



World Christian Fellowship

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Defecting Disciples Restored!

Matthew 26:31-35

Matthew 26:31-35, *Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered." ³² But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." ³³ Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." ³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." ³⁵ Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.*

We would like to think of ourselves as strong Christians but then we know within ourselves that we are weak.

We think that we could never be caught in a situation where we would deny the Lord or ashamed to name His name. But the truth of the matter is from time to time we do that.

We are caught in an environment, and we say nothing. There is a time to speak of Christ, and we do not speak.

Times we shun our identity as Christians for fear of social pressure.

There are times when we should be bold for the cause of Christ, and we are not.

Reading missionary stories about those people who affirmed their faith in Christ all the way to death, some of us wanted so desperately to believe that we would.

As Christ's followers, we sometimes abandon our identity with him. There are moments when, out of shame, we desert and defect from our discipleship.

The disciples of Jesus learned this lesson firsthand. Jesus predicted they would abandon Him. They did, but this failure taught them a profound lesson that changed their lives.

Of all the warnings Jesus could have given, He chose to tell them they would all desert Him.

Matthew, guided by the Holy Spirit, placed this story in the chapter on preparing for the cross because it was a monumental lesson for the disciples to learn. If they were to be strong enough to carry the message to the world, they first had to learn how truly weak they were.

This lesson in weakness was the first step toward their strength.

This passage, like the rest of the chapter, is part of the preparation for the cross.

We have seen how
God,
the Jewish leaders,
Women anointed with costly perfume, and
Judas

all prepared for this event.

Jesus also prepares his disciples, who will carry on His message, by teaching them a vital lesson about their own human weakness.

This is a lesson we all need to learn.

Like Peter, we might boldly proclaim our loyalty to Christ, promising never to deny or abandon him. But when we are truly tested, we often fail.

We must recognize that we don't have the strength on our own to face these challenges, but we must depend on the Lord.

If we rely on our own strength, we will fail.

We should learn from this lesson that we cannot keep them in our own strength.

V 30, *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.*

They all affirmed what we would like to be able to affirm. But they were affirming it based on their own sense of strength.

They thought their love for Christ was greater than it was. They thought their spiritual strength was greater than it was. They thought their ability to handle Satan was greater than it was.

They were leaning on their own understanding.

Proverbs 3:5-6, *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

When it came down to the very moment of having to take that stand when Christ was taken captive in the garden what did they do?

Matthew 26:56, *But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.*

When it came down to the moment of trial, they all fled. All that they promised and verbalized by Peter and then affirmed by all the rest was nothing but empty word. Because they were endeavouring to stand in their own strength.

Jesus here, as part of the preparation for His cross, is teaching the disciples a strengthening lesson, warning them about the inadequacy of human strength.

Every Christian will face trials that can cause them to be ashamed of Christ.

2 Timothy 1:7-8, *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,*

Imagine Paul having to tell Timothy not to be ashamed of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:12, *For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have*

believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Romans 1:16, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

There is no place in the life of a believer for shame regarding Christ. There is no place for defection, or desertion.

Romans 9:33, *As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*

Mark 8:38, *For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."*

It is unbelievers who are ashamed of Christ, not believers. Yet sometimes under pressure we desert, defect, disloyal, and unfaithful.

Here is the lesson about restoring the deserting, defecting disciples.

Matthew is not primarily focusing on the disciples, though they are the seeming surface issue here. The primary focus is on Christ.

Matthew's intent here is to preserve the majesty of Jesus Christ.

How can you do that in a situation like that?

How can Christ maintain His dignity, respect, and glory as the regal Son of God and King of kings when all His followers desert Him?

What kind of leader is it whose troops all desert him when they meet the enemy at the height of battle?

What kind of leader is it who has no control over, loyalty from, or commitment from his own followers?

Lesser men than these have stood in greater seriousness, and they stood their ground.

Did Jesus choose the wrong men?

It could be a very demeaning kind of thing for Christ. He could lose face here. It could be something that weakens His regal splendour.

But it doesn't.

Because Matthew under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit turns it around, so that it exalts Jesus Christ in contrast to the defecting disciples.

We can see the majestic character of Jesus Christ in this passage as clearly as any in this part of the New Testament.

We see it by way of contrast with the disciples. Also, this was in the mind of the Spirit of God and Matthew as this was penned.

