

Main Idea: Two things led to regret for Peter in Mark 14:66-72. If we want to learn how to deal with our regrets we need to pay special attention to what happened to Peter.

- I. Peter is put on trial for Jesus (66-71).
 - A. He denies being with Jesus (66-68).
 - B. He denies being a follower of Jesus (69-70a).
 1. Jesus was willing to die for us.
 2. Are we willing to live unashamedly for Him?
 - C. He denies even knowing Jesus (70b-71).
 1. The problem isn't Peter's mouth, but his heart.
 2. There are idols in Peter's heart, as in ours.
 - a. Acceptance: I want people to like me.
 - b. Safety: I want to be safe and comfortable.
 - c. Control: I want to be in control of what happens to me.
- Think about it: We fear man too much because we fear God too little.
- II. Peter remembers Jesus' words (72).
 - A. The Lord's Word came true.
 1. We are prone to forget God's Word.
 2. We need to take steps to remember God's Word.
 - B. The Lord didn't give up on Peter.

Make It Personal: What can we do so we won't have regrets?

1. We need to remember that we are just like Peter.
2. We need to deal with potential regrets now.

Jonathan Edwards' Resolve (at age 19): "I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age."
3. We need to remember that Christ is sufficient for our regrets.

We return to Mark 14 again this morning in our series, “The Servant in Action.” But we won't see The Servant in this account. In fact, it's interesting that Mark 14 begins and ends with two stories showing how people treated Jesus just prior to His crucifixion.

At the beginning of Mark 14 we meet a woman whose name is not given, and at the end, the name of a man whose name is given. The woman demonstrated great love by breaking her expensive flask of ointment and pouring it on Jesus's head. The man demonstrated great fear, and denied he even knew Jesus.

The woman's actions resulted in criticism from Jesus' disciples, who said, “A waste!” But Jesus said she did a beautiful thing, “for she has anointed my body beforehand for burial.” The man's actions, on the other hand, drew no criticism from the disciples, for they were all gone and in hiding.

Two weeks ago, we looked at The Betrayal. Last week, at the Trial. This morning, we see The Denial. Let's prepare ourselves for communion by reading this account, and then pondering it carefully.

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:26-31, 66-72

The denial. It took only 20 minutes or so. Three short conversations in a 20 minute span. But it was a terrible 20 minutes, and he did something in those 20 that he thought, that he *said*, he would never do. But he did.

He denied Jesus. Peter had followed Jesus, had said he loved Jesus, had done many good things for Jesus. But then he denied him. And it took only 20 minutes.

Most of us can look back with shame at something that we did in 20 minutes. Oh, it may have been 20 days, or 20 years, for that matter. But it just hangs there in our

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the Mark series in 2006.

memory. That wicked deed. That foolish conversation. That self-seeking pursuit of pleasure.

Or perhaps it was something we *didn't* do. That marriage we *didn't* fight for, and now regret. That conversation we should have had with that child, or that friend, but didn't have. And now it's too late.

The course of action we chose during those twenty minutes didn't produce what it promised. We thought it offered us freedom and fulfillment. Instead, it quickly shackled us with shame and regret.

The question is, what are we going to do with that horrible twenty-minute memory? We can try to deny it, but that doesn't work. We can try to compensate for it, but we never seem to do enough. The reality is this. Our lives continue to be defined by those twenty minutes.

But God has a better way. It is a way forward, to His glory, our eternal joy, and our present fruitfulness. And it begins by looking at what He did with Peter.

Many, and I don't think that word is an exaggeration, many people, including people sitting in churches this morning, are presently living lives that are defined (and controlled) by something they did, or didn't do, in their past. And for the next ten, twenty, or thirty years, the way they think about themselves, and life, and even God, is controlled by that action.

"I could never experience intimacy with God, let alone serve Him, not after what I did."

My dear friends, listen carefully. The Lord Jesus Christ does not want our lives to be defined **by what we did**. Rather He wants our lives to be defined **by what He did for us**. He died for us, paying sin's penalty in full. He conquered death for us, guaranteeing that we can experience life that is abundant and eternal. This is gospel reality, and it is liberating!

