

**MIDWEEK OF LENT 4: LEADER**  
 Week 5: Week of March 31  
**THE COURTYARD**  
**Luke 22:54–62**

OPENING

O God of light, Your word, a lamp unfailing,  
 Shall pierce the darkness of our earthbound way  
 And show Your grace, Your plan for us unveiling,  
 And guide our footsteps to the perfect day.

From days of old, through blind and willful ages,  
 Though we rebelled, You gently sought again  
 And spoke through saints, apostles, prophets, sages,  
 Who wrote with eager or reluctant pen.

Undimmed by time, those words are still revealing  
 To sinful hearts Your justice and Your grace;  
 And questing spirits, longing for Your healing,  
 See Your compassion in the Savior's face.

—“O God of Light” (LSB 836, vv. 1–3)<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:54–62), Luke relates Peter's denial of Jesus in the courtyard. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between losing one's life and saving it.

Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus taught His disciples, “whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (9:24). That teaching becomes concrete in this text.

Peter looks like he is willing to lose his life. He follows Jesus to the high priest's courtyard. Yet, when questioned about his relationship with Jesus, Peter denies Jesus in order to save his life. By seeking to save his life, he loses it. His denial of Jesus is the way of death.

Jesus, however, is literally losing His life. Here, He is taken to trial and, from there, to His crucifixion. By losing His sinless life, however, Jesus rises to save the lives of sinners. The way of death for Jesus becomes the way of life for all.

Luke surrounds Peter's denial (22:55–60) with the story of Jesus' faithfulness (vv. 54, 61). He wants us to read both of these together. When we look at Peter's denial and reflect on our sin,

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Luke wants us to see Jesus, looking at sinners and willingly dying for their sin. This vision of Jesus comforts all sinners. Jesus lost His life for sinners that sinners might be forgiven and find their true life in Him.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**1. At the heart of this text is Peter's denial of Jesus (vv. 55–60). Luke records three conversations with Peter in the courtyard and, with each conversation, the stakes are raised and Peter's denial becomes more fervent. Read through the three conversations and identify how the challenges become broader and Peter's denial grows greater with each one.**

In the first conversation, Peter is questioned about a relationship with Jesus (v. 56) and he denies knowing Him (v. 57). In the second conversation, Peter is associated with the disciples, not just Jesus (v. 58), and Peter denies being part of this community of faith. In the third conversation, Peter is associated not just with Jesus and not just with the disciples but with the ministry of Jesus in Galilee (v. 59): Jesus was known as the prophet from Galilee (Luke 23:5), and it was there that Peter himself received his call (Luke 5:1–11). Peter now denies association not only with Jesus and the disciples but also with his call to follow Jesus as He taught and worked miracles in Galilee (22:60).

**2. When the rooster crows, Peter remembers the words of Jesus predicting his denial (v. 61). These words bring about repentant sorrow for Peter. For Luke's reader, however, they offer something more. Read Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial in Luke (22:31–34) and reflect on how this prediction shapes our meditation on this event.**

All the Gospel writers include Jesus foretelling Peter's denial (Matthew 26:30–35; Mark 14:28–31; and John 13:36–38). Only Luke, however, includes the role of Peter in the larger drama of Satan's attack upon the reign and rule of God (Luke 22:31–32). Here, Jesus highlights how Satan will attack all of the disciples, not just Peter (i.e., the plural "you" in v. 31). In response to that attack, Jesus has prayed for Peter (i.e., the singular "you" in v. 32a), foretold that he will repent (v. 32b), and encourages him to strengthen his fellow disciples (v. 32c).

Thus, when Peter remembers the words of Jesus at the end of this event (22:61), the reader remembers something more. Jesus not only foretold Peter's denial, but Jesus also foretold Peter's repentance. Jesus has prayed for Peter that his faith will not fail, Jesus has foretold that Peter will return, and He has given him the future task of strengthening his fellow disciples.

As we read and meditate on this text, then, our vision is not focused solely on Peter, seeing the story through his eyes, but also on Jesus, who has prayed for Peter and foretold the Spirit's future work in Peter's life.

**3. While all Gospel writers include the rooster's crow, Luke is the only Gospel writer to include the moment when Jesus looks at Peter (v. 61). What is the importance of that glance?**

On the one hand, the glance of Jesus catches Peter in his sin. Peter has just denied knowing Jesus and now, when Jesus looks at him, Peter remembers how well Jesus knew him. Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him.

On the other hand, for the careful reader of Luke, this glance of Jesus invites one to contemplate this event from the viewpoint of Jesus. As the story begins (v. 54) and as the story ends (v. 61), Luke focuses on Jesus. This framing device asks the reader to consider Peter's denial in light of the larger story of Jesus' Passion. Jesus is going to trial and to the cross for the forgiveness of all sins, even the sin of Peter's denial. This Jesus has prayed for Peter, this Jesus is now going to die for Peter, and this Jesus will rise and appear to Peter (24:34) and then in Luke's continuation of the Gospel in the Book of Acts, this Jesus will send His Spirit upon Peter to preach at Pentecost (Acts 2:14–41).

**4. The verses from our opening hymn (LSB 836, "O God of Light") turn our attention to the watchfulness of God and His work through His Word. Identify how the hymn describes God working through His Word. Then meditate on how God works that way for Peter in the larger Passion Narrative and how God works that way for you.**

The first verse of "O God of Light" emphasizes the power of God's Word to reveal our sin (e.g., "pierce the darkness of our earthbound way"), to proclaim our salvation (e.g., "show Your grace"), and to guide us in lives of faithful discipleship (e.g., "guide our footsteps"). As the verses continue, God's persistence in speaking His Word reveals His patience with His sinful creatures until ultimately we see God's compassion in our Savior's face.

In Luke's account of Peter's denial, you can see God's watchful word and His unfailing compassion for His creatures. Jesus offers Peter a word that reveals his sin, a Passion prediction that points to his salvation, and a word of guidance for his work with the disciples. For Luke's reader, the glance of Jesus in this text is a moment of great compassion: Jesus sees His disciple denying Him and yet continues in His mission to save not only this disciple but also the world.

God's Word functions in a similar way in our lives. Through His Word, God calls us to see our sin, God reveals to us His Son, our Savior, and God calls us into faithful discipleship following Him.

### CONCLUSION

In this text, Luke reveals how the word of Jesus was fulfilled. Jesus predicted Peter's denial and it came to pass. Jesus also, however, predicted Peter's repentance and called him to strengthen his brothers in the faith, and that happened as well.

When our eyes are focused only on our sin, we can be led into despair. For that reason, it is good to remember the words of Jesus. Jesus turns our eyes away from our sin to see His work of salvation. He offers us the comfort that, even when we fall into sin, He is praying for us, watching over us, and offering us His Word and work that forgive and bring new life.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, You watch over our coming and going and are acquainted with all our ways. Seeing our sin, You sent Your Son to be our Savior and have laid on Him the just penalty of our sin that He might bring us the joys of Your salvation.

Receive our thanks for Your watchful care. Open our ears to hear Your Word and open our eyes to see Your work, so that with our lives opened by Your Holy Spirit we might share Your life with a fallen world.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.