

KAILUACHRISTIANCHURCH

October 26, 2025

Rev. Dale Vallejo-Sanderson

**“Last Talk” Jesus Way of Making Meaningful Moments
“From Regrets to Release”**

Luke 22:54-62 *“Then seizing Jesus, they led Him away and took Him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55 And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with Him.” 57 But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know Him,” he said. 58 A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied. 59 About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” 60 Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown Me three times.” 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.”*

John 21:15-17 *“When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love Me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed My lambs.” 16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Take care of My sheep.” 17 The third time He said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”*

Thank you for having me here with you over these few weeks, I am grateful to be in worship and fellowship together. Last week I began a 3 week series entitled, “Last Talk, Jesus Way of Making Meaningful Memories.”

Over these past eight years I have experienced the sudden loss of my brother, in the same year Bev was diagnosed and began the less than three year journey of passing from cancer. My father and step mom passed just a few months after Bev. This past year my Mom and Mother-in-law both passed. It has been a long journey of processing grief of loss and change. I realized that with each of these difficult losses I had come to appreciate the significance of being present in the moments I have in life.

As I have found my way day by day, I began to find great meaning in the last conversations I had with each one of my family before they passed. I did not know with most of them that that talk would be my last at the time.

When my Mom fell from a sudden stroke that knocked her out of her chair, hitting her head on the ground, internal bleeding on her brain led to a coma in the hospital. My sister Peggy felt bad, wishing she could have prevented the fall, but it was not something expected or could not be prevented. It just happened so suddenly.

I arrived shortly after to the hospital in California where my Mom was. Mom had not been responsive much at all, nor spoken for a few days. The Dr. felt he had done what they could and so wanted to send her home with Hospice to give her comfort and support in her transition.

Peggy and I were out in the hall of the hospital, sad and pondering Mom slipping away. Peggy said a couple of times, "I just wish I could hear Mom talk one last time." I asked Peggy, "If Mom could talk, what would you hope to hear her say?" Without a moment's pause Peggy said, "I love you Babe." The next day Mom was brought home and laid in her bed. The move seemed to stir Mom, and for the first time in over five days, Mom opened her eyes, looked right at Peggy and said, "I love you Babe." It was a beautiful "Last Talk". Whatever regret or concern Peggy carried, this gift of these last few simple words, were a gift of relief.

Over the past many months, these stirring words have come to me.

What if I lived with the same intentional presence, listening and asking questions, choosing meaningful and good words of truth and kindness with everyone I am with. What if I treated every conversation with the quality of a "Last Talk".

I pray that this 3 part message series will be a good encouragement for each of you, as it is to me. A call to savor with care, calm, compassion and close attention to the precious moments we have with the people in our lives. I have found a new sense of being present to the short encounters with the grocery store workers, the Starbucks barista, the wait staff in restaurants, as well as the closer, more personal moments with people in my life.

I have this growing joy of seeing Jesus' love made real in our own lives in these meaningful moments God leads us to day by day. I believe it is a powerful and wonderful way of living faithfully and fully cooperatively with what God is doing to bring healing and promise of hope to our world, one meaningful "Last Talk" at a time.

One of the real challenges of life is that we are not perfect people. It is part of real life to make mistakes, to react and even over react out of our own hurt, frustration, fear and impatience. Words pour out before we could catch them and hurt takes place.

Jesus knew these experiences of real life with real people. The weight of regret can be carried for many years, causing deep sadness, shame and even hopelessness. We can fixate on our own flaws, as well as others, as defining who we and they are and who we will always be. It is tempting to remove ourselves from being open and engaging for fear of hurting others or being hurt. Regret can feel like a burden beyond relief.

Today we are looking at how Jesus has this tremendous capacity to help us face our regrets with His way of healing. Jesus brings a relief so that we may live into giving and receiving love again in meaningful ways.

Earlier in this passage (Luke 22:33), Peter is full of inappropriate confidence telling Jesus “Lord, with you I am ready to go to prison and to death!” Shortly after these words, Jesus is arrested. This is where we pick up in the message today. Peter learned about regret, maybe from his inappropriate confidence in himself and in finding himself failing miserably in the face of a difficult moment.

Three times Peter is accused of being with Jesus, and within ear shot of Jesus. Three times Peter denied even knowing Jesus. It was a challenging and dangerous setting with many accusations by those looking to destroy Jesus and anyone associated with Him. It was very dangerous and so defining of what Jesus is made of and Peter.

Peter heard the crow as Jesus predicted, and went out by himself, brought to bitter regret for his failure. If the story ended here, Peter would have to live with this regret seeping into his thoughts, his heart and his sense of worth and purpose for the rest of his life.