This is just few hours before the crucifixion.

This is the conclusion of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the climax of redemptive history.

This is the greatest moment.

- ✓ **4 chapters** in all **four gospels** are devoted to the first **30 years of Christ's life.**
- ✓ **13 Chapters** are devoted to the **last day of His life.**

This is a monumental moment in redemptive history, and all part of the preparation of the cross.

Christ has ended the old economy,
Closed out the Jewish dispensation with the final Passover,
Instituted the new covenant of His blood by the cup and bread.

Now Jesus teaches this very profound lesson to men who are very critical men in the ongoing extension of His kingdom and covenant.

V 30, *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.*

In the Passover there were four cups. After the main meal of the lamb, the bitter herbs, and the sauce, the unleavened bread, they would take a cup, then they would sing the Hallel.

Hallel are the **Psalm 115 to 118**.

Then they would take the fourth and final cup, and then they would sing the final song, which was Psalm 136.

Psalms 136 called the great Hallel.

Every verse in **Psalm 136** ends with the same line, "For His mercy endures forever"

They would have sung that. But Matthew leaves something out.

Before they sung that last hymn, or literally the Greek says, before they hymned and then went out," Jesus taught them.

The whole teaching is recorded in **Gospel of John chapters 14-16**. So somewhere after He instituted His supper and before they left, we must insert **John 14, 15, 16 and 17**.

John 14-16 is teaching.

John 17 is a prayer to the Father.

In those three chapters of teaching, Jesus promises them all of his legacy: peace, joy, contentment, comfort, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and hope for the future.

Jesus even promises them persecution, but deliverance from it. He gives them all the information they need, the culmination of teaching before the cross.

John 17, Jesus prays to the Father on their behalf in that high priestly prayer.

All these comes before the final hymn and the departure from that place.

John 18:1, *When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.*

John records it.

Matthew does not.

All that great teaching has been given, that great prayer to the Father praying for the oneness and the unity of His own who would come to believe in Him in the days ahead, as well as those who were there that night.

Then the final Hallel, **Psalms 136** and then they leave.

They leaving to the garden was very significant. It was nearly midnight.

They go out of this upper room, down the stairs, out into the street, and the city is alive as if it was midday. It is alive because it is Passover time.

It is the time of the feast of unleavened bread, and there is activity everywhere and people are hurrying around. Some are during eating their Passover meal. Remember, the Galileans and the Pharisees ate it late Tuesday night.

Some are still eating it, so the lamps are burning in the houses. Some are getting ready to have it the next day, the Judeans and the Sadducees.

All of them were getting the preparations ready.

The temple gates will be thrown open at midnight for the special festival. People are surging toward the temple wanting to get in that place. Visitors are everywhere.

People negotiating for a place to have the Passover the next day, who had come from out of town, animals being collected and carried all around to be sacrificed the next day.

The whole city is alive, even though it is night. Jesus and the disciples are pushing their way through this kind of crowd at night, down the eastern slope of the temple mount.

They have crossed the Kidron valley, where the little brook is running as full as it ever runs because of winter rain. Even more full because of the blood of all the thousands of animals that have been slain. The blood runs out the back of the temple, down the slope, into the stream to be carried away.

The 11 disciples, and Jesus cross that in the dark, and they ascend the Mount of Olives, headed for a very familiar place that they have gone to many times called the Garden of Gethsemane, which means “olive press”

Mount of Olives, many olive trees, and a place called olive press.

People in the city didn't have gardens in the city. There was no place for that. They had gardens out on the slopes around the city. They would cultivate those, and those would be the gardens that belonged to the people that lived in the city.

Jesus went to a familiar place.

But it must have been up the slope a way, and as they went up they needed to stop and rest.

Maybe in a similar place that they had stopped the night before when He gave them the great Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24 and 25 on His Second Coming.

So, they stop again on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, and they are gathered in these final hours, and Jesus has something to say to them.

V 31, Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

Basically, all the teaching prior to this has been positive. Promises after promises all through **John 13 to 16**, a hopeful prayer in John 17.

But now as He comes to this moment on the side of the hill, it is time for a warning.

They must learn this great lesson.

Strength is born out of a recognition of weakness, not of a recognition of strength.

That illusion must be eliminated.

