

Two Conversions of Peter Part 2  
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1/21/07

## Two Conversions of Peter Part 2

*Luke 22:31 "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."*

Now He's talking to the converted Peter. The one that had left his nets and followed Jesus. He's talking to the one that is a follower of Jesus, "Satan hath desired you." He's talking to one who has been the most committed. The one who has left all and has stayed with the Lord, followed the Lord for all these years. And at no point left the Lord's side and yet Jesus is saying to His own, "Satan is after you."

*Luke 22:32 "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."*

Many of us don't realize that there are really two conversions, and there were two conversions for Peter. There was the conversion where he was a fisherman and living his own life and Jesus was not even in his life and he converted and left his nets and followed Jesus. We call that becoming a Christian. But Jesus is praying for Peter, there is another conversion, one that is needed for long-time followers of Jesus. One that is for the most committed, and Peter was that. And we know that immediately following this Peter, within the next two verses Peter reacts, "Converted? I don't need to be converted, I'm committed to the hilt, I will die for you! Don't worry about me, worry about Thaddeus and the other boys, but you don't need to worry about me, I'm with you, I'll die for you." And he believed that, as long as it is a glorious death, as long as it is something we can give ourselves to and people can sing songs of how we gave ourselves for Jesus, then we're up for it. But if we're going to follow one who is all of the sudden, everyone turns against him, and says, "Your leader is a sinner, he's a criminal and we're hanging him on the cross and we're killing him because he's a criminal and anybody who follows him, from now on will not be looked at as great heroes of the faith, but as criminals." Oh what fun it is to ride in that sleigh! And so we shared this morning along those lines.

## The Cock Crows

*Matthew 26: 69-75 "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly."*

Notice they're not saying, "This fellow is with Jesus the Messiah", just Jesus, the carpenter's son from Nazareth. What does cock-crow represent? Cock crow represents the trumpet sounding of Romans seven. If you're not familiar with Romans seven, it is where the Godly man, the one who desires the Lord, the one who is after the Lord, the one who has been committed and knows the Lord says, "When I would do good, I end up not doing good, when I know what to do, I don't do it." And he

ends with, “Oh, wretched man that I am, who” and this is someone who has known the Lord.

*“I delight in the law of God after the inward man” Romans 7:22.*

Peter is hearing the trumpet sound of the realities that God wants to reveal to us out of Romans seven. Think about it, this was night time, this is night time. This is a very dark period. They have just come into the garden and they have taken Jesus and taken Him out to be crucified and everything is dark. Everything is turning against Him, and remember as soon as they grab Jesus to take Him out of the garden of Gethsemane, and take Him to be on trial, the disciples scatter. We read that this morning. The disciples scattered and now they're all afraid, and now they're all in different places and now they are hearing that Jesus is going to be tried as a criminal and will probably be dead before the morning, or before this thing is over with, it's a very dark period. Amen? And yet, the cock is crowing. I don't know if you know anything about roosters, but they do that in the morning when the dawning starts happening. When there is a dawning, that is when they do their thing. Normally not in the middle of the night, but here there is no sound of it going on, everything is quiet, except all of the sudden three times. The sound comes. The cock crow represents the dawning of a new day, even when you are in deepest darkness. It is the dawning of new day, the dawning of a new reality to us.

### **Jacob's Dawning – Deep Darkness**

But the dawning of this new day is sort of like Jacob's. Do you remember Jacob's when he went, it was night time and Jacob is wrestling with God, and here he is in deep darkness. Has anybody ever been in deep darkness before? He is in deep darkness, he's struggling with his own stuff and he's wrestling, and Jacob has always been able to survive. Because he had that mentality, “I will survive, I will make it through, I will come through this, I'm like a cat, I always land on my feet, because I know how to manipulate the circumstances and I know how to manipulate people, so don't worry about me. I'm going to be OK.” His very name, the name Jacob means “manipulator”. On that particular night he meets God and wrestles with God and God knocks his hip out and all of the sudden he sees himself the way that he has been. And it says that when the wrestling was over, he rose up to walk and he walked with a limp the rest of his life, walk in the daily awareness, no the step-by-step awareness of his own weakness and the Word of God says that as he walked, the sun began to dawn. There was this dawning that happens, and his name is changed at that point. You're no longer Mr. Manipulator, Ms. Manipulator, but now you are a Prince with God, that was Jacob.

