

[Luke 22:54-62](#)

The Look of Love

Introduction

We've all done it. Whether it was a look directed toward our spouse, or our children, or a friend, or even a brother or sister in the Lord, we've all probably given "a look that could kill." That look could have been a frown or a scowl, which communicated one or all of the following: "Can't you do anything right?"; "I told you so!"; "You blew it again didn't you?"

When Peter denied he knew Jesus three times, the text states that the Lord turned and looked at Peter ([Luke 22:61](#)). Have you ever wondered what Jesus' facial expression must have been? Was it one of those looks that could kill? Or was it the look of love? By the way, all four of the gospel books in the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, have the account of Peter's denial of knowing Jesus. Only the account in Luke describes the Lord turning and looking at Peter.

So, let's take a closer look at "the look" that Jesus gave Peter on the night before the Lord went to suffer and die on the cross.

The Look of Love

The whole premise of this sermon is that Jesus would have given Peter the look of love. In spite of Peter's three-time denial, Jesus' face would have communicated compassion instead of condemnation; His look would have shown exceeding love instead of exasperation; His glance would have been one of tenderness instead of frustration. Why is that? Here's some Scripture verses that help us answer that question:

[1 John 4:8](#) - Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

[1 John 4:8](#) (ESV)

[1 John 4:19](#) - We love because he first loved us.

[1 John 4:19](#) (ESV)

[John 13:34](#) - **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.**

[John 13:34](#) (ESV)

God's love in Christ is agape love, which is defined as unconditional love. It's a love that's faithful and committed. Jesus' agape love is full of forgiveness and understanding. It's 100 percent perfect love that only God can have. Agape love is the kind of love that Jesus had for Peter. It's the love that must have been expressed when He turned and looked at Peter.

I must admit, in most situations where compassion and tenderness is needed, I don't display Jesus' look of love in my facial expression. More often, I've got a frown for the dawdling shopper ahead of me in the checkout line at the grocery store. My

countenance has an arrogant smirk when I pass by the driver who was stopped for speeding and just blew by me a few minutes earlier.

Scripture states that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks ([Matthew 12:34](#)). Since the mouth is part of the face, it usually expresses "the look" that emanates from the heart. Is there anger, bitterness or resentment in our heart? Then, it will be displayed on our face. What has your facial expression been displaying lately? What would your response have been to Jesus' look of love?

According to the text, Peter wept bitterly when Jesus looked at him ([Luke 22:62](#)). Remember, Peter had been a close companion with Jesus from the very beginning of the Lord's ministry. He was with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane that very evening when the Lord's agony was manifested by His sweat becoming like great drops of blood ([Matthew 26:37](#) and [Luke 22:44](#)). Here was the man who when asked by Jesus "Who do you say that I am?" replied "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God ([Matthew 16:15-16](#)). Here was the man who made the bold statement "Lord I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death" ([Luke 22:33](#)).

The realization that Peter had denied the One who loved him deeply must have been overwhelming. At that moment, he must have felt excruciating guilt and shame. Perhaps the pain of his denial was too much to bear. That's probably why Peter wept bitterly. His faith in the Lord faltered. Yet, after Jesus' resurrection, He encouraged Peter when the Lord affirmed his faith at the breakfast on the beach ([John 21:1-18](#)). You see, God's faithfulness remains steadfast and true, even when we're faithless. Here's [2 Timothy 2:13](#).

...if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.
[2 Tim 2:13](#) (ESV)

Now if you're like me, you might be saying to yourself, "I'd never be like Peter; Oh no, I'd never deny the Lord." Really? That sounds more like the Pharisee looking down his self-righteous nose at the tax collector and saying "I'm glad I'm not like that man."

Actually we're more like Peter than we'd like to admit. In fact, God wants us to see ourselves as Peter. Whether we know it or not, our lives are a mess. We're prideful; we're weak; we're failures in so many ways. However, the person who is a follower of Christ, just like Peter, has the assurance that in spite of ourselves, Jesus still loves us. When we screw up, the Lord's countenance is the look of love; there's no scowl, no frown, no smirk.

That's because God's love is demonstrated for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us ([Romans 5:8](#)). We don't have to get our act together in order for God to love us. But wait, there's more. God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved ([Ephesians 2:4-5](#)). Isn't God wonderful? Indeed His love is deep, wide, and surpasses all understanding.

God's love is demonstrated through the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross. The shedding of Jesus' blood means complete forgiveness of sin and the total satisfaction of God's wrath against sin. Something really good happened in a horrific execution of the innocent, humble Son of God on a cross. What man meant for evil, God meant for good ([Genesis 50:20](#)). That's why Good Friday is good. That's why Resurrection Sunday, Easter, is celebrated with joyful exaltation of the risen Christ.

If you've never understood this or believed this, embracing the good news, which is the gospel, will change your life today, tomorrow and for eternity. As author Arthur Jackson wrote in a recent *Our Daily Bread* devotional, "If you haven't received forgiveness from God through the death of Jesus, what's keeping you from doing so today?"

How about you? Are you a follower of Jesus? Is the look of love in Christ an assurance that God's love has been poured into your heart through the Holy Spirit? If so, be assured that the Lord Jesus has dealt with your guilt and shame on the cross. That's one of the reasons why we celebrate and remember the Lord Jesus with the bread and cup at the Table of the Lord. No need to wallow in our sin, but every reason to rejoice in His grace and mercy. Peter knew that. Do you?

Conclusion

When Jesus turned and looked at Peter, he deserved an "I told you so" look. What he got was the look of "I love you so". If we're in Christ, He loves us no matter what. Even on our worst day, Jesus' look will be one of love, tenderness and compassion. How about you and me? What will our look be when our spouse, or our children, or a close friend messes up? Will it be a look that could kill or the look of love?

Love beams brightly in the face of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He made the only way for the Peter's of the world, people like you and me, to be loved by God. How great is He for doing that? Jesus' look probably lasted less than a minute. However, the love ensconced in that look lasts for eternity. So, I'd like to end with these verses from an Old Testament Scripture - [Numbers 6:24-26](#). Let this be our prayer and amen to the wonderful, gracious and merciful Lord Jesus.

²⁴ The LORD bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.
[Num 6:24-26](#) (ESV)