Jesus teaches this lesson to His defecting disciples. We see a marvellous contrast between Christ and the disciples which preserves His majesty.

1. Contrast between knowledge and ignorance.

- **Knowledge** is the presence of understanding, information, and skills. It empowers individuals to make informed decisions and navigate the world effectively. It is often seen as a source of light, a tool for dispelling fear and uncertainty, as we tend to have more faith in what we understand.
- **Ignorance** is the absence of knowledge or information. It can lead to poor decisions and a sense of being lost or fearful of the unknown. However, ignorance is not always negative. It can be a powerful catalyst for curiosity and discovery. The recognition of one's own ignorance is often the first step toward seeking knowledge and making new discoveries, as famously stated by Socrates: "I know that I know nothing."

In essence, the relationship between knowledge and ignorance is dynamic. As we acquire more knowledge, we often become more aware of the vastness of what we don't know, leading to a state of intellectual humility. This continuous cycle of learning and recognizing our limitations is a driving force behind human progress in science, philosophy, and all aspects of life.

The disciples are woefully ignorant.

V 33, we find Peter saying, *“Though all men will be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.”*

Such ignorance. Only a matter of a few hours before he would be offended.

V 35, *“Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You.”*

Peter didn't know that. As it turned out, that was ignorant. Then all the disciples said the same thing in **V 35**. They were ignorant.

They were ignorant of their own weaknesses.

They were ignorant of the strength of Satan.

They were ignorant of the test and its great power.

They were going to be facing in a matter of a few hours.

They were ignorant of so very many things. They were ignorant of the Old Testament prophecy mentioned in verse 31 about the shepherd having to be smitten and the sheep of the flock being scattered. They were ignorant about many things. Their ignorance is obvious.

But over against their ignorance is the marvellous knowledge of Jesus Christ.

V 31, *Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:*

I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

- ✓ Jesus knew they would be offended.
- ✓ Jesus knew it would happen this night.
- ✓ Jesus knew it would be because of Him.
- ✓ Jesus knew He would be raised from the dead.
- ✓ Jesus knew He would meet them again in Galilee.
- ✓ Jesus knew they would be offended to the point where, that very night before the cock crowed, Peter himself, the leader, would deny Jesus Christ.
- ✓ Jesus knew they would never pass that trial that night in their own strength.
- ✓ Jesus knew everything.

Jesus's Foresight: The Panoramic View of the Passion

Imagine Jesus in a control room, with every screen showing a different part of the coming events. This is how he saw the future, with complete, supernatural clarity.

Event Screen	What Jesus Saw	Significance
Betrayal	Judas's every move, culminating in his kiss in the	He knew the exact moment his friend would turn against him.

	garden.	
Desertion	His disciples fleeing in fear, leaving him alone. He saw Peter's denial vividly.	He wasn't surprised by the weakness of his followers.
Arrest	The soldiers approaching with clubs and torches.	He knew the exact moment his freedom would be taken.
Old Testament Prophecy	The fulfilment of every ancient prophecy, one by one.	He saw God's timeless plan unfolding perfectly.
The Bigger Picture	The entire panorama of his suffering, all laid out before him.	He had full control and wasn't a victim of circumstance, but an actor in a divine plan.

This complete, all-knowing perspective shows that Jesus wasn't a surprised victim. Instead, Jesus was fully aware of

every detail of His own suffering, demonstrating His divine knowledge and purposeful submission to God's plan.

Jesus didn't strain to find such knowledge!

It was imminently in His awareness.

Jesus knew the kiss.

Jesus knew the betrayal.

Jesus knew every step in the mock trials.

Jesus knew it all, the descent, the desertion of the disciples, the denial of Peter, the whole thing, every bit of it was in front of His eyes.

Jesus loses none of His regal majesty here. His royal personage is clear, because He has a knowledge of all these things that will come to pass.

- ✓ Jesus knew **the present**, the moment, this night.
- ✓ Jesus knew **the past**, it is written, it is the plan of God.
- ✓ Jesus knew **the future**, you are going to be offended.

It was all very clear to Him.

Jesus knew it all, the majestic knowledge of Christ.

V 31 on an Old Testament prophecy found in **Zechariah 13:7**, *“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Strike the*

Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

This is the plan of God. This is not some event that has come to pass by the whim and the will of Judas, or the religious leaders, or anybody else on earth.