### **We Can Only Strengthen the Brethren by Seeing Our Own Weakness**

Peter is in this situation and it says, *“And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.” Matthew 26:75.*

It's amazing, that it took three times for Peter to wake up to his own inadequacies, three times. We're pretty hard-headed people. Especially that guy laughing back there in the back. This just shows you that God trumpets the reality of our inadequacies, so that we can begin to no longer be “Mr. Committed Peter” that thinks he's the man, and thinks he's the one. It is very disconcerting to realize that you are not the one. You're not the Messiah, you are not that chosen, special one, you're not that chosen, special one, “Oh my God, I'm actually weak like all other people when put in just the right circumstances.” You see your own weakness. Because we're real good at seeing everybody else. We ought to get a job doing that, because all of us can make money at that. It's easy to spot at everybody else, we just don't see our own. That's why it takes God, it takes God to break through. Because if we

are ever going to truly strengthen the brethren, we're not going to do it by giving them the stuff we're running on. The high-octane that we think that we're running on. They're going to need Jesus, the life of Christ, not the pumped up, guy like Simon Peter that thinks he's got it together, or Jacob that thinks, "I know how to move people. I know how to reach people. I know how to strengthen everybody, we'll do it this way!" and you know what, it doesn't strengthen them, it pumps them up. There is a difference. I've seen people in churches so excited, they were so full of adrenaline with what was going on, they were ready to bite a back out of a pew. But it wasn't Jesus, it wasn't life, and the proof of it is that it goes high gear in church and low outside. And that's where we read, "Oh I wish I could dwell in the house of the Lord forever." "I wish I could just stay in a church service all my life, I would be something special." But you see when David said, "I would dwell in the house of the Lord forever" wasn't talking about staying in the middle of a church service.

### **The Dawning of Our Weakness**

*Luke 22:32 "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."*

These words were said to Peter before they went into the garden, before Peter pulls out a sword and says, "Don't worry, I'll save the day!" And cuts Manchu's ear off and Jesus said, "put it away, that's not the way we function." And Peter says, "But it is the way I function! I'm going to use all of my resources, I am going to use all my commitment." And Jesus says, "Put it away." "All my abilities." "Put it away!" Well, that sort of throws Peter and the rest of them and they run and hide. But now Peter is standing there denying the Lord and he is hearing the cock crow and in that moment of darkness, he is probably thinking, "How in the world can I strengthen others, when I need help?" Has anybody ever had that thought in your mind before? How in the world am I going to be able to strengthen people when I need strength? You ever hear the old saying, "give and it shall be given unto you"? If more churches used that outside of money and for other purposes, we would have a real changed church. But we only apply it to money, "Give and it shall be given unto thee." But when you don't have anything! The widows mite, who gives just what little she has and Jesus says, "Whoa, she is giving more than they all!" Because she gave out of her lack, not her abundance. "Oh call on me when I have abundance, but don't call on me when I am in lack." In lack is the best time because you have nothing to give so it is going to have to be Jesus! This is amazing because when the cock crowed, especially for the third time, there was a dawning of his own, terrible weakness which made him have no hope in himself. The dawning wasn't the gloriousness of Jesus at that moment, he hadn't come to the resurrection, he was saying right now, "There is no hope in me."

There is a dawning happening. A real dawning, not a teaching dawning, you know there is a difference. You can hear a teaching dawning and somewhat understand. And I do that, I write stuff down. But that dawning is sort of an awakening to certain truths. The dawning that Peter is going through, that Jacob went through, the one that Paul went through in Romans seven, is an absolute clarity. Before it's like everything is sort of muddy, but now it is absolutely clear, "I am not Him." You have heard me say before, "Jesus is the great I am and I am the great I ain't." I know greatly that I am not it! There is no hope in me. Isn't it amazing how people put hope in you, when you don't put hope in yourself. They look to you as if there is something in you, and we'll see that this actually happened with Peter after these events. Because there had been some what of a thing where Peter has worked on getting a reputation for one who would stand up for the Lord. And stand up for the truth, and lead the troops. And now he's realizing, "Oh my God, I am not it! I am not the one, I am not able to do this."