Fortunately Jesus gave Himself on the cross, cleared the way for forgiveness for all failures, even Peters. In the second passage in John that we are looking at, we see how Jesus invited Peter to face and release his regrets of failing. This is Jesus' way to help Peter to rise up in humble gratitude for Jesus' love for him and his love for Jesus. Jesus was able to release Peter from his regret in a meaningful “Last Talk”, that lifted Peter to live with Jesus in a meaningful life of giving to others after Jesus' own heart.

I invite you to join me in welcoming Jesus' way of Making Meaningful Moments even of our regrets.

Jesus moves me from Regret to Release by...

I. Helping me acknowledge my own words of regret.

*“Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. **61** The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown Me three times.” **62** And he went outside and wept bitterly.”
Luke 22:61-62*

Some years ago I was enjoying dinner with some good friends, Gary and Karen. They began talking about a mutual friend, Jacob, we had. They were positive and spoke about a good visit they had recently had. As they shared, feelings began to stir up and rise to my mind and into my words. Anger, frustration and resent flew out in barely disguised words about him. In the year before, this mutual friend, Jacob and I had been at a conference. As Jacob and I were talking, I asked a question for clarification to understand him. Somehow and unexpectedly to me, he took offense. And in that moment he lashed out in a rapid attack of me, my life and his great ability and accomplishments in comparison. I was stunned. I attempted to engage to resolve the tension, he was not receiving it. I apologized and backed off. He never apologized, the wounds felt deep and unwarranted. The rest of the trip was walking with a limp in my soul.

A distance grew over the year, I never forgot, yet tried not to really think of it. Till this night with my friends, Gary and Karen. Much of that hurt just gushed out in derogatory words and dislike. I could barely choose my words with any restraint and care, until no simple moment. Gary simply said, "Come on." With a look of hurt and kind of surprise in me. I was caught by this and stopped, kind of apologizing, quickly changing the subject of our discussion. The night ended and as I returned to my room in the hotel, I was brought to my knees in deep and confusing regret. I regretted pouring out the ill feelings onto my friends. I regretted carrying this hurt that now had decayed my mind and heart. I talked with my dinner friends the next day and asked their forgiveness as I apologized. They were gracious and continue to be good friends. This moment also sent me on a path of sorting out my hurt, anger and resentment. I realized I had let that moment of Jacob's unfiltered reaction stay in me and held it against him all year long. I choose to distance him, which is understandable. Yet he really wasn't distanced from me, because I carried him in my heart with the ache of unresolved wounds. And I was stuck. Regret for how I had become, went beyond my dinner friends, even beyond the friend who hurt me. I regretted being stuck in hurt and anger, that caused me to close my heart. I slowly and carefully began reconnecting with the friend that I felt hurt by. He never apologized. That's ok. I was in time released from the regret of how I had become by the healing love of Christ forgiveness and grace for him and for me. Here is a question for you to ponder.

A. What Last Talk do I regret? Who are they to me?

The healing of Jesus with our regret, is welcoming Jesus' understanding and care that allows us to look into and identify what we are feeling, thinking and living with that resides with our regret. I have come to see the value of acknowledging my regret in order to find Jesus' help to meaningful release. Even Jesus can't heal and release what we/I am not willing to be open with Him and ourselves about.

Jesus moves me from Regret to Release by...

II. Helping me identify what moved me to speak the words of regret. Was it for me?

A. Anger B. Fear C. Hurt D. Disappointment E. Something else?

Shohei Ohtani, the outstanding baseball player for Los Angeles Dodgers, is hit by a pitch of the San Diego Padres. It is often a bad tactic used by professional pitchers to gain the upper hand. This move typically causes the entire teams from both sides to leave the dugout and enter into a huge brawl right on the field. Shohei chose to speak of healing love for himself, his team mates, the pitcher and the other team. After being hit, he waved to his team mates to not come out and fight. He talked to the other team in their dugout with hands held behind his back in a calm grace. Shohei, shook hands with the pitcher himself. Shohei revealed the way of Christ, choosing to respond in the midst of pain and even reasonable anger with presence of mind and heart to move on and live without regret.

Jesus moves me from Regret to Release by...

III. Inviting me to speak healing love into my and their hurt.

“The third time He said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love Me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love Me?” He said, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.” John 21:17

Jesus asked three times if Peter loved Him, so Peter could choose words of love and healing between him and Jesus and for himself. Words without regret. Jesus' way of releasing Peter and you and I.

B. What words of love could I speak to someone I regret having hurt?

C. Will I pray for God's loving strength to move me from regret to release with this person and others?