

# Luke 22:54-71

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[ 0 : 00 ] Luke 22 verses 54-71. So there's a statistic about these four books we call the Gospels.

! And that makes it very clear that these Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they were never intended to be biographies of Jesus. They were always, always intended to be a Gospels, a kind of genre of literature to itself.

They were to be messages of good news. And the stat is this, from about 35% to 50% in one of the Gospels, we find that the Gospel is devoted to the last single week of the Lord Jesus' life.

One of the Gospels, on all of the Gospels, in all of them, something like 10-40% covers the last 24 hours of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now that isn't how you write a biography, is it? That's how you do it. But it is what makes these books good news. They are all about the death of the Lord Jesus.

Because in each case, it indicates to us that the authors understood what is fundamental, and what is absolutely essential to the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus.

[ 1 : 23 ] It is not just the great things that he said, or the great things that he did, or the wonderful works and miracles. The Gospels are here to teach us, in the form of the narrative, that the Lord Jesus, what he came into the world to do, quite specifically, was to die for the sins of his people.

That is what Christianity is all about. That is what the Gospels are all about. That the Lord Jesus came into the world to die for sinners.

And that is why the focus is on these last days, and especially on these last hours. And woven into Luke's Gospel, that we've been studying, we not only learn what happened to the Lord Jesus, but Luke tells us the story in such a way, that we're able to understand why it is the things that happened to him, happened to him.

And there's a sense in which the key to those verses, that we've read today, is found in verse 67. Can you see it? They say, if you are the Christ, tell us.

And these verses, in one way or another, have all got to do with either recognising or refusing the Lord Jesus Christ as the Christ.

[ 2 : 38 ] As the Messiah. It means the anointed one. So in the Old Testament, there are particular individuals that are anointed by God to lead his people.

There were prophets. And there were priests. And there were kings. And they were anointed by God to lead his people. So, in various places in the Old Testament, God has promised one day that there would appear a great prophet.

A great prophet. A greater prophet than Moses. One whom the people of God should listen to. And he promised that one day there would be a greater priest.

A greater priest than Melchizedek. Who would come and who would appear. And he would be the great sacrifice for his people's sins. And one day a king would appear, who would sit forever on the throne of David.

And would rule his people from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth. And so it is very, very striking. That here, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, that they are asking Jesus, and they are not really interested in the answer Jesus makes clear.

[ 3 : 57 ] They are asking Jesus, are you really the Christ? Are you really the fulfilment of all Old Testament prophecy?

How about the coming saviour? And it's fascinating to see, how these three offices of the Lord Jesus, that he is the prophet, he is the priest, and he is the king, are woven by Luke into this passage.

And strikingly, in each case, what Luke shows you, is he is rejected. He is rejected as king, he is rejected as prophet, and he is rejected as priest.

So let's look at that. I'm going to try and be brief, both morning and evening. So in the first case, he is denied as king. He is denied as king by Simon Peter. In this deeply poignant event, Peter, who clearly loved the Lord Jesus, who is almost later, he is almost later, begging Jesus to believe him. He says to him at the end of Luke's gospel, Lord, you know that I love you. You know that I love you. And he said a few hours earlier in this event to me, he said, even if all the other disciples run away and desert Jesus, I will always follow you.

[ 5 : 19 ] I will always follow you as king and as master. And then Luke so cleverly, though he is speaking geographically, there is a double entendre there, isn't there, in verse 54.

He says, doesn't he, and Peter was following at a distance. Now that was true in space and time, wasn't it? It was true geographically, but it did begin to be true in the heart.

The physical distance between Peter and the Lord Jesus, spoke of his desire for his own safety, and his own security. And Simon Peter was to learn that night, wasn't he, that night, that when a man or a woman or a boy or girl seeks their own safety, with respect to the Lord Jesus, that is when we find ourselves in greatest danger.

And so it was here with Simon Peter. This cold spring night, he is in the courtyard of the high priest, and somewhere up there on the second floor, perhaps, even within here's shot, perhaps with an eye shot, the Lord Jesus, as we read in verse 63 to 65, the Lord Jesus is being abused.

And Simon Peter is desperately frightened. And though he loves Jesus, which is why he is there in the first place, he is effectively denying that Jesus is king.

[ 6 : 41 ] Actually, this passage is a very striking example, isn't it, of something that we all know in our lives, of what is a common example, a common principle, that if we're in a new situation, we're with new people, we face a challenge to our Christian faith, and we don't respond faithfully, the first challenge is brought to us, and we don't respond faithfully, then the second challenge comes, and it makes it very difficult, doesn't it?