Like I said, "How can I strengthen others when I myself need strength." The answer comes with the dawning. The dawning not only woke him up to his own inadequacies and it does, it wakes you up in that way. But soon it will awaken him to Christ and what it means for Christ to be his life and what it means for Christ to be his resurrection and life. We all know it, we all quote it, but Christ really being the resurrection and the life. Not theology, not doctrinal things that we go, "Oh yes, I believe that, hallelujah." And we all jump and shout. But when you get into the darkness, He is your light. When you get into your emptiness, He is your fulness. That's another way, we say, "I know He is my fulness." Jesus is all fulness, Jesus is the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The place to prove that is not in a high-faluting worship service where we are all jumping and shouting, the place to prove that when you feel absolutely empty, and inadequate and unable, and to turn and say, "Jesus, you are my fulness in me, come forth, oh Lord. Resurrection come forth, come out of the tomb called Randy! Roll the stone of my own mind away. Mine own blockages and help me to see that you are the resurrection and the life, not someday in eternity, but right now in Ran-i-ty!" Or you, your name. Right now in you!

### **Faith Union Must Be Tried**

This thought of strengthening and Jesus did it here, verse thirty-two, "*But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*" This thought of strengthening, is tied to faith union with Christ who is our strength and our ability. If you can't call on Jesus when you're down and out, then you don't have this faith in you. If you can't get Christ coming forth, you might believe in Jesus, but you are sort of believing at Him. He's over there and you're sort of throwing your faith bean bag at Him, trying to hit Jesus. Like the disciples, He's asleep in the boat, "Wake up!" The purpose of the cock crowing is to wake us up, not Him. We are the one asleep to the reality of the resurrection life that is Christ in us. We are the ones that need to wake up. And the only way that we are going to wake up to that is when we see that we can't do it. We must see the depth of our own inadequacies. You talk about the cross, you talk about death, you talk about needing to see as Paul did, "I am crucified with Christ. I am, not just He is, but I am crucified with Christ." Well, who wants to receive that? Only people who see their lack and say, "You know what, this dead dog needs to be crucified with Christ so this fulness that is Jesus can live in His body." But see we don't want the cross. "I don't want to hear about the cross." I hear people say stuff like, "Look, I'm just after life." Well do you have any clue the life that He is going to give you if you get life. It's going to be the Lamb of God. That means that that nature that is Him will be in you. The one that laid down His life for the world, will start doing it in you. Did anyone hear what I just said? The one who laid down His life and continually laid down His life for everybody else will be inside of you. And what do you think that He is going to be different? No, He is going to want to lay down His life for others. And that what eternal is, His life living in us. It's a whole different spirit, it's a whole different way.

### **"Instead of praying your way out of it, pray Christ life into it."**

There is this place of faith union that has to be tried. There is a trial you have to go to. You have to go to trial. "Why am I in this situation? Why would God allow this?" See He didn't say, "Peter, Satan hath desired to have you, but don't worry I have rebuked him into the next county. Don't worry I am God, I rebuked him, I bound him, I gagged him. And I slapped him around a little bit." That sounds like modern-day Christianity today. That's the goal is to beat up the devil. But Jesus could have done that, He doesn't mention it. He could have said, "Peter, don't worry, you won't go through anything, I will protect you." But there is a trial and you have go to trial. Instead of praying your way out of it, pray Christ life into it. Show that you are more then conquerors, you don't have to be a conqueror, because He said, "In all these things. Whether in nakedness, peril." He didn't say He would deliver you from it, He said, "In all these things you are more then a conqueror, because you are with

me, you love me, you have my life, you have my love. You are full in external emptiness.” Whether it's the heroes of the bible, Daniel and the lion's den, or Joseph in the prison or any great movie that you love, a couple that is going through stuff, or whatever, the thing that you love about it is that even when everything is wrong, they are still strong, they are still together. You love that, but then in your own life you say, “No, no, don't want to be together in bad time, I just want good times. I don't want Christ to manifest in glory in me, I want Christ to manifest His resurrection power over my circumstances.” God wants His Son living in you, that's why He put Jesus in everybody. You understand what I mean, those that receive Him. I don't mean that He put Jesus in everybody.