This is God's divine plan, it is written.

Jesus not only knew

- what Judas was doing,
- what the religious leaders were doing,
- what the disciples were thinking,
- what Satan was planning,
- how the whole trial would come out.

He knew everything that was going to happen that night when the soldiers and the leaders came to take Him. He knew the disciples were going to flee. He not only knew all the present and all the future, but He also understood the plan of God in the past, and He also understood the meaning of the prophet Zechariah when he said what he said.

Zechariah 13:7 is not an easy passage to interpret. If it had been very easy, the disciples might have understood it.

In **Zechariah 13**, Zechariah is talking about some false prophets who will be wounded in their idol houses. He was talking about false prophets that God is going to come and wound in their idol houses.

In other words, God is going to judge false prophets. **Zechariah**, the prophet is speaking against those false prophets, who are worthy only of the judgment of God.

Then comes verse 7.

Zechariah 13:7, *“Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.*

It might seem at first that he is referring here to a false shepherd, that God is going to come down and smite a false shepherd and scatter all the followers of that false shepherd.

We might think that, except for the clear interpretation of Christ, who says, “The smiting is Me, and the flock is you.”

The smitten shepherd of **Zechariah 13:7** has to be the Messiah, and the scattered flock has to be His people.

If you understand that, you understand the meaning of **Zechariah 13:7**, and it makes sense out of that passage, especially as you look a little closer to it.

Zechariah 13:7, “Awake, O sword, against My shepherd.”

This is Jehovah God speaking, Now, that tells you right away that it’s not a false prophet. God is not slaying a false prophet whom He calls “My shepherd,” God’s personal representative.

God says, “My sword will slay My shepherd” – “Awake, O sword, against My shepherd.”

Then this most interesting phrase, “And against the man,” and he uses a Hebrew word here that is not the normal word, not the generic word, but means “mighty man” or “man of great strength.”

First, the shepherd to be slain is called “the shepherd of God, My shepherd, a mighty shepherd.”

Then it says, “Who is My fellow.” “The mighty man of My union,” or “the mighty man equal to Me.”

Who is equal to God?

Christ.

Who was God’s shepherd?

Christ.

Who is the mighty shepherd?

Christ.

Clearly, Zechariah is turning a corner from the false, saying, “Yes, God will wound the false shepherd in the house of his

idol, but God will also wound the true shepherd, and His sheep will be scattered as well.”

End of the verse, “And I will turn My hand on the little ones,” there will be a remnant.

What Zechariah was saying is the day is coming when God is going to smite His own shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the sheep are going to be scattered.

Now, the sheep I believe Zechariah has in mind is the nation, Israel. Israel went into chaos after the death of their Messiah. **70 A.D.**, the city was destroyed, the temple and everything else, and they are still in the same chaos resulting from the rejection of Messiah.

But the disciples being scattered were sort of the first phase of the chaos that hit the nation, Israel. Zechariah sees God smiting the shepherd, the nation disintegrating, and the first phase of it the Lord applies to this group of His own disciples, who will be scattered.

Jesus doesn't quote this in Matthew, but it is in Zechariah.

Zechariah says, “*But I will gather again My little ones.*”

While the whole nation ultimately went into chaos, God went back out and gathered back His scattered disciples.

God has continued to do that in the remnant. The prophecy of Zechariah is critical. We see the supernatural knowledge of the Lord. He knew the meaning of the plan of God, "It is written." Jesus knew how to interpret a difficult passage in Zechariah perfectly clearly.

Jesus understood the disciples and where they were going and what they were going to do.

Jesus knew what Satan was going to bring to bear on them.

Jesus knew they couldn't handle it.

He knew what Peter would do, even though he said he wouldn't do it. He knew every detail of what was going on, and He knew when it was going to happen, *"this night, and you are going to do it before the cock crows."*

Supernatural knowledge, as over against the ignorance of these disciples.

Jesus doesn't lose in this, they do. They are not heroes because they left the person whose revolution went sour.

They show themselves to be

- ignorant,
- dull,
- unable to understand the plan of God,
- unable to understand the prophetic word,
- unable to understand the signs of the times.

Jesus majestically knows every detail is in perfect place.

Christ shines by contrast.

2. Contrast in courage and cowardice.

Courage and cowardice are two opposing character traits, often defined by an individual's response to fear and danger.

