

I Am He (Luke 22:47-71)

We have been studying the gospel of Luke together. Today we will look at 22:47-71.

After the last supper, Jesus took his disciples to the Mount of Olives. He withdrew a stone's throw beyond his disciples and prayed. When he finished praying, he came back to the disciples and spoke to them.

In the following section, v.47 through 53, we will find three distorted relationships with Jesus. Let's look at them one by one.

1. Distorted relationships

(1) Judas

47-48

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Judas was one of the twelve disciples. He knew where Jesus would spend night every day. He got up from his seat in the middle of the last supper. He met the chief priests and the crowd gathered by them, and led them to the place where Jesus would always spend night. As Judas didn't want to miss the chance, he arranged a signal with them. He said, "The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him." (Matt 26:48) As expected, Jesus was there as usual. Judas came close to Jesus and kissed him.

For them, greeting with a kiss is normal social custom. That expresses the friendship, acceptance and love. Judas pretended to love Jesus and betrayed Him.

Sometimes people pretend to love, but it can be hypocrisy. Their actions may look good on the surface, but they may be acts of hypocrisy. For example, Jesus said like this;

Matt 6:2, 5

² "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men.

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men.

Giving to the needy, and prayer; they are both originally acts of love to people and to God. But when we do these things to be seen by others, the Bible says they are hypocrisy. If we give or pray because we want to be praised, we want to look good, want to be acknowledged, want to be noticed, then our actions are hypocrisy and false.

We may not intentionally betray Jesus like Judas did. But it is possible for us to pretend to love God, but do the act of hypocrisy before God. It is possible for us to do the act of love on the surface, but to deceive others in reality. We need to examine our heart.

Then, how did Jesus relate to Judas? Jesus first called his name. That is a personal relationship. By calling his name, he is saying, "I know you personally. I accept you. And I will talk to you honestly and frankly."

And he said, "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" "You are pretending to love me, but about to betray me. You pretend to have fellowship with me, but are about to sell me. Remember what you have seen in these three years. Think carefully whom you are trying to betray."

Jesus didn't reject Judas, though Judas' relationship with Jesus was distorted. Jesus accepted him and tried to help him so that he would be aware of the distortion.

(2) Disciples

49-51

⁴⁹ When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

While Jesus was praying, the disciples fell asleep. Jesus came back to them and while he was talking to them, the crowd arrived. They were armed with

swords and clubs. "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" someone asked Jesus. Before hearing his answer, one of them struck one man, cutting off his ear.

As for the disciples, just some moment ago, they were told, "if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one," so they must have felt, "Now is the time to rise up with swords!"

At that point the disciples appear to have the intention of running away from the situation. Here Luke describes disciples Lord's soldiers. They brave to fight for Jesus, even though they are inferior to their opponent in number.

But what they were doing wasn't what the Lord meant. Their motivations were good. But their understanding was wrong. And their actions were wrong.

Let's look at another scene.

Matt 16:21-23

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

When Peter heard that Jesus must suffer and must be killed, he said, "This shall never happen to you!" As for him, he loved Jesus dearly, worried about him, thought of him and said so. However, far from being appreciated, Peter was scolded, "Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling- block to me." After all, he didn't have in mind the things of God but the things of men.

We might think we are doing something good for Jesus. But what we are doing may not be Jesus' will. That may be a stumbling-block to Jesus, obstruction to God's will. We may not notice it, but we may not have in mind the things of God but the things of men. It is important for us to humble ourselves before God, listen to Him and follow Him.

Come back to Luke 22. Now, Jesus stopped the disciples from using the sword, "No more of this!" Clearly disciples were wrong in doing that. That was not what Jesus meant. Moreover, Jesus also straightened up the wrong disciples

did. He touched and healed the man who had his ear cut off by one of the disciples.

Sometimes when we notice we did wrong it can be too late. But the Lord can fix things which no human being can do anything about. When the Lord stops us, it is important to listen to Him humbly and entrust the situation Him.

Disciples thought they were doing something good for Jesus. However, they didn't have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. This is another distorted relationship with Jesus. Jesus didn't reject his disciples, just because they have distorted relationship with Him. He accepted them and helped them so that they will notice the distortion. Moreover, he also made up for their wrong-doings.

(3) Chief Priests

52-53

⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? ⁵³ Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns."

Chief priests, the officers of the temple guard and elders are the people who are supposed to teach God's word, guard the temple and lead people to God's presence. If people turn away from God, it is their job to bring them back to God. If some people try to make the temple into the den of robbers, they must stop them and keep the temple holy.

However, although they saw the temple became the den of robbers, they left it as it was. On the contrary, they opposed Jesus as against a robber, although he drove out sellers from the temple in order to restore the temple into the place to worship God. Out of envy, chief priests handed Jesus over to Pilate and asked him to crucify Jesus. (Mark 15:10-14)

Luke 22:37

³⁷ "It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors,' and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment."