### **Isaiah Saw His Glory and His Wretchedness**

*John 12:39-41 “Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.”*

There is a conversion that has to take place and we begin to see this through Isaiah. Remember in Isaiah six, is where he is talking about this. *Isaiah 6:1 “When I saw the Lord high and lifted up and His train filled the temple.”* You remember the scripture and we sing songs about it? It also says, that in seeing the Lord he saw what a wretched person he was and *“I am unclean.”* Remember the words that he said about himself? We all want to see the Lord and have a glorious experience and walk around like we're the superman or something as the result of it. But the true result of see Jesus is that you see your inadequacies, you see, “Oh wretched man that I am.” You see, “I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people that are always talking strength and power and commitment and involvement, but they never talk Christ in you the hope of glory, it is the Christ above the hope of glory, the great power-giver, not Christ, the power of God, the wisdom of God. They haven't been converted.” And this is what Isaiah was saying, what he saw His glory and said, “They have not even been converted. The dawn has not yet come upon them, they still think that there is something about themselves that is worthy to get past the cross.” Wow, that's a little bit scary. Does that scare anybody?

### **It's a Conversion from Self-Righteousness**

So we can be assured that like Peter who had followed Jesus for years, there are probably some in this room, or listening to this, or watching this, there are probably some people that need yet a conversion, not a conversion to become a Christian, but a conversion from themselves, like Isaiah. “They are blind”, he said. He's talking about the people of God, he's not talking about sinners! Can you imagine? He thought Israel had it together and the world was the one that had the problem and then in the temple he sees the Lord and he says, “I was Isaiah, the great prophet, the great man of God. I am unclean!” You know unclean was the phrase they used for lepers. You will never go in the power of the Lord, the life of the Lord, the strength of the Lord until you have shut down any thought that you are going to get stronger, you are going to get better. In fact doesn't the bible say, “He must increase, and I must decrease.” Anybody here want to an increase of Christ? How many of you realize that if that happens it is going to have to cause a decrease of you? He didn't say, “He must increase.” Oh yes, let's just let Jesus spring up like spring-time all over the earth! How about winter first, winter kills you off and then Spring brings Him forth. What is spring? New life! Not old life improved, blessed. What is new? Something you didn't have before. “That you might walk in newness of life.” Or as in the Spanish, that you might walk in new life! His life, His strength, His power, His victory. And don't think that this is something that it's not. It's not just a conversion from our strength to His. It's not, it's a conversion from self-righteousness. Then you'll go from your strength to His. But you have to see

the difference.

### **It's Just Plain Old Pride**

One is we are ready to change off strength, “OK, OK, I admit it mine is inadequate, give me yours.” Oh no, there has got to be something that strikes so deep within you, the cock crow has got to bring a dawning, that “Oh my God, I just said moments before I will never leave, I will die for you!” And remember the wording of the scripture, “And thus said they all.” “We will all die for you Jesus!” and when Jesus starts to look like a criminal, “Well, I don't know if I want to be associated with this. I want to join the best church, the biggest church.” Why? Because if that big church has got a nice, big reputation, then people ask what church you go to, and all the pride and everything that Jesus went to the cross to crucify comes up and says, “I go to so and so...” and they say, “Oh, isn't that the fastest growing church in the metropex?” “Yes, it is! And mainly it's because of me.” There is a conversion needed for Christians, can you say amen? There is a conversion that is lacking in Christianity. There is so much pride. We call it religious pride, or spiritual pride. It's pride! It's just old Adam, old nature, pride. It says, “OK, I won't have pride in my shiny car, or my stereo. I'll have pride in my shiny church.” You understand what I'm trying to say. There has to be this conversion. Peter didn't get it when Jesus said to him, “When thou art converted.” Because he immediately responded with, “I am more than converted, I will die for you.” And Jesus is saying, “See, that is the very proof right there that you haven't had the second conversion.” Don't make that a doctrine! “Those people at New Creation preach the second conversion.”