And then the third challenge comes, and we've not responded faithfully, and it's almost impossible. For us to stand for Jesus Christ, and many of us know, we've been in that situation, we've failed when the first challenges come.

You're in school, you're a student, you're in a new job, you've moved into a new flat, there's new friends, there's new colleagues, and the opportunity comes, and the challenge comes, and you effectively say, I don't know Jesus, and I'm not going to speak for Jesus.

And you know, don't you? How much more difficult it becomes. And how impossible it can be, when that third challenge comes. And so Peter's story is my story.

And perhaps it's your story too. A man who loves Jesus, but denies Jesus as a king. And what was his mistake?

[ 8 : 00 ] Well it's actually portrayed here very graphically. It's a mistake that Simon Peter's made once before, isn't it? You remember Jesus had called him to walk on the water.

And on that occasion he walked on the water, and as long as his eyes were fixed on the Lord Jesus, he's been able to do that, hasn't he? In some extraordinary way to walk on the water. But as soon as his eyes move from the Lord Jesus, and the fear of his circumstances begins to dawn on him, well it's the moment he begins to sink.

And it's exactly the same in Luke 22. He turns away from the Lord Jesus, to think, how can I keep myself safe? And how can I defend myself?

In case anybody knew that he was a disciple of the Lord Jesus. And so it's impressive we take our eyes off the Lord Jesus, it's so simple and yet it's so obvious, isn't it?

[ 8 : 57 ] And yet it's the greatest problem in the Christian life. You're in a situation where the thing, where you need, you know that to be kept safe, in that situation, you need to kind of give up on the Lord Jesus.

It's very, very costly, isn't it, to follow Jesus. But Peter discovered in this passage, it is even more costly not to follow him. And so here the king is on trial.

The king is on trial. And he denied him. And as we notice, actually in the passage, an hour or two passes, Peter is in the courtyard. Do you notice that verse 59?

And after an interval of about an hour, still another insisted, saying, certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean. And so we're meant to understand this, Luke makes this clear, that while this was happening, something else was happening in the high priest's house.

And verse 63, the men are holding Jesus in custody, at the same time, in an ongoing way. They are mocking him, and beating him, and blindfolding him, and insulting him.

[10:08] And they say to him, prophesy. Prophesy. Who is it that struck you? And so even as Peter is denying Jesus as king, the soldiers are mocking him as prophet.

He was the one who spoke the truth of God. You know that, in the Old Testament, one of the words that is used for a prophet is that of a seer.

A seer. Somebody who is able to see into the secrets of God. Somebody who is able to see into the hearts of man. Somebody who is able to see what God is going to do in the future.

The prophet was a seer. And so do you see what they are doing? They say, so you are a seer. You are a prophet. Let us blindfold you. And now tell us what you see.

And so they slap him. And they abuse him. And they play with him. And they molest him.

Sometimes you find yourself in a situation where you think Jesus cannot possibly understand this situation.

[11:17] Well, you just need to read the Gospels, don't you? To find that there is no situation in life for which the Lord Jesus is unable to come to us and say, I understand your situation.

You think of believers in Iraq this morning fleeing from their lives. Jesus can come to them and say, I know what it is to be abused. I know what it is to be persecuted. The thing that strikes me here is this.

We've been told in the Gospels that Jesus knew Peter was going to betray him. In a sense you can say, Jesus was mentally prepared for the moment.

And this passage makes it clear that he is in command of the moment. But what can prepare you for this? What can prepare you for this awful isolation?

The terrible drinking of this cup of desolation at the hands of the officers of the high priest's house. Imagine how this began for these men.

[12:24] They may have heard his word. They may have heard him preach, some of them. They may have rejected his word. They may have seen his followers and found themselves inwardly mocking Jesus.

And they couldn't help themselves. You can imagine when these soldiers went home that night and they told their wives what they'd done.

How could you possibly do that to Jesus of Nazareth? And they could have said, well it was out of character. Other people made me do it. But if their wives had any sense they would have said to them, no, it wasn't out of character.

It was a revelation of what your character is really like. You see, it is a trajectory, isn't it? You begin by harboring your heart, it's Jesus' word, and rejecting him.

And then slightly mocking him into a superior attitude. And then you find yourself hating him. And so Jesus here is on trial as king.

[13:27] And he shows his regal dignity as he is also mocked as prophet. And here is the tragedy. They blindfold him. But it is they themselves are blind to his true identity.

They blindfold him. And yet it is they who are blind to his true identity. And we need to know that. As our Lord Jesus is mocked and scorned in the world in which we live.

