

Jesus has forgiven Peter . The whole gospel is summed up in this story. Jesus comes for the forgiveness of sins. We touched on the unpopularity of the concept of sin on Friday, on the feast of Catherine of Siena and how at a recent funeral I found myself rewording it as ' imperfection : we all make mistakes" as an attempt to sugar the pill. People are averse now to the concept of original sin in particular,, how can even babies carry the burden of sin, but to ignore our capacity or potential for sin, for imperfection, is if you'll excuse the manner of speaking, to throw out the baby with the bathwater and to eviscerate the Good News of its Goodness altogether. For what Jesus has done is to go to the core of what it means to be human and remake us in God's image; he's not just tinkering here with the software but has gone to the hard drive itself; and it's in this sense that in Christ we are a new creation. But we continue to sin and this becomes a source of great anxiety to us - perhaps I'm not in Christ after all, perhaps it's all hypocrisy, perhaps I should try something else. But there's no one else with the power to change or tinker with that hard drive now - for Christ is there at your centre waiting for the software to finally fit and more than that opening the flood gates of grace at every move towards God, towards goodness. In Christ the path to holiness is difficult but never closed. Peter though has to know the seriousness of what he has done and the seriousness of what he is to embark on in accepting this way of forgiveness. Firstly he tries in Christ to forgive himself and then to lead a life in which he can teach this way of forgiveness by his forgiveness of others, and finally to give himself for another in death - when the Christian forgives he or she recovers that original meaning of what it is to be created in God's image - for like God we exist for giving - for God is love and forgiving is loves dynamic.

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