



## World Christian Fellowship

[www.wcflondon.com](http://www.wcflondon.com)  
[wcflondon@gmail.com](mailto:wcflondon@gmail.com)

### Restoration of Peter!

**Matthew 26:58; 69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54 - 62; John 18:15-18; 25-27**

**Matthew 26:58; 69-75,**<sup>58</sup> *But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.*

<sup>69</sup> *Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."*

<sup>70</sup> *But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."*

<sup>71</sup> *And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."*

<sup>72</sup> *But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"*

<sup>73</sup> *And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you."*

<sup>74</sup> *Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.*

<sup>75</sup> *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.*

We come to the study the denial of Peter the apostle.

One side this is sad and tragic story on the other side it may be one of the most encouraging and hopeful of all biblical accounts.

We normally look at Peter's denial of Jesus Christ as a great tragedy, and indeed it is. But there is another side to this. We could see it as a positive, exciting, hopeful, and encouraging account.

### **What is the single greatest gift God could ever give?**

From Scripture the **forgiveness of sins**.

There would be no salvation without the forgiveness of sins.

There would be no relationship to God without the forgiveness of sins.

There would be no entering into heaven unless our sins were forgiven.

We would know no usefulness to the Lord without the forgiveness of sin. We would know no relief from guilt without the forgiveness of sin.

The greatest single thing that God has ever offered to man is the forgiveness of sin.

**Exodus 34**, when Moses said, "I want to see You, God," the Lord said, "I am the Lord, Lord God, and I am merciful, and I am gracious, and I pardon iniquity".

God went on to describe His gracious sin-forgiving character.

**Micah 7:18**, *Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.*

**1 John 1:7-9**, *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Forgiveness of sin, cleansing from sin is the single greatest gift that God has ever offered to man.

We see the forgiveness of sin in this passage.

In the bible we have never seen anyone sank to the depths of sin that Peter did on this occasion.

The wonder of wonders is that even in the extremity of his sin, the Lord was there to forgive him. That is a hopeful truth.

All of us as Christians experience times when we come before the Lord overwhelmingly impressed with our own sinfulness. If

we don't, we have grown very cold and may not even be Christians.

But for those who know the Lord, and who walk in His will, and in the light of His Word, and in the power of His Spirit, there are those constant times when we become aware of our sinfulness, brokenness, come to the Lord, and find the forgiveness that heals the soul and brings joy.

Such was the experience of Peter.

The depth of his sin gives God an opportunity to show the profound extent of His forgiveness.

For Peter, who fell so deeply, was soon after restored to become the leading spokesman of the early church. A thrilling and encouraging story, for all of us who are sinners saved by His grace.

We need to realize that woven through the tapestry of the arrest and trial of Christ is this denial of Peter, and it has been coming all along. It isn't as if it happened spontaneously.

There are reasons why it happened.

When we begin to read verse 69, and find Peter in the courtyard, and someone comes to him and identifies him with Jesus, and he denies it.

We ask ourselves, "How could it happen?"

## 1. Peter's brag.

**V 30-31**, *And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. <sup>31</sup>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.'*

They had just sung a hymn and gone out into the Mount of Olives with the eleven disciples. Judas was already gone off to work out the betrayal details.

Jesus and the eleven disciples have finished the Passover meal, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the teaching recorded in **John 13 to 16**. The wonderful high priestly prayer of **John 17**. The Lord has said all and done all that He desired to do. He had ended the old covenant with the final authorized Passover.

He has instituted the new covenant with His own table. He has given them great, sweeping truth on which to base their lives until He returns.

He goes to the garden to pray and to be taken captive. As they are going along toward the Mount of Olives, Jesus predicts their defection. He predicts that they will all forsake Him in the midst of His trial.

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

He predicts His own resurrection, and the regathering of His scattered disciples. They will forsake Him in the moment of His trial. But it won't be the end of the story, because He will be raised again, and regather them to Himself, and lead them into Galilee.

As Jesus predicts the defection of the disciples, Peter responds.

**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."*

Peter rather loudly and vehemently protests the Lord's statement and prediction of the disciples' defection. He says that everybody else might do it, I will never do it.

Based upon his emotional feeling for Christ, love and attraction to Christ, he felt himself to be invincible.

He could not accept the prediction of Jesus.

He thought that he had come to the place in his own life where he was mature spiritually.