- **Courage** is not the absence of fear, but the ability to act in the face of it. It involves making a deliberate choice to confront pain, danger, or uncertainty for a worthy goal. Courage can be physical (bravery in battle) or moral (standing up for what is right despite popular opposition or personal cost).
 - **Examples:** A soldier charging into battle, a person speaking out against injustice, or someone admitting a mistake.
- **Cowardice** is an excessive fear that prevents a person from taking a risk or facing a challenge. It is the failure

to act when one should, prioritizing self-preservation over what is right or necessary.

- **Examples:** A person deserting their post in a time of crisis, a leader who flees from their people when they are in danger, or someone who remains silent while others are being harmed.

In essence, courage is about being guided by principles and a sense of duty, even at great personal risk.

Cowardice, on the other hand, is driven by an instinct for self-preservation, leading to a failure of character and a disregard for a greater good.

V 31, *Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble*

"You all shall be offended/stumble."

The word is trapped. You will get trapped.

You are going to get caught in a trap, and it's going to be more than you can get out of. The trap will catch you.

You are going to hit a trial that is too much for you to bear. All of you are going to get trapped.

What was the trap?

Proverbs 29:25, *The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.*

They were afraid of what the Romans would do to them, or what the Jews would do to them.

Matthew 26:55, *In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.*

When they saw those soldiers coming with the clubs, the staves, the swords, the torches, and they saw the leaders come, they fled. They were afraid.

You are all going to get in a trap because of Me.

You are going to defect.

You are going to forsake Me.

When the pressure was on, they were gone.

- They were afraid of what is going to happen.
- They were ashamed to be identified with Jesus Christ.
- They were ashamed to bear the reproach of Christ.

Not that they don't love Christ, not that they don't want to be true to Christ, but that they are just afraid.

They don't have the faith to believe the Lord can deliver them.

They don't trust Him.

They looked at Jesus as a victim.

If Jesus is a victim, what are we going to be?

If Jesus can't get out of this, how we going to get out of this?

Admittedly, identifying with Jesus Christ can be a reproach. It can be difficult.

Moses chose the reproach of Christ rather than the sins of the world.

Hebrews 11:25-26, *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.*

But not everybody makes that choice on every occasion. There are those of us who flee when the pressure is on, who run for safety because we are afraid.

The cowardice of the disciples.

But we see Jesus in perfect courage, just moving to the cross, committing Himself to the Father, unwaveringly.

"Not My will but Yours be done, whatever it is that You will Me to do, Father, I will do it, I trust You, I put My life in Your hands."

Christ's courage is unbelievable.

He goes to a cross to bear sin.

Jesus has never touched sin, and Sin has never touched Him.

He has never been tainted with one single sin, and He will bear the sins of the world.

He will be abused, mocked, and spit on, all those unbelievable things happening to the Christ of God, and He moves toward that with courage that is distinctly divine.

Even His defecting disciples can't diminish the majesty of their Lord.

While the disciples run out of fear, He stands true to the task in great courage, facing death, sin, and Satan, for their sake.

The contrast again presents Him in His splendour.

3. Contrast between power and weakness.

The disciples were afraid to face the moment, because they were weak and they couldn't handle death which scared them.

V 32, *But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.*"

The Lord faced death with tremendous courage, because He knew He had the power over death.

The disciples knew they didn't.

They were looking at themselves and saying, "We can't handle death. They are going to kill us and that's it. We have no power over death."

They wouldn't commit themselves to the one who did have that power. They lacked faith.

Romans 6:4, *Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the Father. Which means that when Jesus went to the grave, here He says, "I will be raised up," and He said it repeatedly.

Matthew 16, Matthew 17, Matthew 20, "I must go and be crucified, and three days later I will rise from the dead."

But He committed Himself to the power of God, to divine power over death.

Hebrews 2:14, *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*

He came to destroy Him who had the power of death, Satan. Christ's power was so great that He faced the cross, because He knew there was power to conquer death.

Jesus took on death as an enemy to be defeated. The disciples paled in the face of death and ran, and so you see their weakness as over against His power.

He believed what Abraham believed!

Hebrews 11:17-19, *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," ¹⁹ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.*

Abraham believed that if God wanted to take Isaac's life, He would have to raise him back from the dead to fulfil His promise. But God was a God of promise, and God would do that if He had to, so he was willing to offer his son.