As his word is treated terribly in the world in which we live. As he is mocked and scorned it is they who are blind, not the Lord Jesus Christ.

So even as he shows his royal dignity, that royal dignity is denied by Peter in his life. And even as he is the prophet whom God has sent about people who said, no man ever spoke like this man.

We find that he is mocked as prophet. And then in a very striking way we find that he is sacrificed as high priest. He is sacrificed as a high priest.

[14:40] Now how does this come about? It's very interesting isn't it? Here you've got these two events that go side by side. You have the guards and the soldiers. And they cease, they stop their viciousness to the Lord Jesus.

And they are it seems taking Jesus to be tried by the Sanhedrin. And there is an event that is described at this moment. It's the last time Simon Peter denies him as king.

It's the end of the soldiers mocking him as prophet. And just at that point the eyes of Simon Peter and the Lord Jesus meets. Do you see that in verse 61?

And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord.

How he had said to him before the cock crows today you will deny me three times. But Luke tells us only a little bit of what the Lord Jesus had said to him.

[15:46] Do you remember what Jesus had said to him? It's there in verses 31. to verse 34. What Jesus said was this. Simon, Simon, behold Satan demanded to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. I have prayed for you. Can you think of that moment when Simon Peter goes out and he weeps bitterly in the darkness in the cold of the Jerusalem night with the prophecy of his denial still ringing in his ears.

But there was also that promise of the Lord Jesus wasn't there? That he would be Simon Peter's great high priest. I will pray for you.

I have prayed for you. That he would be to Simon Peter what the high priest was to God's people. He would wear on his breastplate with jewels engraved on it the names of the tribes of Israel. That he might carry them on his heart before the presence of God and he would pray for his people in all their weakness and their failure and their needs.

[16:57] And so in amazing in an amazing way Jesus is a priest. Indeed he is a high priest. That Jesus is taken before the Sanhedrin and there before the Sanhedrin he is sacrificed as a priest.

There's two interesting things and woven it. I don't think the high priest probably knew this. But it's interesting the only way that a high priest could be tried and condemned is if he was tried and condemned by the whole ruling council.

And that is what is happening in Luke 22. And there's another strange oddity. Before the great day of atonement other priests kept the high priest up and awake all night.

And it's almost as if those two traditions that had grown up around the liturgy of ancient Judaism they are coming true before their very eyes. The high priest was doing the very things that they would do to a high priest.

And now they turned this great high priest into a sacrificial beast upon the altar of Calvary. And in this amazing way despised and rejected of man a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

[18:16] It is though Luke is saying to you and I do you see what is happening here? That the king is being rejected that the prophet is being despised and that the high priest is being made a sacrifice.

Don't you see he is exactly the saviour he is exactly the Messiah he is exactly the Christ that he promised to be.

And there are lots of ways we can apply this let me apply this in one way it is this think about Simon Peter Jesus came into this world for failures failures like Simon Peter failures like you and failures like me and he came into the world for people who would deny him and people who would demean him and reject him and that he would die for us.

I was with Dick Lucas the other week and Dick Lucas is fed up because William Taylor the minister of St. Helens William Taylor's son has got a cockerel and a cockerel every morning at about 5 o'clock cock-a-doodle-doo it starts you know when you are 88 that is a bit tired isn't it and every morning he is woken up by this cockerel and it got me thinking about Luke 22 can you imagine for Simon Peter even in the cities in those days there would have been cockerels can you imagine every single morning every single morning he was woken up by a reminder that he denied his saviour that was his alarm call every single morning there was a reminder that he denied his saviour three times but every single morning there was an alarm clock there was a reminder of God's grace that Jesus Christ had said to him Simon Simon Peter I am the high priest who prays for you it's what gripped the apostle Paul wasn't it in Romans chapter 8 do you remember who is going to bring any charge against God's elect it is God that justifies who is going to condemn me when Christ has died for me and has risen for me who is at the right hand of the throne of the most high and he intercedes for me failure we've all been there haven't we you have been there the times when I denied the Lord Jesus the sins of my heart the sins that haunt me day in and day out and we can get no release from them and where are you going to look where will you look for salvation and for mercy we are to look to this you see that again in verse 32

I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and that is something isn't it that we have to hang on to when we struggle but the Christ who has come to reign over us is the Christ who has come to die for us he is the Christ who ever lives at the right hand of his father to make intercession for us so when Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within at what I look and see him there who made an end of all my sin and that is it isn't it and so when we say we need to fix our eyes on

the Lord Jesus it is not some pious platitudes it is because when our eyes are fixed on the risen ascended and seated Lord Jesus Christ we know that we are his and we know that we are safe let's pray