Yes, Peter denied Jesus. This is a terrible, twenty-minute reality, and the New Testament does not hide this reality, as we'll see today. But when you read the New Testament, the *whole* New Testament, you soon discover that Peter's life is not defined by what he did in those twenty minutes. His life is defined by what Jesus did for Him.

I want us to fix this reality in our minds even before we look at The Denial. I want us to keep in mind what happened to Peter *after* The Denial.

I want us to remember *the look* (Luke 22:61 says that right after Peter's third denial, "the Lord turned and *looked* at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord").

I want us to remember *the meeting*, when in just a matter of days, Jesus met with Peter at the sea of Galilee and asked him three times, "Do you love me, Peter?" And in so doing helped Peter repent thoroughly, and experience forgiveness freely, and then restored him to ministry.

And indeed, was he ever restored! Jesus gave Peter an amazing ministry of preaching the good news that had rescued him from despair. And to whom did Peter preach? To Jews who had done what he did, abandoned their Messiah. And thousands believed in the Messiah they heard about through Peter's lips and pen.

This is the question for all of us. Will we continue to allow our lives to be defined by what we did, or by what He did? Will we find our identity in our past, or His?

This is why the Bible calls on us to repent and believe. We must turn from trusting in and living for ourselves (repent), and put our total trust in Him (believe). And when we do, the Bible says we are saved. But repent and believe isn't merely past tense. It is to become a way of life for us from the day God saves us until we see Him in glory.

One of the things I love about the Bible is that it presents people as they really were. We see the warts and all. Why? Because God wants us to leave every story remembering who the real hero is, and that if He could do it for them, He can do it in our lives as well.

So now, let's look at Peter's twenty minutes. And let's do so with ours in mind as well. And let's prepare ourselves to come to the table, and then leave this room knowing that our identity is no longer defined by what we did, but entirely by what He did for us.²

Let's remind ourselves of the context. We have come to the climax of the life of Jesus. He Himself said in Mark's theme verse (Mark 10:45), "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." In just a few short hours Jesus will do just that. He will give His life as a ransom payment for many on a cruel Roman cross.

But the focus at the end of Mark 14 is on Peter. To appreciate fully what Peter is about to do, we need to keep in mind three background items from Mark 14:27-31:

1. Jesus predicted He was going to die and that all His followers would abandon Him (verse 27).
2. Peter promised Jesus he would *not* do so (29). "I will not!" he declared.
3. Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him, not once but three times, stating in Mark 14:30, "I tell you the truth, today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times."

Those words were spoken just hours prior to the account we're about to consider. Jesus went to Gethsemane to pray, was arrested by a mob, forsaken by all, subjected to a mock trial by the Sanhedrin, and condemned as worthy of death. Since the Jews lacked authority to execute the death penalty, they began to abuse Jesus while waiting for morning when they would take Him to Pilate, insisting that he do the dirty work.

Then came Peter's regrettable moment. Verse 66 gives the setting, "And as Peter was below in the courtyard." So Jesus is upstairs in Caiaphas's house, on trial before the Jewish religious leaders, and is now being beaten. Peter is down below, outside, and next to the house. He too is about to be put on trial.

I. Peter is put on trial for Jesus (66-71).

Notice verses 14:66–67, "And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came,⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, 'You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.'"

Note the contrast. Jesus is being beaten. Peter is warming himself by the fire. And there by the fire, a woman looks closely at him. Apparently, the flickering light from the fire enables her to get a good look at Peter's face. Luke's account says she *looked intently at* him, a strong verb which indicates she fixed her eyes upon Peter and studied his face.

"You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said. At this point the conversation around the fire quieted and Peter's heart nearly pounded out of his chest. He now has the opportunity to do what he promised the Lord he would do. But he doesn't.

A. He denies being with Jesus (66-68). In verse 68 we're told, "But he denied it, saying, 'I neither know nor understand what you mean.' And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed."

² The Lord willing, we have about seven messages to go in our Mark series. But we're going to take a break now for Christmas, and then a mini-series on the family. We'll plan to finish our Mark series in the weeks leading up to Easter Sunday in March.