### **Peter Preaches Conversion**

*Acts 3:12 “And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?”*

*Acts 3:19 “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”*

This is a different Peter standing up! This is not Mr. Commitment now, this is a guy that has really seen his own inadequacies and he's plugged into Jesus. There is a whole new bursting forth of real life. It is a person who finally knew that he was meant for eternity, he was a vessel of honor. He was meant to strengthen the brethren, now voice is being given to his life and it's breaking out all over. All these things were clear in his mind about being converted and what that means. In Acts he is clearly declaring boldly and proclaiming, “Repent and be converted.” Not just repent of your sins. Not just be sorry for what you've done. We all need to be converted from our own view of ourselves. The full view and meaning of conversion was fresh in his mind because it was only three days earlier. You have got to remember now when he went out and wept bitterly, it wasn't for three days, it took three whole days until he ran to the sepulcher and began to understand the resurrection and what it meant personally. So he spent three days in the reality of “I failed Jesus. I thought I would have stood up and died and instead I didn't do it. I cursed Him.” That's incredibly, incredibly hard. Isn't it? There needs to be a new dawning in the church. A dawning first, not just a dawning of Christ as our life, not just a dawning of, “I am crucified with Christ.” Because “I am crucified with Christ” will never be anything more than a doctrine, ultimately until we are ready to give up our own life and let Christ live in us. Until we are convinced. And you won't do that, you'll say you will do it, you will be like Peter. I mean we have some of the most committed people around, right here. That's the problem. We tend to

gravitate highly committed, highly, but that's part of the problem, because a lot of times, it is people that are ready to give themselves totally for Jesus and He's thinking, "I want you to give yourself, to give yourself up, to deny yourself, not deny yourself of things, to deny yourself and follow me. It would be my life, not just you.

### **The Proof of the Conversion**

The proof that this conversion happened, just a few days later now, he has seen it and he is going off on a whole different reality. And the verse we read, shows this. Here Peter and John are coming into the temple, there is a lame man, "Silver and gold have I none, but in the name of Jesus rise up and walk." So he's walking and leaping and all the crowds are running around saying, "Oh my god, this man was lame, I can't believe it. This wonderful thing happened!" And verse twelve, "*And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us?*" The very thing most Christians when they do something for God want, is for people to look on them. And say, "Oh!!!" And earnestly look, "Oh, woman of God, man of God. Oh, man of death." You never hear that. Nobody ever glories in the cross. Paul did, "God forbid I glory in anything, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified to the world." In his mind it's not like in our mind. We have a mind full of two thousand theology, he had a mind full of reality right now. "I am crucified to the world, and the world to me." Everybody is looking on Peter, everybody is marveling at Peter and John. And they're thinking, "Man this is your own holiness. You are a committed man. You must really, really be with God for this to have happened." But Peter said, "or why look ye so earnestly on us as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" As our own power or holiness! This is totally contrary to the Peter before the cross. Peter would have said, "That's right, I'm the most committed one. That's right. I've been following God more than anyone else. And I love the other eleven knuckleheads, but then they can't touch me with my commitment level. I would die for Jesus and now I'm doing great things for Jesus. And if you really want to be special, you can be like me." My God! We need to point people to be like Jesus. We look at these tel-evangelists and go, "Oh man, I wish I could be like that!" I want to be like Jesus. And Jesus may walk around and not make a big deal out of it. He may heal somebody and say, "Sh, sh, sh." So that nobody knows what Jesus is doing. "No, no, we want all the big multitudes to go, Oh, by your own power and holiness this is done!" This wasn't the same old Peter. This boy had had a conversion. Praise God for that!

### **Not By Our Holiness**

*2 Peter 1:17-18 "For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."*

Remember in Acts, Peter said, "It's not by our holiness, it's not by our power." You have to see what Peter saw on the Mount of Transfiguration. They are standing there and here is Jesus, and Moses and here is Elijah. And if Peter is standing there, then there is John and James. James became the first great leader of the church, he's surrounded by great, mighty, committed, men. And all of the sudden he says, "Jesus would you like me to build booths for everybody?" You go to these conferences and there are booths all up and down the halls. There is all this thought about, "We have got all these great men, let me do something for these great, committed men." And God intervenes, comes in a cloud, overshadows everything and they see no man but Jesus only. And Peter says, "This is the holy mount." Holy meaning, the one separated to God, and the only one seen was Jesus. Holy means to be separated unto God. He knows what he's talking about. He saw it. He says it right here, "I saw it on the mount