He couldn't imagine any circumstance or any difficulty that could cause him in any way to defect and deny the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter boastfully saying that you are wrong, Lord which takes an awful lot of ego, to confront the word of the living God and say to Him but he did.

## 2. Peter's rebelliousness.

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

Jesus goes back to even a stronger statement, and not about the whole group but just about Peter.

Peter defiance.

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

His courageous speech swept everybody else up, and all the other disciples said the same thing.

**V 34**, "You will deny Me," and uses a strong verb that means to completely deny, and Peter just cannot accept that. He persistently defies the word of the Lord.

**Mark 14:31**, *But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.*

Mark writes that he vehemently protested this. It wasn't a mild protestation, but a vehement one.

Peter says I will die first, which is the ultimate and extreme act of courage.

Tuesday evening, Peter has pledged great courage, even to the point of death. He boasts and he even defies the word of the Lord. Remarkable!

Matthew picks up the flow of Peter's steady decline when they reach the garden in verse 40. They came to the garden on the slope of the Mount of Olives. Jesus went further into the garden, then the disciples, eight of them, stayed by the entrance.

Three, **Peter, James, and John**, and **Jesus** further than they. Jesus goes into a very private place, and when He returns, having asked that they should pray with Him, He finds them in verse 40 asleep.

**V 40-41**, *Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"<sup>41</sup> Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

All the other disciples affirmed that they were really willing to die for the Lord. But their flesh was not as able as their spirit was willing.

Jesus says, “You should be praying,” but you see boasting, self-confident disciples don’t pray, because they don’t need to!

They have reached the point of invincibility.

They thought themselves to be absolutely invulnerable.

### **What was there to pray about?**

Instead of being alert to the actual reality of the moment they simply went to sleep.

### **What did they need with prayer?**

They had made their vow.

They were going to be carried by their verbal commitment.

## **3. Peter’s lack of concern.**

They are indifferent to the need to pray.

The Lord goes back to pray a second time.

**V 42**, second time Jesus went and prays,

**V 43**, returns to find them asleep again.

**V 44**, He returns to pray.

**V 45**, comes back the third time finds them asleep again.

**V 45**, *Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

Jesus could already see Judas and the band of temple guard, Roman soldiers, priests coming up the slope toward them, and the disciples were sleeping through all of it, spiritually overconfident, indifferent to the reality of the attack because they were so boastful.

#### **4. Peter's thoughtlessness.**

Peter is so confident, defiant, indifferent, and now we find him, acting absolutely on his own.

*V 51, And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.*

Peter sliced of the ear of Malchus, and he was the servant of the high priest, and he tried to cut off his head and missed and only cut off his ear.

This is not acting under the instruction of Jesus. This is not what Jesus wanted. Had Peter forgotten the several times in which Jesus had said, "I must go to Jerusalem, and I must be taken captive, and I must lay down My life, and I must rise again?"

Peter acted impulsively, so controlled by his own ego, and feeling somewhat invincible. Since Jesus was standing next to him, and he knew that Jesus had the power to destroy them

all. Because moments prior to him taking the sword, Jesus had knocked them all over to the ground. A thousand of them had fallen to the dirt at the very sound of His name.

Peter knew that he was standing with one who had ultimate power. He had no fear because he knew that the Lord could save him in another situation like walking on water.

Peter felt invincible. He took out a sword and started through the whole group, and the Lord stopped him and said, “Put that sword away, unless you want to die by the sword.”

If you take a life, they have a right to take your life, that’s biblical law.

**V 52-54**, *But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will uperish by the sword. <sup>53</sup>Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup>How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”*

Here is courage but misguided.

Here is zeal but misdirected.

Here is somebody who is so confident and defiant in terms of listening and hearing what the Lord is saying. Yet who is so zealous that he acts ultimately in an impulsive way that is completely at odds with the plan of God.

Peter is trying to show everybody that he is as courageous as he claimed to be. But he was completely out of sync with the plan.

It was his boast, his defiance, his indifference and his impulsiveness that led finally to the sinner's collapse.

## **5. Peter's Failure.**

Peter collapse was inevitable because of these prior attitudes. The scene here is very vivid.

They took Jesus' captive, and they tied Him up.

They manhandled Him. Then they took Him out of the Garden of Gethsemane with this huge entourage of up to 600 Roman soldiers, several hundred of the Jewish temple guard, priests, and all those who go along with them.

They want to carry out a trial in the middle of the night in the house of the high priest.