The word “deny” in verse 68 is the Greek *arneomai*, which means “to deny, disown, repudiate, not consent to.” Jesus used it in Luke 9:23 when He said, “If anyone would come after me, he must *deny* himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”

Typically, Peter is bold and confident, but now he is intimidated by a slave girl. He denies association with Jesus, moves away from the fire, and heads for the doorway. Apparently, the young lady followed Peter.

Verse 69 says, “And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, ‘This man is one of them.’”

Peter could feel her steely eyes fixed on him. Here was his chance to take a stand, to say, “Yes! She’s right! I was with Jesus. You’re all making a big mistake about Him!”

Yet he doesn’t. Verse 70 says, “But again he denied it.” He actually ramps up his denial. First, he denies being *with* Jesus. Now he denies being His follower.

B. He denies being a follower of Jesus (69-70a). Before proceeding, let’s acknowledge the reality. This story about Peter is in so many ways a story about us.

I am so much like Peter. I get tongue-tied when I’m around skeptics too. I clam up when the opportunity presents itself to talk about my Savior too. I have neighbors I have never talked with about Jesus. I have family members who are heading for eternal destruction and I have yet to share with them about the One who is their only hope.

This is us, friends. It is unthinkable, yet true.

1. *Jesus was willing to die for us.* He who knew no sin became sin for us, 2 Corinthians 5:21 declares. He died for us, Romans 5:8 announces. He died *for our sins*, 1 Corinthians 15:3 proclaims. That’s what Jesus did for us, beloved.

But the question is.

2. *Are we willing to live unashamedly for Him?* This is precisely what Jesus calls us to do. He Himself spoke these sobering words in Matthew 10:32-33, “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”

For Peter it was crunch time. Verse 70 records, “And after a little while [Luke’s account says, “about an hour later”] the bystanders again said to Peter, ‘Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.’”

They were of course down south in Judea. How did they know that Peter was from up north in Galilee? The same reason a New Englander enters our presence and the moment he speaks we say, “You’re not from around here, are you?”

In Matthew’s parallel account they added, “Your accent gives you away (26:73).”

John’s account of the story indicates that one of Peter’s accusers was a relative of the man whose ear Peter cut off at the arrest. John says this man challenged Peter, saying, “Didn’t I see you with him in the olive grove? (John 18:26).”

And how does Peter handle the question? In the first two denials, he denies all association with Jesus. But in the third, he goes even further.

C. He denies even knowing Jesus (70b-71). In verse 71 we’re told, “But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, ‘I do not know this man of whom you speak.’”

The ‘invoke a curse’ means “to declare oneself liable to the severest divine penalties.”³ To ‘swear’ means “to make an oath,” “to affirm, promise, or threaten with an oath.”⁴ Peter did both. He cursed, and he swore. And he did so to remove all doubt that he had any connection with Jesus.

³ Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon

⁴ It appears in Acts 23:12, “The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and *bound themselves with an oath* not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul.”

Listen to the New Living Translation, “I swear by God, I don’t know this man you are talking about.” Peter’s verb choice is in the perfect tense, which refers to activity that began in the past and continues into the present. The Young’s Literal Translation captures the sense, “I have not known this man of whom ye speak.”⁵

So there it is, in all its ugliness. The man who once had professed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!” is now swearing, “I don’t know the Man!”

You say, “Where did this cursing, this denial, originate?”

1. *The problem isn’t Peter’s mouth, but his heart.* It’s not what’s happening to him, but what’s *inside* of him. How do we know? This is precisely what Jesus taught in Matthew 15:19, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, *false testimony*, slander.”

Peter may be an apostle, but he still has a heart problem. What kind of heart problem does he have? This kind.

2. *There are idols in Peter’s heart, as in ours.* That’s right. There’s a battle raging in Peter’s heart. Yes, he worships the Lord in his heart. But during these twenty minutes by the fire, he is bowing down before other gods, false gods, *idols*.