Christ, of course, was willing to go to the grave, because He knew God to be a God of promise. If God said He would be the Christ, and He would be the King of kings, and He would be the ruler, and He would rise from the dead, that's exactly what would happen.

Did the disciples know that?

They should have.

They should have remembered a few days before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:47-53, all the rulers knew He raised Lazarus from the dead. They should have remembered.

John 11:25-26, *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

They should have known that, but in the weakness of their faith, they were cowards.

In the strength of faith in the God to whom He committed Himself, Jesus moved in power toward the cross.

We see again the majesty of Christ compared to the weakness of the disciples in the fact that He believed in the power of God over death, and they did not.

The disciples were weak.

Jesus was strong.

He said, "I will lead you into Galilee, I will be back personally to be your shepherd to lead you once again."

He did that.

Matthew 28:10, *Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."*

He did it. He came out of the grave, and He met them. He knew He had the power not only to conquer death, but to abolish death.

After He did that, He would come and collect them again. But they had weak faith, weak love, weak gratitude. Basically, all they had was sentimentalism, and not much more than that.

The lesson is very important for us!

- We can parade our ignorance, and we can say we are smart when we are not.
- We can go around saying how courageous we are, and when tested, we turn out to be cowards.
- We can claim we have the strength to face anything, but when we are truly tested, we often find ourselves to be very weak.

No, it's not all bad, because until you learn the lesson of your own weakness, you can't learn where the strength is!

2 Corinthians 12:9, *And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

4. Contrast between pride and humility.

Pride and humility are contrasting attitudes that define how a person perceives themselves in relation to others.

Pride

Pride is an inflated sense of self-importance. A person with excessive pride believes they are superior to others, often leading to arrogance, a need for recognition, and an inability to admit fault. This mindset can hinder growth because it prevents an individual from accepting criticism or learning from mistakes. Pride is fundamentally a focus on the self.

Humility

Humility is the opposite it is the quality of having a modest view of one's own importance. A humble person recognizes their strengths and accomplishments but does not see them as a reason to feel superior. They are open to learning, willing to admit when they are wrong, and appreciate the contributions of others. Humility fosters growth and strong relationships because it focuses on collaboration rather than self-glorification.

In essence, **pride** builds walls between people, while **humility** builds bridges.

Pride is a state of being "full of oneself," whereas humility is a state of being open to others.

The pride comes through in the mouth of Peter.

V 33, *Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."*

Just imagine how others would have looked at Peter when he made this statement?

Proud, self-confident Peter coward, weak, ignorant, but didn't know it. He is a tough case.

Peter was very self-centred, egotistical, consumptive, and proud.

Peter does not learn well.

Just a matter of a few minutes before this Peter had been taught one lesson already, but he forgets quickly.

John 13:36-38, *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward."* ³⁷ *Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake."* ³⁸ *Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.*

Jesus had already said that once to him in the upper room.

Now we are out of the upper room, a little while later we are up the slope of the Mount of Olives.

Peter says that though all men be offended, I will never be offended.

Jesus gives him the same answer.

V 34, *Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."*

This is twice in one night.

Twice, Peter just doesn't listen.

He has got so much pride, and so much self-confidence.

Jesus said something else to him that Matthew didn't record, but Luke recorded it.

Luke 22:31-33, *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."* ³³ *But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."*

Jesus calling him by his old name, before he was saved, because he was acting like that.

Satan is after you and he is going to shake you like you have never been shaken.

Satan is going to shake you violently, as a man shook a tray to let the wheat fall and the chaff blow away. You are going to get shaken. But Jesus said I prayed for you that your faith does not fail.

Jesus said, "I am going to pray for you that it's not going to be a total collapse. You are going to have a disaster, but it's not going to be total, because I have prayed for you. When you get restored and recovered, then you are going to be able to strengthen others.

Why?

Because you are going to go out and say, don't trust yourself. You are going to learn a lesson that you can preach to somebody else.

Now, Peter had run into Satan before.

Matthew 16:21-23, *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.* ²² *Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"* ²³ *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

Satan had been messing with Peter for a long time.

Jesus is speaking of a severe trial and the "you" is plural not only to come upon Peter, but on all the rest. They are on very treacherous ground.