**V 57**, *And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.*

We know from the other gospel records that when they took Jesus back into the high priest's house, He first was taken before Annas, who was the former high priest.

**John 18** describes the whole scene before Annas. Matthew doesn't describe that. John is the only one who describes it in detail.

Jesus then was taken back to Annas.

Annas was the prior high priest. He was deposed by the Romans because he was amassing too much power, and they allowed others to be put in his place.

The one who was now the high priest at this time was Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas. It was not uncommon for those high priests to occupy the same home, particularly because they were related to each other.

They sent Jesus first to Annas. With his experience and wisdom, surely, he could come up with some charge against Jesus that they could use as a basis for the trial before the Sanhedrin.

When they took Jesus away and led Him to the place where Caiaphas lived, and where the Sanhedrin was assembling in his house.

When Jesus was led away to the place of Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, He would be in the very identical place where Annas would confront Him as well.

Jesus faced Annas first, then He was taken to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin for the second phase of a three-part trial, the third

part occurring after dawn in the morning, when they sort of publicly affirmed, according to the rules, during daylight the decision they had made in the middle of the night illegally.

Jesus is taken away, and He is brought into that great courtyard. All the denials of Peter occur in that same place.

**John 18** says that the first denial occurred while Jesus was before Annas. The other gospel writers tell us that all the denials took place in this courtyard. There's no conflict.

Annas and Caiaphas shared the same courtyard. All three denials took place in the same court of the same house of the high priest.

**V 58**, *But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.*

Although all of them had fled, when Jesus was taken prisoner peter couldn't stay away. He was sort of pulled by the love that he had for the Lord, and so he comes back to follow the Lord.

Peter follows Him afar off. He is not brave enough to get close to Him, but he was caught somewhere between love and fear, and he follows at a distance.

Peter wasn't alone.

**John 18:15**, *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.*

The other disciple was John. He was known to the high priest, we don't know what the circumstances were, but it apparently gave him entrance into the high priest's house.

The Lord is brought to the high priest's house and following along are Peter and John. They really were getting in over their heads.

We have no word of what happened to John.

We don't know whether he stayed or whether he left.

But we do know that he didn't deny the Lord.

Peter was shut out. He couldn't get in. He didn't have any entrée. John rectified the situation.

Apparently, John went back out and worked it out with the girl who watched the door to let Peter in and so Peter got in. John unwittingly contributed to Peter's tragic denial of Christ. John then disappears from the scene. He was there to get access for Peter.

**Why in the world would Christ even predict that Peter would deny Him?**

**Why would the Lord even work it out so he could do it?**

Because it was to teach us a profound lesson about spiritual unpreparedness.

Even beyond that is to teach us a profound lesson about the restoration of a sinning saint. A lesson we should rejoice to know about.

*V 58, But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.*

Peter is there sitting with the temple police/ temple guards. No doubt the Roman soldiers from Fort Antonius have gone back to the fort. They did their duty. They got Jesus captured. They got Him into the place of trial before the Jewish high court.

The temple police could handle it from there.

But Peter comes in and he wants to see the end.

Peter should have known the outcome, the Lord had told him enough times, but he didn't listen very well. He just couldn't walk away. His love for the Lord was real but weak.

Peter had to know. He had to see what happened.

Peter totally ignores the prediction of Christ that he was going to deny Him and puts himself right in the hot place where it's going to happen.

The Lord was inside before Annas. Maybe Peter could even see Him in there. Peter was outside, sitting in the court.

The other writers tell us "Sitting by the fire." There was a fire that night because it was cool. They were keeping warm by the fire. He is in a large crowd of temple police, Sanhedrin members bustling in and out, because they are starting to collect for their part of the trial, after Annas is through.

They are moving through, the servants of the house are there, all the dignitaries that surround that high priest system.

Little before 1:00 AM, and the whole trial's going to last two hours. In these two hours, Peter's going to hit rock bottom. By 3:00 AM, which is cock-crow time, it's going to be all over.

Peter sits with the soldiers, warms himself, trying to lose himself in the crowd, stay close enough to find out what happens, but not so close he is exposed.

## **6. Peter's downfall.**

**V 69**, *Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."*

Peter sat outside in the court and a maid asked him.

**Mark 14:66-67**, *Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. <sup>67</sup>And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."*

**John 18:17**, *Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."*

They loved to use those terms as Jesus of Nazareth in reference to Jesus, because they were terms of derision. You mock someone when you call them a Nazarene from Nazareth, or a Galilean. The proud citizens of Jerusalem looked down on the people from Galilee.