Ken Sande observes, “An idol is not simply a statue of wood, stone, or metal; it is anything we love and pursue in place of God, and can also be referred to as a ‘false god’ or a ‘functional god.’ In biblical terms, an idol is something other than God that we set our hearts on...”⁶

This is what is ruling in Peter’s heart right now, a *functional god*. Any time a sinful word comes out of our mouths, we can trace its origin back to a functional god that is receiving our affection in our hearts.

Richard Keyes comments, “An idol is something within creation that is inflated to function as God... Idolatry may not involve explicit denials of God’s existence or character. It may well come in the form of an over-attachment to something that is, in itself, perfectly good.”⁷

At this moment, Peter still believes in the Lord. But something else is inflated to function as God in his life. I can’t see Peter’s heart, so I don’t know what idol he is bowing before. I do know what idols entice me, and far too often receive my worship.

So allow me to suggest three possible idols, the presence of which would account for Peter’s sinful actions, and our own.

a. **Acceptance:** I want people to like me. “These people will think poorly of me if they think I’m a friend of Jesus. I don’t want that. I want their approval. I want them to think I’m a good guy.”

Is it wrong to want people to like us? No, not necessarily. There is certainly no virtue in causing people to *dislike* us. It’s nice to be approved by people. But the issue is this. *Must* I be? Is that what drives me? Am I willing to sin to obtain their approval?

b. **Safety:** I want to be safe and comfortable. “If these folks know that I know Jesus, they might do to me what they’re doing to Jesus right now. I don’t want to be beaten and killed. I want to be *safe* and *comfortable*.”

Is safety and comfort wrong? No. But this is. What’s wrong is to *worship* safety and comfort, to insist we must have it, to give our affection and energy to it. Maybe that’s the idol that Peter bowed before. Perhaps it was this.

⁵ But didn’t Jesus say these words in Matthew 5:34, “Do not swear at all”? Yes, He did, and Peter heard Him.

⁶ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*

⁷ Taken from message by C. J. Mahaney, *The Idol Factory*.

c. **Control:** I want to be in control of what happens to me. “If these folks know I am a disciple of Jesus, who knows what they will do to me, probably some pretty bad things! I don’t want that. I refuse that. I must do whatever I can to maintain control over my life!”

We have a term for that. We call such people “control freaks.” Know anybody like that? Most of us have that bent. A control freak struggles to trust God, and others, and therefore tries to control situations to produce what he or she considers to be the best possible outcome. And what a control freak resists is being in a situation where someone else is in control. Why? Because if that happens, I might be embarrassed or worse yet, look foolish, or even worse, get hurt.

Proverbs 29:25 says it well, “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.”

Peter was gripped by the fear of man and consequently denied his Lord. And he’s not alone. Think of the woman to whom God has given a beautiful voice, yet who refuses to use that voice for the Lord’s work. Think of the man who doesn’t pray in public. Think of the young person who doesn’t come to Sunday School because he or she is uncomfortable in small groups. In each situation, what is ruling the person’s heart? The fear of man is. The fear of man is irrational. It ensnares us.

Why then do we do it? And let’s be clear. We *all* do it. We bow down before the idol of the fear of man. What’s needed? Jesus Himself answered that question for Peter just an hour or so before the denial.

Think back. Is there a connection between Peter’s denial and what Peter *failed* to do just an hour or earlier? I think there is. Do you remember what Jesus urged Peter to do when they were in Gethsemane?

Notice Mark 14:37-38, “And he [Jesus] came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’”

There it is. There’s the problem, and the solution. *We fear man too much because we fear God too little.*

So maybe for Peter it was acceptance. Maybe safety. Maybe control. Maybe it was yet another idol. But know this. Peter did what he did because of what he was *wanting*. The problem wasn’t merely his mouth, but his *heart*.

Beloved, this is yet another of a thousand reasons why we need a Savior. Our problem isn’t simply that we do bad things. It’s that we have hearts that want bad things, and even more often, hearts that want legitimate things too much. We, like Peter, need a Savior who can cleanse our wicked hearts and give us new hearts.

And that’s what Jesus did on the cross, and now does for us, if we’ll ask. As the hymnwriter put it:

*He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free.
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.⁸*

So ends scene one. Peter is put on trial for Jesus. Now scene two.

