That mission was to love and feed Jesus’ sheep. Peter was being sent out to saints and sinners alike. He was told to love them and offer them forgiveness. The forgiveness Peter offered was the same forgiveness Jesus had given to Him.

We need to understand and agree that this is our mission. It is my mission. It is the mission of every believer. That is to offer to saints and sinners alike the forgiveness that Jesus has given to us. As disciples of Jesus we are committed to making more disciples. We make disciples by offering them the forgiveness we have been given. No matter what our family members face in life, God’s forgiveness is available to them. Regardless of what our neighbors have done, the forgiveness of Jesus exists for them to receive. Whatever has happened in the life of a co-worker Jesus lived, died, and rose again that they might receive His forgiveness. Let the forgiveness you received from Jesus be a central part of your story. Make your story part of your conversations with family, neighbors, and co-workers.

Is the rooster crowing in your life? That is, could Jesus be revealing to you that He has seen your sin and He loves you? Is the rooster crowing and you know that Jesus is calling you out of your sin and into a life of forgiveness? It’s not just a nice saying, Jesus loves you. It is the truth that is eternal. There is nothing in your life that Jesus won’t forgive. You are not so evil that Jesus has denied you, betrayed you, or rejected you.

You have the opportunity to trust Jesus with all of your past, all of your sins. You are at the moment of decision to embrace a mercy like you have never experienced before. Choose Jesus and be set free from the power sin has had over your life. Let Jesus enter your life, cleanse you of your sin and give you hope and peace. Open your heart, your spirit, your soul to Jesus to and a new person, the one He created you to be. In your own words tell Jesus you are a sinner. Ask Him to forgive you. Invite Him into your life.