She has this information, because maybe she knew John, and so identified Peter with John, and knew John was a follower of Jesus. She comes with her little information to impress all the guards that are sitting around the fire that indeed this is one of the followers of Jesus.

This scene is very natural and normal. This is a crowd scene. Things that are given to us in the narrative in the text are only initially what we could anticipate occurred.

The maid comes and says, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.” But we can be certain that she couldn’t just walk up and quietly say that without getting the attention of everybody first. There are soldiers milling around talking, people everywhere.

When we read **Matthew, Mark, and Luke**, we find that the girl is recorded to have said maybe something a little bit different in each place. Very likely that in a very natural scene she is saying, “You were one of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth,” and may have said it in two or three different ways to get the attention of everybody. She perhaps used several means to express her information. The response of the men must have come back in several ways as well.

When we see a slight variation in what she said, or even in the gospel of John it seems as though he has reversed the first denial and the second, because he is not interested in chronology, we shouldn’t be shocked. This is a very natural scene.

Look at Peter’s reply. She articulates this question, no doubt several different ways, by the time everybody’s chimed in and listening.

Peter denied it before all, which is to say that she had gotten all their attention. Peter denial is not to this maiden, it is to everybody, who has now been brought into the scene.

Jesus said Peter would deny Him three times. There are no more than three denials.

What you must understand is that each of these three occasions of denial, in a very natural way, embraced more than one statement from both sides, so that each is a denial scene in which there must have been a back and forth with dialogue.

**V 70**, *But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."*

Peter denied it before everybody, saying, "I know not what you say." I don't know what you are talking about.

Shocking! This is Peter. Unbelievable.

There is a full expression of what went on. In a very natural scene, he was denying before everybody. He probably did it with several statements, even more than are recorded.

### **How could he do this?**

This is the person who just said he would die for Christ.

Peter who was at the top of any calling any human being could ever know.

He was the leader of the twelve.

He was given the keys to the kingdom.

He is an articulator of the gospel of the kingdom.

He is one who has lived with the king.

He is a privileged man.

He is one who knows Christ who has miracle power.

### **What in the world is he doing denying Christ?**

This is not some new convert.

This is not somebody who hasn't had a personal acquaintance with Christ, so he may have a little doubt.

What if the Lord had suddenly sent Peter and said face My trial, I want you to speak on My behalf then he might have stood by the Lord and felt invincible.

Peter may have been ready for the big moment.

Peter may have been ready for the big opportunity to be a speaker right there beside the Lord.

### **But what happens when he wasn't ready for the little unexpected thing?**

We are also like that!

- We may get ready for the Bible study well.
- We may prepare very well to communicate Christ in each situation.
- We may be able to anticipate certain things that are going to come, and we build up our system to get ready for it.

Then all of a sudden, we get hit with something we don't expect that knocks us off guard, and we wind up denying Christ.

He was ready for the big thing, but it was the little one that got him.

The Lord wasn't by his side, either and he was afraid.  
Peter denied what she said before everybody. He denied that he had any identification with Jesus at all.  
Really frightening!

Reminds of **Elijah**, who goes up on **Mount Carmel**, takes out a sword and slaughters 450 false priests. When he goes down and hears a woman after him and runs out of town.

**How in the world can you go from such heights of victory to such low points of defeat?**

- This is Peter, who just came out of the upper room experience, where he had seen the end of the old covenant, the initiation of the new covenant. Where he had heard promises that had never been heard by any human ears before and can never be outdone by any given since.

- This is Peter, who has seen the Lord knock down a whole group of people numbering nearly a thousand to the dirt.
- This is Peter, who has seen Jesus give an ear to one who had just lost an ear.
- This is Peter, who has walked on water.
- This is Peter, who has heard that Jesus will raise from the dead.

### **What in the world is he doing denying Christ?**

Peter is a living illustration of the principle given by the apostle Paul.

**1 Corinthians 10:12**, *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

Peter's own sense of confidence became his undoing. It took only a little door maid to fell the chief of the twelve.

Gone was his courage that supposedly existed in his heart. From his hand had been snatched the sword, and now out of his heart had been snatched his character.

Now there he was, the arrogant coward, unable to confess his heavenly Lord, cringing in lying denial.

He was afraid of being arrested.  
His self-preserving instincts took over.