Peter is a fool here and his pride is manifest in three ways.

1. Peter contradicted the Lord.

Contradicting the Lord, "No, Lord, You are wrong, I will not deny You."

Very brash.

2. Peter claimed to be better than everybody else.

"Though all be offended, I will never be offended."

3. Peter trusted in his own strength.

"I will die with You, and I will not deny You."

I is the man was very proud, and all the other disciples.

V 35, everyone said the same thing.

The humility of Jesus comes through so beautifully.

V 34, *Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."*

I will be left alone, forsaken, and deserted.

The stupid pride of men, and the majesty humility of Jesus Christ, who resolutely willingly goes to the cross to die and shed His blood for the stupid, cowardly, weak, proud, disciples who are going to desert Him.

How dare these men be ashamed of the living God who is not ashamed of them?

If God was ashamed to associate with sinners, but for sinners to be ashamed to associate with God?

It shows you how twisted they were.

"This night, before the cock crows"

When was that?

The Jews divided the night into four parts.

1. Evening 6-9 pm.
2. Midnight 9-12 am.
3. Third crow 12-3 am
4. Morning 3-6 am.

Cock crow was the name of a period from **12.00 am to 3.00 am** morning, because that's when the cock would crow.

Very early.

Lord says, "In a few hours, even before that cock can crow two times, you will have already denied Me on three occasions. Before it even gets to be three in the morning, you are going to have denied Me on three different occasions."

Jesus knew every detail.

Jesus knew what was going to happen in every movement, not only of His own, but of Peter.

Jesus knew where Peter would be.

Jesus knew who he had meet, deny and everything was all clear to Him.

Matthew 26:74, *Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.* ⁷⁵ *And*

Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

It isn't enough to deny Christ, but he starts letting profanity out of his mouth. This is Peter the apostle, cursing and swearing.

Could it be that he was cursing Christ?

It's inconceivable.

Immediately what happened?

A cock crowed, and he remembered the words of Jesus!

What a lesson?

Matthew 26:35, *Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.*

Nice sentiment, Peter, just hot air, a lot of words. He can't pull it off.

Luke 22:60-62, *But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 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.*

Can you imagine that?

Jesus just looked at Peter.

I told you.

We see their pride, and over against that the humility of Christ, who is dying for these ungrateful, unloving, defecting, deserting, disciples, humbly sacrificing Himself for those who wouldn't even name His name under pressure.

So, the all-knowing, courageous, powerful, humble Christ goes to the cross alone, without His ignorant, cowardly, weak, and proud followers.

Conclusion:

Thankfully it doesn't end that way.

V 32, *But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."*

The final **contrast between desertion and restoration.**

Despite everything they did to desert the Lord, cursing, swearing, denial, fleeing, forsaking, and all that, He was loving, merciful, and restoring.

Psalm 136 they must have said repeatedly, “His mercy endures forever.”

We see the absolute classic illustration of mercy.

They aren’t worthy of anything, but He says, “I will be back. Despite what you do, I will collect you and lead you to Galilee.”

Exactly what He did. He led them to a hillside, and He restored them.

John 21, it records that most specifically He restored Peter. Jesus said, “Peter, feed My sheep, feed My lambs, feed My sheep.”

He asked him three times if he loved him. He got Peter back on board.

God is in the business of picking up disciples who have deserted.

We may forsake Him, but He will never, under any conditions, forsake us.

Did the disciples learn?

They learned it!

Thank God!

Acts 5:40-42, *And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.* ⁴¹ *So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.* ⁴² *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

These disciples learned a powerful lesson about their own weakness.

When Jesus came back from the grave, and put His loving arms around those disciples, pulled them back to Himself, and restored them into the community of disciples that they originally designed to be!

Recommissioned them and sent them out!

They had so profoundly seen His mercy.

They had seen His power in the resurrection.

They were now not afraid of death because they knew they would rise from the dead like He did.

They had seen the glory of Christ and the grace of Christ in their behalf, and they went out with a whole new approach.

It may be in our lives that it isn't until we have been restored from a defection by the sweet and tender grace of the Lord

that we will go out to conquer uncompromisingly in the future when we face those kinds of difficulties.

I thank God for the times that I failed, and the Lord taught me the frailty of my own strength.

Aren't you?

I am glad for the times when He taught me His own power, and I rest in Him.