of Transfiguration, when we tried to make somebody else, I don't care how great they were, something, God overshadowed and said, "this is my Son! And I'm going to put Him in every one of you!" Notice how Peter tied those two specific subjects together. Power and Holiness. This is how it's taught, if you have holiness, you'll have power. Has anybody had it taught like that before? Peter didn't say, "It's not by my power, but it is by my holiness." Acts 3:12, is that what it said or not? You have to believe the man that went through this horrible thing to find out what God wanted him to find out, that it wasn't him, it was Christ in him that was supposed to be not just the power, but the holiness. "It is not by my power, nor did my holiness bring this power, it is by the life of Christ." And that is where He always put the glory. As long as we think it comes by our own holiness, we will work on improving what God has crucified. We will reject any teaching on the cross, because we will still hold to what God is trying to break us loose from. Remember this morning we talked about Peter calling Jesus, being born again of incorruptible seed. Seed being that which has all the life within itself, all the fruit within itself. He's that incorruptible seed. Peter would say, "I am corruptible, He is the seed that has fruit in it, that has growth in it, that has potential in it. All of the tree comes from the potential that is all wrapped up in the seed, and the seed is Christ." He didn't look any longer at his old corruptible self and think, "My attributes will last, will stay the course." He was convinced that "I won't stay the course. If I don't get something greater than high-level commitment, I am going to fail."

### **Faith in the Cross**

*Acts 3:16 "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."*

This is the faith which is by him. Where do you get the similar thing? Galatians 2:20, faith is mentioned. Faith is mentioned in the middle of, "I am crucified with Christ." We have got our faith in everything from getting a better job, to keeping the devil off of me, to healing my sickness, to everything else. Paul tied it to being crucified with Christ so that Christ could live in him. "*I am crucified with Christ, yet nevertheless I live, and the life I live in this flesh, I live by that faith that I am crucified.*" How many people do you know that you say, "Are you walking in faith?" "Oh, yeah, the just shall live by faith, I walk in faith all the time." "Where is the cross in any of that?" "What? No, no I use my faith for finances." And again I am not discouraging that or putting any of that down. I'm just trying to bring out the whole counsel of God. If it's true here, then it ought to be true in the cross too. And besides if we are trying to get money for finances through our faith, and we're trying to get this, and we're trying to do that, but we're trying to do it through a man that God wants crucified, then all of those things, every time God does something for us, we are going to get a little more puffed up. Has anybody ever been used of God in a church service, and after wards you just felt so much pride? Anybody? It does happen. I know most of you are real holy! But it does happen, I mean God uses you and then all of the sudden you say, "Yeah, I am good! I am the man that you thought that I was. The Holy man of God!" We think that if God uses us there is something special about us. So what happens? God quits using you in that way. He used to, it was great, but He quit doing it. "Why did you quit doing it Lord?" "Because every time I wanted to use you as my vessel, you ended up being more than the vessel, you made this your holiness and tried to impress people with what came out me as thou it came out of you, from you, you were the source, because of some specialness about you." Peter had stood on his own faith. Remember Jesus said, "I have prayed for you Peter that your faith fail not." Remember that? Even your faith will fail if Jesus doesn't pray for you. You have no leg to stand on, unless it is Christ, or Christ is covering you in your situation. There is absolutely no hope! That is what we have to realize. But we won't realize that, we won't realize that until we have been converted on this subject.



## **Times of Refreshing Come From Conversion**

*Acts 3:19 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."*

Peter is oozing with times of refreshing personally! Isn't he? God has just used him to heal this person and then come and say, "Oh, Peter, man of God! You're a good man." And he says, "Oh, no, don't look on me as thou this comes as a result of me. This is not by me, this is not through me, this is simply the Lord's work and if you will be converted, then you can know something of the times of refreshing that come from the presence of the Lord." Anybody up for that? I mean Peter feels so good, because he feels so clean. I mean not just washed in the blood, not filled with the leprosy of self. Not everything intertwined with self. "Yes, God used me!" He feels so clean from the presence of the Lord, not just on him, but in him. "This was from the presence the Lord. This was the result from converting from myself to the Lord. And you can experience this refreshing!" That's what he was saying. Isn't that good? Remember now, this is all within a short scope of time where all these events happened one after another. He went from deep darkness, the highs of how strong and good he was and how committed he was, to the deep darkness of how he betrayed and denied the Lord, and failed the Lord. And still ringing in his ears, "I need you to strengthen the brethren." He's going, "I can't do it. I am a mess." To now the reality that is Christ in him, that will accomplish what the Father wanted in the first place. And the Father will look at you and not see you, He'll say, "In you, that's my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased. That's the one, that's the seed, that's the hope, Christ in you is your hope." And without it you will eventually fail, and you'll fail big time. You'll miss what it is what God is trying to do through the conversion. This is how Peter starts ending his speech, with the times of refreshing that come from the presence of the Lord, oozing with hope for the people. Oozing with just the absolute cleanness of "I am not going to dirty this situation by injecting myself. Not just my sinful self, my committed self." Like, "I am going to bring forth the Lord." And after three days of pondering his own failure, this was refreshing. Can you see that? This is like that rain of heaven washing him. "Thank God there was a way out and it wasn't God improving me, because I was convinced that there was no hope for me. But there is hope in Christ. There is hope from Christ." There is hope when the presence of the Lord is not just falling in a church service. Because it can fall in a church service and you can feel like superman. And go out and get in a situation where you feel like the weakest man in the earth in a short amount of time. You can go from incredibly high to incredibly low like that. Incredibly strong, to incredibly weak, like that. Anybody know what I'm talking about? If you don't, I will pray for you that your faith fail not. Because you will be put through this trial.