He denied what he knew was really true.

This is quite remarkable and is a great insight into spiritual character.

**The thing that reveals character is involuntary response, not planned response.** Your character isn't manifest by what you prepare to do, it's manifest by what you are not prepared for!

### **How do you react to that involuntary reaction?**

That shows your character. We can all plan for those spiritual experiences, to some extent. It is those things that catch us off guard and reveal the real weakness of our hearts that tell us who we really are.

He was caught off guard.

He couldn't get prepared for this one.

His involuntary reaction was one that showed his character to be weak and sinful.

- It wasn't just something brand new.
- It was the result of strong ego.
- It was an unwillingness to listen to the word of the Lord.
- It was a failure to pray.
- It was acting utterly on his own impulse.
- It was independent of the purpose and plan of God.

He was on his own, and on his own he was weak, just like anybody else.

**Luke 22:58**, *“And after a little while,”*

**V 71**, *And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”*

After denying the Lord by the fire among the temple guards, he can't go immediately away, or it will look like he is a liar, so he hangs around for a little bit.

Then he sort of plays it cool and just drifts slowly away. He was trying to be coy about all this.

There were probably two places to keep warm on a cool night.

- One would be around the fire.
- The other would be up in the corridor away from the wind.

So, he heads for the corridor. It's darker there, the moonlight won't be as bright, neither will the fire light.

He went into the porch, away from potential danger, away from recognition.

**Mark 14:68**, *But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.*

Peter has denied the Lord once, the cock has crowed once.

He has got two more denials, and it will crow the second time. Everything's on schedule.

Peter didn't hear that first one. The crowd, his own tension, he gets into the porch, the corridor, he tries to hide in there in a place of seclusion. But it doesn't work.

**V 71**, *another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."*

Another girl, **allos**, another in the feminine gender, another of the same kind as the other one, another door maid, saw him, and said to the crowd there gathered.

*"This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."*

Uses a derogatory term with some disdain.

Peter got exposed again. He just can't get away.

**Luke 22:58**, *And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"*

Luke adds that at this time a man also confronted him, the same as the girl did. Again, this is a very natural scene.

This is the time of his second denial. But that's not to say that there was only one statement made.

It was another maid, but Luke also adds that there was a man there in the corridor also that confronted him.

**The second denial scene:**

The girl and then the man, and they confront him, and the crowd must have been drawn into it.

*V 71, another girl saw him and said to those who were there,*

She puts it out for the whole crowd again that he is one who followed Jesus.

Peter's response is unusual and amazing.

*V 72, But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"*

Peter is angry. He is embarrassed, frustrated, afraid, confused, and trapped. Now his denials are getting more vehement, and this time he doesn't just lie, he double lies.

He lied, and then he lied, and he lied in that he said he didn't lie. He lied in his lie, and he lied in his oath.

**Do you know what an oath is?**

To swear to the truth.

To swear the ultimate oath would be to swear by the living God.

*V 63, But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"*

Peter made an oath. He made personal pledge of truthfulness before God, "I pledge the truth before God, I do not know the man, Jesus."

Incredible.

John the apostle says that it is characteristic of a believer that he knows the Father. That he has an identification with the Father.

Paul says we cry, "Abba, Father."

We are the ones who know Christ and make Him known.

Peter's going against his own nature as a child of God, violating a basic trait.

He is vehemently denying and bringing in an oath of truthfulness that he doesn't know Christ.

**The second denial Worse than the first.**

It demonstrates a lack of trust.

**Why couldn't he just say the truth, and commit himself to the care of the Lord?**

Because he didn't have the spiritual strength.  
He was weak.

He had great spiritual privilege, and experience, but one thing escaped him, and that was that in spite of your experience, and privilege, you are not necessarily invincible.

It may be that there are people who think that because they know so much about the Bible, and because they have experienced so many things in terms of the moving of God, that they are beyond the possibility of a disaster, and that's just when you are most vulnerable.

If you think because you have been in our Church and learned lot of things and you are invincible, you better think again.

Peter was with Jesus Himself for three years and look where he went.

- Sooner or later, you must embrace the brokenness of humility.
- You must realize that you cannot defy the Word of the Lord.
- You must get on your knees to seek the strength you know you don't have.
- You must begin to align yourself with the plan of God.
- Otherwise, you will find yourself in the same tragedy that Peter did.

