

Peter's Three Denials Mark 14:27-30

Thank you for joining me once again for "It's a Good Life." Today, we continue our study in the life of Christ, and this would be lesson number 12, Peter's three denials. We've looked at, as Christ was in the garden of Gethsemane, how that He was betrayed by Judas, by a kiss, from one who hated Him, a pretender. We've seen briefly the trials of Christ; there were six of them; and one thing we need to look at today is the three denials of Peter.

First, the Lord's prediction of Peter's sin is seen in Mark chapter 14, verses 27-30. It says, *And Jesus saith unto them...* Now, this is talking of His disciples... *All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* ²⁸*But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.* ²⁹*But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.* ³⁰*And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

Peter, in essence, was saying in verse 29, "Not I, Lord. Others may fail you, but I won't." Often, we have the same problem that Peter did. "Oh, I would never do that. I would never deny the Lord." Well, what should my attitude be towards the possibility of sinning? I need to realize that there is no sin that my rotten depraved heart is not capable of. There, but by the grace of God, go I. In I Corinthians 10:12, it says, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Our confidence needs to be placed in our Lord, not in our flesh. We are simple, weak human beings, and we should not depend upon ourselves to get out of trouble when we sin, when we do something wrong, but we need to

thank God that Jesus Christ is able to deliver and help us to live a Christian life, to be a witness to those people around about us.

Well, the Lord predicted that Peter would sin and then we see Peter's three denials. Now, all four of the Gospel writers record this event in detail. The birth of Christ is found in only two of the four Gospels. Each Gospel writer gives the same basic story, but each one contributes his own unique details to these denials of Peter. To get a full picture of what happened, you need to go to all four Gospel accounts.

The place of the denials – let's look at that. Peter's denials took place in the court of the high priest's residence. The key he used to get through the door was the apostle John who had connections with the high priest. Look at John chapter 18, verses 15-16, to see this. Let's read that.

It says, ¹⁵*And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest...* Many Biblical scholars believe this was John, the disciple that was known unto the high priest. And it says, *[He] 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... this would be John... which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. So he had permission to bring Peter in.*

Well, the place was the high priest's residence, and the time of the denials. The denials took place in the middle of the night, even as it was getting toward morning. I would have you understand that roosters usually crow before dawn. I've been around and I grew up somewhat on a farm, not so much on a farm,

but we had animals and we had chickens, and I remember the old roosters crowing, and sometimes it would just wake you up. But this rooster was getting ready to crow, and at the same time that these denials were taking place, Jesus was in close proximity. He was close by where Peter was. He was being illegally put on trial. Remember, we talked about that.

As we have seen, there were actually six trials that Jesus attended that night. He stood before Annas, the former high priest, before Caiaphas, the present high priest, before the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews, before Pilate the first time, before Herod that fox, and before Pilate the second time. Christ was going from one trial to the other all through the night and even into the early morning hours.

Well, notice the circumstances of the denials. Peter warmed himself by the fire. John 18:18 says, *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.*

That sometimes happens when we hold hands with the world; doesn't it? We warm ourselves by the coals of fire of this world. It somehow brings us solace sometimes to warm ourselves at the fire of the world, but let me tell you, it's not what we should be doing. We should not be holding hands with the world. We need to be holding hands with our Lord, and we need to stick close to Him. Although Peter was in close proximity of the Lord, he was far away from Him at this time. He was holding hands with the world.

Each denial of Peter got worse. The last denial was greater and stronger than the first. Mark 14:71 says, *But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.*

The denials of Peter did not take place in rapid succession. In Mark chapter 14, verses 66-70, it talks about this, and it says, *And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: 67And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. 68But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. 69And a maid saw him again... This is another time now... and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. 70And he denied it again. And a little after... This is the third time now... they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.*

In Luke 22:59, it says, *And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.* Remember, Peter was out there and he was making these denials as Christ was placed on trial. Six trials, remember that. So the denials took place over a period of time, not all at the same time.

The rooster crowed two times, not just once, according to Mark chapter 14, verses 68 and 72. It says in Mark 14:30, *And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night... before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

So Peter denied Christ three times and the rooster crowed twice. When the rooster crowed the second time, something else remarkable happened. Now, only Luke tells us this detail. The rooster crowed the second time even when Peter was still speaking. Luke 22:60 talks about this, and that's right in the midst of his third denial, before he had even finished his remarkable words. At this very

instant, the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, Luke 22:61. It was then that Peter remembered the Lord's prediction of his denial, verse 61. And what does the Bible say in Luke 22:62? It says, *And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

Well, what was the difference between Peter's sin and the sin of Judas? Peter denied the Lord; Judas betrayed Him. Judas pretended that he loved Jesus and even kissed Him, according to Matthew 26:49, but it was the hypocritical act of an unclean, unregenerate disciple, according to John chapter 13, verses 10-11. Judas did not really love the Lord, but he acted as if he did, and Peter really did love the Lord, but during his denials, he acted as if he didn't. Peter's sorrow led to genuine repentance. Judas' sorrow led to his death. And even though he acknowledged his sin in Matthew 27:4, he never turned to the Savior.

What were the factors that led to Peter's sin? Matthew 26:31-33, I believe, gives us the answer. ³¹*Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.* ³²*But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.* And verse 33 of Matthew 26 says, *Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.*

Peter relied too much upon Peter. "Self" will also let you down. "Self" is an unfailing failure. It will always let you down. Peter failed to watch and pray as Jesus had told him, Mark 14:38: *Watch ye and pray...* Jesus said... *lest ye enter into temptation...* This was as He was going into the garden of Gethsemane to pray. He's telling His disciples, "Watch out now".... *The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.*

Then, Peter followed afar off. He was at a distance according to Mark 14:54. Peter did not stay close to the Lord. He probably was about as close to the Lord physically as he could get, but spiritually, Peter followed the Lord afar off... from a distance. Spiritually, he was not close to the Lord at this time.

And then we see that Peter was overwhelmed by his circumstances. Peter was absolutely crushed under the weight of what he considered to be unfavorable circumstances. Remember, he cut off the ear of that servant? He was trying to protect the Lord. He couldn't understand that Jesus had to go to the cross. At this time, he didn't understand that, and the circumstances overwhelmed him.

And then, number four, we see that Peter sat among the Lord's enemies. Now, I've spoken of this.

Well, what about Peter's recovery? Luke 22:62. Yes, he recovered. We see his bitter tears and his tears reflected a broken and contrite heart.

The intercession of Christ, Luke 22:31-32. It says, *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.* The word "you" here in Luke 22:31 is plural. It refers to more than just Peter. Satan was out to get all of the disciples, and he's out to get us today, but Jesus has prayed for us. In Luke 22:32, it says, *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* The words "thee" and "thy" in this verse are both singular. Now the Lord is referring specifically to Peter.

Was Christ denied by Peter? Yes and no. He denied Him here, but later on, he would stand up and he would preach a great message and over three thousand people would be saved.

And as I ended the last lesson, I will say hallelujah, what a Savior. Do you know Him today? Ask Him to come into your heart. Look at our Website, www.LRWM.org.

Until the next time, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.