

Peter

Portraits of Repentance

Matthew 26:69-75

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A female servant came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰ But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." ⁷¹ When he went out to the porch, another female servant saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene."^[a] ⁷² Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." ⁷⁴ Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter was one of Jesus' most faithful and beloved disciples, and he proclaimed many "yesses" during the three years he walked with Him. Jesus predicts that Peter will deny Him three times during the Last Supper - which comes to fruition when Peter folds under pressure, denying Jesus when confronted by a young girl in the courtyard. If even Peter can fall away, so too can we at any given time. As Stephen says, the line between good and bad is thin within the human heart and can change in a flash.

Even as we strive to follow Jesus, it's so easy for us to we deny him in our daily lives, though not to the degree to which Peter faces. **Consider how we are so easily prone to deny Jesus. Which of these speaks to you the most?** 1) When we fail to practice the basic practices of Christian life -- scripture, worship, relationships, service, and prayer; 2) When we treat others badly even though we know they're made in the image of God; 3) When we are so centered on ourselves we fail to honor Him with praise and gratitude; 4) When we fail to acknowledge to others that we're a Christian; 5) When we tell someone who's really struggling that we'll pray for them but don't really follow up; 6) When we are comfortable saying a blessing at home but not in a restaurant.

Peter's "no" is recorded in all four Gospels as a strong reminder that there is some of him living in all of us. Thanks be to God for His grace that shows up when we fail, and that He says yes to us even when we say no. Peter's sobbing after his denial shows his deep repentance, and he was able to say "yes" to Jesus for the rest of his life until he died a martyr's death in Rome years later. As Peter writes to us at the end of both of his letters, "Dear friends, stand firm in God's grace." **How is the the example and life of**

Peter an encouragement to you as you continue to follow Jesus wherever you live, work, and play?