

Peter, His Failure

John 18:10,11; 15-18; 25-27

We greet you in the powerful name of Jesus, this Jesus who has defeated death and conquered the grave, He is the one we exalt and worship as the true God. We are Heralds of Hope, and we are so glad you have chosen to join us for today's teaching from the book of John. We are a small organization with a big goal of using media to make disciples of Jesus Christ to accomplish the great commission in our lifetime. With God's help and the help of Gods people we magnify the name of Jesus through Bible teaching and Bible distribution.

In today's lesson we will look at Peter and Peter's failure. It can be easy to look at Peter and think, how could he deny Jesus 3 times? He knew Jesus and spent time with Him, why would he act like he never knew Him. I am sure it was hard to be where Peter was and I don't know how I would have responded in that situation, but have you ever wondered why Jesus would welcome Him back? Would you trust Him if he had just denied you? Jesus could have said, "That's it, Peter; we're done. You denied me 3 times so don't ever try to tell me you are sorry, it's over."

Jesus didn't do that, not with Peter or anyone else. Matthew and Luke tell us Peter went out and wept bitterly. I believe Peter was forgiven. Jesus offer of forgiveness is always available and it is life changing. Peter learned from His mistake and lived a remarkable life for Christ after this. This reminds me of a small phrase in Psalm 18:35 it says, "thy gentleness hath made me great." Someone who has not experienced Christ's forgiveness might think, just go do whatever you want and ask for forgiveness later. It's a license to do anything.

However, Peter and all who have experienced Christ forgiveness can understand the truth in this verse. The gentleness and forgiveness of Jesus does not cause us to live recklessly. No way, instead we consider our actions and make every effort to live a holy life following all His teaching, because he has forgiven us and still offers us His love, we are motivated to do all we can for Him. His gentleness really does make us great.

Forgiveness is truly unique to Christianity, and this is one aspect of Jesus teaching worth thinking more about. Today as we look at Peter's failure, we hope you would be reminded of Christ's forgiveness to you. Now let's give our attention to Pastor J Mark for today's teaching from John.

The very heart of the Gospel comes into focus in the study of these chapters in the Gospel of John. The word Gospel means “good news”. At the same time, the events which we’re studying are surrounded with sorrow. Some great aspirations or hopes end in sorrow.

Peter, a disciple of Jesus, once told Jesus he would lay down his life for Him. When Peter made that boast, Jesus replied he would instead deny Him even before the rooster would crow. But Peter insisted he would never deny his Lord.

I admire Peter for his good intentions. Good intentions are noble and right. But to have any real value they must be backed by loyal actions. That is what we are now going to consider from John 18: PETER-HIS FAILURE.

10 *Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.*

11 *Then said Jesus unto Peter, put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

15 *And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.*

16 *But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spoke unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.*

17 *Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man’s disciples? He saith, I am not.*

18 *And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them and warmed himself.*

25 *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.*

26 *One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?*

27 *Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.*

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the access we have to your word. As we read this text, we are grieved by the failure of the apostle Peter to identify with you. However, we know our own weaknesses, and how often we too have failed you. So as my friend and I reflect on these scenes from the closing hours of Jesus’ earthly life, help us to learn from Peter’s failure. May my friend and I grow in our loyalty and devotion to Jesus. I pray this in His precious name, Amen.

Good intentions are noble and right. To have any real value they must be backed up with loyal actions. From these verses we can understand the WAYS Peter was led into failure.

First was Peter's Futile Defense.

In the Garden, faced by a military guard, Peter drew his sword. Peter meant to carry out his boast to lay down his life for Jesus. He was ready to take his sword and defend his Lord. He must have meant to cut Malchus down, to cut off his head. Apparently, the servant ducked, and Peter simply sliced off his ear.

Now listen to Jesus rebuke Peter, "Put up your sword, Peter." This was not the way to defend his Lord. Peter had it wrong. Jesus gave him a reason, saying His Father has a plan which He will carry out. Peter misunderstood what this was all about. He failed because his defense was entirely futile.

The second Way: Peter's First Denial.

As Jesus was led off to be tried, Peter was following all right. That in itself is worthy. He could not get inside the courtyard because he did not know the right people. So, another disciple brought him in. We conclude it must have been John, the disciple of our Lord. He was known by the high priest and could go to the door keeper and request the maid to let Peter in, which she did.

But then, when this girl looked upon Peter, she asked him a burning question. "You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" That is exactly the way she asked the question so as to anticipate Peter saying, "No". We have ways to anticipate answers when we ask questions, and this girl asked the question in such a way that it was easy for Peter to say no. "You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" And Peter said, "I am not." In that answer he was denying his Lord just as Jesus said he would.

Then Peter stepped up to the fire which the servants and officers had made and warmed himself. It appears that Peter was trying to be unknown. He was trying to hide there among those officers and servants so as to be undetected. That was his first denial.

The third Way: Peter's Final Denial.

Those servants and officers were not friends of Jesus. But Peter stood there with them anyway. That means Peter identified himself with the enemies of Jesus. That was the wrong thing to do, but there he was. They asked him the same question in the same way that girl had asked, which meant they were expecting Peter to say no. It made it easier; I suppose. Anyway, Peter did say, "I am not".

Now notice what happened next. A kinsman of the servant whose ear Peter had cut off was also warming himself by the fire. We may be sure this kinsman had looked very carefully when Peter cut off

that ear. So, he said, "I saw you in the garden with him, did I not?" It's a different kind of question this time. This man expected yes as an answer, and a good reason. Most likely he had watched Peter very carefully, and now here he was, facing him. "I saw you in the garden with him, didn't I?" expecting yes as an answer.

But since Peter had already denied the Lord twice, he found he could do nothing else, and Peter denied again. But then, the cock crowed. Peter did exactly what Jesus predicted he would do. He denied Jesus before the cock crowed. We feel deeply for Peter because we know what failure means. Our high aspirations often lie shattered when we face testing.

Now, my friend, has Jesus been calling *you* to a loyal walk with Him? Remember, His sacrifice was the greatest event of history. Guard against a futile defense of Jesus, a first step in denying your Lord, and hiding among His enemies. Back your devotion to Jesus by loyal actions and failure will not be yours.

Thank you, J Mark for this teaching from God's word and thank you for joining us. It is a privilege for us to study God's word and learn from it. Now take what you heard and put it into practice. The teaching and instruction in the Bible are for us and it is meant to be lived.

Don't be like the man in James 1 who see himself in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like, instead be like the man in v 25 who looks intently into the word and is a doer of the work. God says, "that man will be Blessed in what he does."

And we want to bless you as you follow Jesus and share Him with those around you. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching just contact us and ask for it by title or tell us the passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each lesson, it is called the Hope Herald. Please let us know if you are interested, and we would be happy to give you one.

Here are several ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. And the 3rd way you can contact us is through our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. Please look on our website for this teaching and other similar teaching. There you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again, the website is Heraldsofhope.org

We thank you again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as Pastor J. Mark continues teaching from the Gospel of John. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with this blessing from Number 6. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.