It is none other than the chief priests who denied Jesus that fulfilled this promise. The chief priests denied Jesus, but were used to fulfill God's will. This is really distorted relationship.

Actually, it doesn't just apply to the chief priests. But it also applies to the crowd who were stirred up by the chief priests, and shouted "Crucify him!"

In Acts 3, a crippled man who was begging at the temple gate called Beautiful was healed through Peter. The man was full of joy, jumping, walking and praising God, and went into the temple with Peter and others. People were astonished to see the man and gathered round them. Peter said to them;

Acts 3:13,18-19

¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

While denying Jesus, they were used to fulfill God's will. But it doesn't make their denying Jesus justified. The wrong is wrong. Evil is evil. Sin is sin. They need to repent.

How did Jesus relate to people who denied him and crucified him? He became redemption for them. He went to the cross not only for the redemption of his disciples, but also of those who denied him and crucified him. Jesus died on the cross for sinners. (Rom 5:8)

Jesus became redemption for us. That is why we can repent. That is why we can come back to God. Jesus accomplished eternal redemption by his own blood. (Heb 9:12) As we receive this redemption through the cross and God's grace by faith, and have conviction of forgiveness, so we will not be afraid of God, but love God, repent, and come near God. God' grace leads us to repentance. (Rom 2:4)

While denying Jesus, they were used to fulfill God's will. This is really distorted relationship. Jesus didn't reject people just because they had distorted relationship with him. He accepted them and pointed out the distortion. Moreover,

he became their redemption and prepared restoration of their relationship with him.

We have seen three distorted relationships with Jesus. What is common in these three cases was that they all thought they were doing what was right. None of them realized that they had distorted relationship with Jesus. Perhaps, they have never even imagined that. But in reality, they all had distorted relationship with Jesus. And Jesus related to each one of them as each one needed to be.

2. Denying Jesus

54-60 (NKJV)

⁵⁴ Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵ Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶ And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him." ⁵⁷ But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." ⁵⁸ And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" ⁵⁹ Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean." ⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

Here Luke describes the scene where Peter denied Jesus. Peter not only denied Jesus. But he also denied his own identity by himself. Let's look at the movement of his heart.

55

⁵⁵ Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

People kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down around it. And Peter sat down with them. Who are those people?

54

⁵⁴ Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance.

They are the people who caught Jesus and took him there. Peter joined them.

If he doesn't deny he was one of Jesus' disciples, his life may be put at risk? He may also be caught like Jesus? We cannot deny the possibility. But we can be sure that he would be all right in this scene from one thing.

A servant girl saw Peter sitting there in the firelight, and she said, "This man was also with Him." Why did she say, "This man was also"? In what occasion, do you say, "this man also"? There was also another disciple of Jesus there.

According to John, one disciple who was known to the high priest, spoke to a servant girl who kept the door, and brought Peter in the courtyard. (John 18:15-17) Most likely it's John. They join people who warm themselves with a fire. At least some people there knew that that man was Jesus' disciple. But it didn't drive him into a dangerous situation. So we can say, if Peter told them that he was also Jesus' disciple, it didn't put his life at risk.

So, it is not likely that Peter had to deny Jesus in order to protect his life. But rather, that was the problem of his heart. What is that?

When he sat down with them around the fire, Peter tried to pretend to be one of them. In other words, he was putting a mask there. In order to be accepted by that group of people, he pretended to be someone whom he thought would be accepted by them.

They are a group of people who don't accept Jesus. Peter tried to pretend to be one of them in order to remain there. He put on the mask of one who doesn't know Jesus. He put on the mask of one who is not one of Jesus' disciples.

Did it go as he expected? Finally, he even said, "I do not know what you are talking about." "I don't want to talk about it with you guys any longer." He rejected to open his heart to talk to the group of people he tried to join.

He is there with a mask, and the result is ironical. He pretended to be someone else so that he can join the group, but he ended up rejecting to have

communication with them.

61-62 (NKJV)

⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." ⁶² So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Peter woke up, when Jesus looked straight at him. Jesus knew Peter as who he was truly. "Peter, I know you know me. I know you are one of my disciples. I know you will talk to others how you met me, how you deny me and how your relationship with me was restored, and how you recovered your true self. Peter, I know you."

In Jesus eyes, we don't need a mask any longer. We can be who we are.

By being sifted, Peter could face up to his reality. He denied himself who was in relationship with Jesus. He denied himself who belong to Jesus and was one of his disciples. And he deceived himself who needed fellowship with other people. By Jesus, Peter realized that he pretended to be someone else, and he started to restore his true self in his relationship with Jesus.