II. Peter remembers Jesus’ words (72).

⁸ Charles Wesley, *O For a Thousand Tongues*

Notice verse 72, “And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.”

Listen to Luke’s account in Luke 22:60-61, “Just as he [Peter] was speaking, the rooster crowed. *The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.* Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him...”

Perhaps Jesus was by a window between beatings and at that very moment, He made eye contact with Peter even as his self-protecting words hung in the air, “I don’t know the man!” It was *then* that Peter remembered. Once he saw Jesus, and once he saw that Jesus saw him, it all came back. “You will disown me three times.” And he had.

A. The Lord’s Word came true. Immediately, Peter responded in two ways. First, the ESV says, “And he broke down.” The Greek word *epiballo* actually means ‘to throw on, to put on.’ It’s used in Mark 11:7 for throwing cloaks over the colt that carried Jesus into Jerusalem. Here it carries the idea of “putting one’s mind on something, to think about seriously about something.”

In other words, Peter processed the data (the sound of his own voice denying the Lord, the recorded sound of His Master predicting this denial, and the sound of the rooster crowing), and when he processed that data, *he broke down.*

Then he *wept*. The Greek verb *klaio* means ‘to cry, wail, mourn, weep bitterly.’ It’s used of mourning for the dead in Mark 5:38. It’s what Jesus did when He *wept* over Jerusalem in Luke 19:41. Here Mark uses the imperfect tense verb which carries the sense, “And Peter *was weeping.*” In other words, he wept and wept and wept as if he would never stop weeping.

Don’t miss the timing here. When did Peter break down and weep? It happened after he denied the Lord, and then after the rooster crowed, and then after he *remembered* the word of Jesus.

It’s the remembering that caused the pain to tears to flow. It’s not just his sinful denial. It’s the truth that he remembered, and remembered *too late*! If only he had remembered the Lord’s word sooner, he could have stood up for his Savior and passed this test.

There’s a vital lesson here for us, beloved.

1. *We too are prone to forget God’s Word.* The word ‘remember’ in the Greek is *anamimneskomai*, meaning “to cause to remember, to call to mind, to remind, to remember and weigh well and consider.”⁹ That’s what Peter failed to do until too late with Jesus’ words. We find the same root word in the noun form in the familiar instruction in Luke 22:19, “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in *remembrance* of me.’”

This is when we get into trouble, friends, when we fail to give priority attention to remembering the person and words of Jesus. This is why we need church, fellow Christians, to be reminded of Jesus’ words. If we don’t place ourselves under the consistent ministry of the Word, we like Peter are in great danger.

2. *We need to take steps to remember God’s Word.* Allow me to be specific. What should happen when we get up on Sunday morning and feel too tired to go to church? Remember Peter! Remember what happens when we neglect God’s Word.

God is so good. In His grace He has given gifted servants to His church to feed us so we will be strong and able to stand during temptation. But the teaching of His Word doesn’t help us if we don’t place ourselves under its sound.

⁹ Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon

I don't think we realize how vulnerable we are when we neglect God's Word. Without the Word of God, we are weak because we don't have inherent power. The power for living comes from the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), and He gives us that power through His Word ministered to us through His people (Col. 3:16).

We need to be under the Word. The Word of God is our food. If we neglect the ministry of the Word, we are in trouble. Just ask Peter.

Beloved, let's encourage one another to value the ministry of the Word. As a church. In our families. In our own personal lives. Let's take steps to remember the Word. We need continual *reminders* of what the Lord has said. Peter remembered *too late*.

Thankfully...

B. The Lord didn't give up on Peter. Do you remember the words of the angel to the women on resurrection morning? Listen to Mark 16:6-7, "'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples **and Peter**, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Do you hear grace ringing in those words? Tell Peter! And Jesus did meet Peter in Galilee. In John 21 the resurrected Christ met Peter by the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

"Do you love me?" He asked Peter three times.

"Feed my sheep!" He commanded Peter three times.

Why did Jesus repeat those questions and commands three times? He wanted Peter to remember the night he denied his Lord three times. But He's not reminding Peter to punish him, for the punishment for Peter's sin and the sins of all who believe were absorbed fully by Jesus on the cross.