**V 73**, *And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you."*

A little later gives us the impression that Peter's again trying to be a little reserved about this. He hangs around, and after a while, he sorts of floats out into the courtyard again.

A group of men were standing around.

### **How long later was this?**

About an hour later.

**Luke 22:59**, *Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."*

Now the two hours are up.

### **The first hour, two denials.**

Then another hour goes by then his third denial.

Peter can't quite bring himself to getting out of the place. No doubt he was drifting over toward the big room in Caiaphas' wing where the trial was going on, because it must have been something incredible.

They were screaming about blasphemy over there. By this time, they were spitting on the face of Jesus, and with their fists they were pounding on His face. Then they were slapping

Him in the face, having blindfolded Him, and asking Him to tell them who it was that hit them when He couldn't see.

It was a horrible thing.

Peter was there, and he was nearby, and he could see through the doorways and windows into the scene. Peter just can't bring himself away.

Maybe the screams of blasphemy, the pounding and beating on Jesus, and spitting on Him held him there.

Peter may have had some conversation, these people come over and say, "Surely you are one of them, for your speech betrays you."

You have got that Galilean accent, which was readily distinguishable.

These people, who have been listening to him speak and hearing his accent, say, "You are one of them."

One of them would have said as the spokesman for the group.

**John 18:26**, *One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"*

That spokesperson was a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off.

Peter hits rock bottom!

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

**Can you see yourself doing this?**

**Can I see myself doing this?**

Cursing, *katathematiz*, very strong word.

It means to pronounce death upon yourself at the hand of God if you are lying.

May God kill me and damn me if I am not speaking the truth.

This is the most serious taking of the Lord's name in vain imaginable. May God destroy me if I don't speak the truth.

Peter, you better be careful.

To swear, to pledge your truthfulness so on the negative side.

Peter says, "May God damn me, May God kill me if I lie."

He calls down the damning power of God on his own head if he is not telling the truth.

That's how far gone he is.

Peter lost all fear of God.

- First, a single lie,
- To cover up a single lie, a double lie,
- To cover up a double lie, a flurry of lies, with curses and swearing.

**V 74, “he began”**

He began, which is to say it doesn't just happen once, he began it, and it must have had some continuity. He kept it up. Maybe the accusations kept flying.

**Imagine the scene here:**

Here is our precious Lord, who has been rejected by the world, sold by one of His disciples, and now denied again and again with curses and swearing by the leader of His own group. Talk about a man of sorrows.

Peter has gone to the very pit. You couldn't get any lower than this.

**V 74, *Immediately a rooster crowed.***

**The second time the rooster crowed.**

The cock crow was about 3:00 AM.

**The Lord's prediction came to pass.**

At this very split second, when the cock crowed.

**Luke 22:61, *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.”***

## **What a look?**

Unbelievable.

Peter must have been able to see the Lord.

Maybe he was standing outside the window, looking in at all that was going on, watching Jesus beaten and spit on.

Maybe he was in the courtyard a way away, and Jesus, the trial having ended, was led passed him, and in moving past, looked into the eyes of Peter.

The look must have burned his soul.

It must have created for him the most excruciating pain he had ever experienced, and even beyond that.

Straight into Peter's eyes went the gaze of the Lord Jesus, to show him you never do mistrust what I say. If I say it will happen!

To make him know forever what he had done, and yet to look on him with compassion and mercy.

Jesus' face covered with spit, battered, puffy, and bleeding, looks into the eyes of Peter who has delivered blows of denial that are infinitely worse than any fist could ever deliver. An indescribable moment of pain!

The total collapse of Peter is immediately frozen like a still picture and crystalized in start imagery in one moment of

time, as the whole scene stops, and the eyes of Peter are frozen on the eyes of Jesus.

Ask yourself the question:

**How in the world could Peter ever sink to that depth?**

**How could anybody ever do that?**

Here are the footprints down the path.

**a) Self-confidence.**

Peter felt he could handle anything.

He could follow Christ anywhere. His own warm feeling and affection would be enough to make him able to handle any circumstance. It was self-confidence.

He thought he could stand.

**b) Disobedience.**

The Lord told him twice, and he denied it both times.

He defied the word of the Lord. He would not submit himself. He would not become subordinate to the word of God. He didn't take the word of God seriously. He rejected reproof.

He ignored the voice of the living God just like a believer who reads it and then goes out and ignores it.

We are not invincible.

We cannot defy the Word of God and survive.

**c) Prayerlessness.**

Peter slept instead of praying.