## **Same Gospel Preached to Abraham**

*Galatians 3:7-8 "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."*

*Acts 3:25 "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed."*

Here Peter is saying the gospel was preached to Abraham. Not just some information or some preparation for the next dispensation. No, the gospel was preached to Abraham. And that gospel was, "That out of you, you're hopeless, you're dead, you're dried up, you and Sarah are as good as dead. You can't bring forth anything, you're too old, you're too past the point of hope in yourself, but I will put a seed in you that will bring forth and bless the nations! And not only that, but the hope of all the

nations, everywhere that they receive this seed, they are going to be blessed by this time of refreshing that is called Christ in you, the hope of glory. They will receive the gospel too.” The same one Abraham received. And Abraham who being strong in faith, not in himself! He says, “I have no faith, I have no hope in myself... who without hope believed in hope.” What does that mean? “I have no hope in myself, but I believe in hope for the seed to come forth.” That was the gospel that was preached to Abraham. That is the faith that is preached in Galatians, and Romans and everything else, telling every believer, everywhere, “You need to receive the gospel. The faith, not that Jesus just died for your sins,” you read all of these scriptures and he doesn't even go into the fact that He died for your sins in that sense. In Galatians, he's not trying to make that point. He's trying to make the point that Abraham didn't just have God come to him and say, “Now Abraham, if you'll believe in Jesus then you won't go to Hell.” You have no mention of that in Abraham's life. And yet the faith of Abraham is the one that is given to us to follow. What meaneth these things? It means that Abraham got it. “Oh my God, there is no hope for me, there is no hope for Sarah, but whew he is going to put a seed in us and that seed is going to be Christ and He is going to come out of us.” Because he says in Galatians 3:16, *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”* God wasn't promising something to Abraham and the Jews. It says it right here. It says the promise wasn't to the Jews, the promise was to Abraham, that Christ would come out of Him. The seed was not Isaac. The seed was Christ. I don't want to get into all that.

### **Christ in You the Only Hope of Glory**

Peter understood these things and said, “I am corruptible. I need to be born again of incorruptible seed. Not just born again, meaning saved again, born again by a seed alive within me, so that I am one of the Gentiles that received the gospel by the faith of Abraham, that in me all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. In thy seed, that becomes my seed, that becomes my hope.” God has to take Peter and Paul and all of these people, He has to take them down the same road that always feels like no one has ever been there before. God has to bring all, not just your badness away and down, He has to bring your goodness down. He has to bring all your hope and potential in yourself down. Because that is the only that you are going to be ready for the true gospel. As long as you have got hope in you, you will not be open. There will be something in you that reacts, that draws back. I understand it, I did it, Paul did it. Paul resisted the Christians. Paul went out and tried to kill them, until the seed Himself appeared to him. And then we see what Paul went through. There is no hope in any of us. Not the greatest, not Moses. “You have to be overshadowed Moses.” Not Elijah. “You have to be overshadowed. Peter, you have to be overshadowed. John, all your idols are coming down. And only one, not an idol, but the image of God, Christ in you.” The image of God formed in you, Christ in you, the hope of glory. Paul said, “I am praying, travailing in birth till Christ be formed in you.” And he's praying that for Christians, he's praying that for committed believers. “I travail for you.” Because Paul believed this is futile, it is a hopeless religion unless Christ is formed in His own people.