No, Jesus is taking Peter *back* so he can move *ahead*. "I'm not done with you, Peter!" the Lord is saying. "I have a work for you to accomplish in the care of my people."

And the Lord did restore Peter and for the next thirty-plus years Peter lived boldly for Christ and even died boldly for Christ, crucified by the Romans.

Hudson Taylor once said, "God chose me because I was weak enough. He trains somebody to be quiet enough, and little enough, and then uses Him."¹⁰ That was true with Peter, too. And can be true of us.

Make It Personal: What can we do so we won't have regrets?

I would suggest three steps of preventative maintenance.

1. *We need to remember that we are just like Peter.* This same Peter later wrote about the lessons he learned and shared the following insights in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

Peter fell prey to the lion that night. But the context of that warning is key. In the first four verses of chapter five Peter exhorts the elders of the church to feed and lead the flock of God. On the heels of those words, Peter exhorts the young men and others in the church to submit themselves to the elders and to put on humility (verses 5-7). Right after that instruction comes the warning about the lion-like devil.

What's the connection between the exhortations to the elders and young men in verses 1-7 and the warning about the devil in verse 8? Peter commands the elders to lead and feed the flock because the tendency of elders is to NOT do that. The natural tendency is to think of yourself, not others, which for shepherds means they use the flock

¹⁰ Taken from Kent Hughes, p. 184.

for self-gain. And Peter commands the young men to submit to the elders with humility because the tendency of young men is to NOT do that. The natural tendency of young men is to think you don't need to be fed and led by the elders.

And when that happens, Peter says, when elders fail to feed and lead the flock, and when young men and the rest of the church fail to see their need to be fed and led, disaster is coming. Why? Because there's a prowling lion who is waiting to strike proud little sheep who refuse to live in the safety of the fold as instructed by the Good Shepherd.

Peter learned the hard way that if we neglect the Lord's Word, we end up experiencing *regret*.

Remember something else. The Gospel writer Mark received much of his information for writing this Gospel *from Peter*. "That is what I did," he must have told Mark. "I denied Jesus, yet He never stopped loving me."¹¹

Barclay tells the story about an evangelist called Brownlow North: "He was a man of God, but in his youth he had lived a wild life. One Sunday he was to preach in Aberdeen. Before he entered the pulpit a letter was handed to him. The writer recounted a shameful incident in Brownlow North's life before he became a Christian and stated that if he dared to preach he would rise in the church and publicly proclaim what once he had done. Brownlow North took the letter into the pulpit with him. He read it to the congregation. He told them that it was perfectly true. Then he told them how through Christ he had been forgiven, how he had been enabled to overcome himself and put the past behind him, how through Christ he was a new creature. He used his own shame as a magnet to draw men to Christ."¹²

That's what Peter did. And that's what Peter experienced, *regret* AND *forgiveness*.

2. *We need to deal with potential regrets now.* Jonathan Edwards was born in 1703. When he was 19 years old he wrote down 70 resolutions by which he, by God's grace, sought to govern his life. They reveal what was important to Edwards and should be to any who has a passion to live for the glory of God and wants to finish without regrets. I want to focus on one of his resolves, resolve #52, which he wrote down on *July 8, 1723*.

Jonathan Edwards' Resolve (at age 19): "I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age."

What do people in old age often regret? Why do we often follow in their footsteps instead of learning from their confession? Are there things in your life that, if not changed, will result in regrets when it's time for you to leave this world?

3. *We need to remember that Christ is sufficient for our regrets.*

Perhaps you've blown it and right now are overwhelmed with guilt. Look to Christ. Be assured that He loves you and will give you hope and a future if you'll repent and trust Him. Just ask Peter.

Closing Song: #201 "*Grace Greater Than Our Sin*" (all four verses)

Communion

December Benediction: 2 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV) "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere."

¹¹ The Gospel of Mark was written for believers who were suffering Roman persecution. This story spoke volumes to them. If Peter could deny the Lord after spending three years with Him, they too must be on guard.

¹² Barclay, p. 353.