He slept instead of watching for temptation. Spiritual neglect. He omitted an essential spiritual duty, and that generated a downward impulse. Spiritual indifference leads to ruin. Lack of prayer leads to disaster.

#### **d) Independence.**

Peter acted on his own.

He didn't need to seek God's will. He didn't need to ask the Lord what to do. He acted on his own. Therefore, he got himself into situations that were disastrous to him.

#### **e) Compromise.**

Peter followed Jesus in, he goes right into the lion's den, he sits by the fire, he mingles with the crowd that was the enemy of Christ. He reminds the person in Psalms.

**Psalm 1:1**, *Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;*

He walked in, he stood around and finally he sat down, and he sat among the scornful. He took his place in a compromising way.

Either he should have been where Christ was, not afar off, or he should have been gone from the temptation that he knew he wasn't able to handle. But to sit in the midst of the

temptation, and yet far enough from Christ not to be able to count on that resource, was to be in the place of compromise.

If you think you can handle every situation, you are going to get into some situations you can't handle.

There where Peter was and that led to defeat. The darkest hour in human history, hell was running at full tilt, and Peter was no match for this in the flesh.

We wouldn't be too shocked if he just went out and hanged himself like Judas, but he didn't.

**The key to this whole message:**

**The true Peter is seen not in his denial, but in his repentance.**

We don't ask the question whether Judas was a real believer, because we know how the story ended. He went out and hanged himself because there was no real repentance.

**Peter went out and wept bitterly and came back to be restored and therein lies the difference between a Judas and a Peter.**

Both will sin, but one will be repentant and restored, and the other will be damned.

**Do you know what the difference?**

**Luke 22:32**, *But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*

### **Why didn't Peter's faith totally fail?**

Because the Lord had prayed for him.

The reason that we stay saved is not because of something we have done, but because the Lord holds us.

He didn't hold Judas because He never had Judas.

But He held Peter, and Peter's faith didn't fail.

**V 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.*

**First thing he did was remember.** He remembered the words of Jesus. He remembered that He said it would be this way, that he would do it three times before that cock crowed twice. He remembered.

**The second thing, he hit the exit.** I am glad that none of the gospel writers tell us where he went or what he said. **A private moment of repentance.** A private moment of coming to grips with your own sin. We don't need to be there. It is for him and the Lord, whom he so grossly offended.

**The third thing "He wept bitterly."**

It uses a very strong expression, which means to weep audibly, to sob loudly. He just wrenched in the agony of repentance.

It wasn't until he saw the face of Jesus he remembered the words of Jesus, that he repented. His sin didn't make him repent. It was the Saviour that made him repent.

It is not our sins that make us weep.

It is not our sins that make us repent.

It is when we see what kind of Saviour we have sinned against.

We ever and always need the vision of who He is. The sin alone didn't do anything to Peter.

He would have kept it up. But it was when he saw Jesus, and he remembered His words.

It is the repentance born of a recognition of the kind of Saviour we have sinned against.

It is not a ministry of just telling you to turn from your sin, but a ministry of lifting up our God of glory, Lord Jesus Christ, so that in seeing Him, you understand the atrocity of sin.

In the wrenching agony of repentance, things were made right with the Lord he had sinned against.

Peter, like Isaiah, cried out to God, "I am a man of unclean lips," and he, like Isaiah, was purged.

## **Conclusion:**

### **Peter's restoration.**

In **John 21**, Peter's in Galilee.

Our Lord appears after the resurrection. He comes to restore Peter.

Jesus comes to Peter and says, "Simon, son of Jonah do you love Me?"

Jesus asks him three times.

Three times Peter says, "I love You. I love You. I love You."

### **Why do you think the Lord gave him three opportunities to say that?**

For the three times of denial, there were three times of affirming love.

The Lord accepted Peter's testimony, and the Lord restored Peter.

Jesus said, "Feed My sheep, feed My lambs, feed My sheep," and He put him back on his feet, and back in the ministry, and he became the great proclaimer of the gospel in the early church.

God is in the business of giving grace to sinners.

God is in the business of restoring the fallen.

God is in the business of picking up the person who has even denied Him, who has shown himself to be weak, and putting him in a place of strength.

We have a God of forgiveness!

**Did Peter learn the lesson?**

**2 Peter 3:17-18,** *You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; <sup>18</sup>but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*

Peter says, “Beloved, don’t you do what I did, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”