What does it mean for Christians to put on a mask? Is it possible for Christians to pretend to be someone else? To disguise themselves as false-selves?

Have you ever thought like this? "If I can do exactly what I am expected to do, and become someone I am expected to be, then they will surely accept me, love me and appreciate me. So I will do it." "If I can just become what they want, they will accept, love, and appreciate me. Let's try to be like that." This is the state where we put on our masks. It doesn't just happen in work places, schools and relationships with friends. Some people even put on a mask at home. Some put on a mask in church. And they are afraid that others get to know their true self, who they really are.

When Jesus gazed at him, Peter remembered Jesus' Word. Jesus knew that Peter would betray him. He knew it wouldn't be just by mistake or accident that Peter denied him, but Peter would deny him many times with his clear consciousness. And he prayed for Peter's restoration.

Jesus knows who I am in reality. And Jesus accepts who I really am,

even when I pretend to be someone else. When we experience this grace, the grace will lead us to the restoration of our true self.

"If our failure could stop grace, there would never be any such thing as grace."¹

Grace has power. It has power to heal damaged emotions of the past, power to reconstruct broken relationships, power to reprogram distorted personality patterns, power to recycle and transform the crippling and wounds into means of ministry.²

Peter was sifted. He denied Jesus many times. And when gazed at by Jesus, he remembered His Word. By His grace, Peter started his journey to recover his true self with Jesus. We can also experience the same grace Peter experienced. It can be a distressful experience to be sifted. But without looking straight at our reality, there will be no experience of grace.

3. I am he

63-71

⁶³ The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. ⁶⁴ They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" ⁶⁵ And they said many other insulting things to him. ⁶⁶ At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. ⁶⁷ "If you are the Christ, " they said, "tell us." ⁶⁸ Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. ⁶⁹ But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." ⁷⁰ They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am." ⁷¹ Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

Jesus was mocked, beaten, and insulted. The authority encircled him and put pressure on him. He was totally exhausted physically and mentally, but he never lost sight of his identity.

He knew he was the Christ. Even if others don't accept it, and even

¹ David Seamands, "Healing Grace", Scripture Press, 1988, p.128

² Ibid., p.132

though they may be respected religious leaders, it doesn't change the fact that he is the Christ. He doesn't also need to pretend to be the Christ they expected, for he is the Christ.

He knew that he was the Son of God. He knew that Father God would receive him, and he would be seated at the right hand of Him. He didn't have to behave so that people would see him fit for the position, for he was so.

He never made mistake about who he was. Even if others related him distortedly, he never lost sight of who he was.

We need to remember this carefully. Our true identity will never be changed by the words of others. We don't have to change who we are according to others' expectation. In fact, we shouldn't change it.

Self is "your basic personhood, the self God intended you to be – imperishable, indestructible, and of eternal value in His sight. It is your basic human personhood, the unique you with all the possibilities for your particular personality with its talents."³

The fact that Jesus is the Son of God and is seated at the right hand of Father God is closely connected with our experience of grace, and recovery of our true self, just as it was so with Peter.

Father has given his Son, Jesus authority to judge all the nations. (John 5:27, Matt 25:31-32) And his judgment will divide people into eternal punishment and eternal life. (Matt 25:46) This Jesus forgave and accepted Peter who betrayed him. Here is the experience of grace.

It is not the same as just saying, "That's all right," without reason. Jesus didn't overlook Peter's betrayal nor did he pretend that he didn't notice, nor did he decide to give special treatment just for Peter. Jesus looked straight at Peter's betrayal, and forgave him and accepted him. That is why Peter experienced the depth of his grace.

Peter can give many excuses. He can even compare himself with other disciples, and think he is better than them, or he can justify what he had done. But while he doesn't acknowledge who he really is, and making excuses for what he did, he cannot truly understand the Lord's grace.

We cannot truly come to know grace, while we are denying what we did, and who we really are. That is because God loves my "real self" "true self". Jesus loved Peter, not because he said, "I am ready to go with you to prison and to

³ Ibid., p.101

death,” nor because he tried to do that. Jesus loved Peter who denied him three times.

In the eyes of Jesus, Peter remembered Jesus’ Word. Jesus knows my “real self.” Peter was touched by his grace. He removed his mask. And he started to recover his true self in his relationship with Jesus.

Grace "can make you strong enough and brave enough to take off your ... mask and begin to look at your real self. For it's your real self which God loves and for which Christ died, your real self with all its sins and flaws which He has always known and never stop loving. Feeling this at gut level gives you courage to face yourself as you truly are."⁴

God made each one of us in His image. He gave each person different personality, and made each one unique. And He made us in His image so that we can live in relationship with Him and other people. The gospel recovers the lost image of God and restores distorted, broken relationships.

⁴ Ibid., p.132