

Connection to Passage

Jesus warned Peter about a time when Peter would deny knowing Jesus. Peter failed and denied knowing Jesus just as Jesus had foretold. Peter was heartbroken, but the story did not end there.

Introduction/Opening

Most of us have experiences in our past that we wish we could redo. We relive those situations thinking what we could have said or done differently, knowing we can never have that moment back. We live with the guilt or disappointment in ourselves, but God can restore us from those past hurts.

In the last section of Matthew 26, two trials are taking place. One is an official trial in which Jesus stood before Caiaphas, the high priest. The other was an unofficial trial that took place outside in the courtyard. In this unofficial trial, Peter was forced to speak about Jesus by some in the crowd. Unfortunately, Peter openly denied any personal knowledge or association with Jesus. Tragically, Peter is remembered for this failure. But the rest of the story is that Jesus helped Peter make a tremendous comeback!

Outline

- I. Peter's Faithful Past
 - a. According to the Bible, Peter may very well have been one of the most passionate followers of Christ. What a wonderful thing it is to see someone faithfully following Jesus. When you walk faithfully with Jesus, it will be the most joyful days of your life. Walking with Jesus puts a purpose behind every day. Consider a few of the instances of Peter's faithfulness to Jesus.
 1. His confession recorded in Matthew 16:15-16.
 - a) Jesus asked the question, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."
 2. His bold statement of being willing to die for Jesus.
 - a) In Matthew 26:33, Peter declared, "Even if everyone falls away because of you, I will never fall away." Peter said this after Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him.
 3. His invitation to walk on the water in Matthew 14:22-33, a display of Peter's passionate walk with the Lord.
 4. His decision to cut off the ear of the soldier in John 18:10.

II. Peter's Failure Moment

- a. As wonderful as it is to watch Peter so passionately following Jesus, the Bible shows us that Peter was human and prone to failure. In our text, Peter denied Jesus three times. After the third denial, Peter heard the rooster crow, which was a fulfillment of the Lord's prophetic word in Matthew 26:34: "Truly I tell you ... tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."
 1. First, the servant girl approached Peter. She told Peter she saw him with Jesus. Peter tried to evade her by saying, "I don't know what you're talking about" (v. 70).
 2. Another girl approached Peter and informed the bystanders that she too had seen Peter with Jesus. This time, Peter changed his approach by denying with an oath that he knew Jesus.
 3. Others approached Peter and told him that his Galilean accent gave him away as being "one of them" (v. 73). Peter denied Jesus this time by cursing and swearing and saying, "I don't know the man!" (v. 72). Notice that each time Peter denied Jesus, he became more and more mean-spirited. He used lies, oaths, and curses in his denials.
 4. Also, notice that Peter never acknowledged his relationship with Jesus. In fact, the main thrust of this text is that the leading man of the Twelve emphatically declared that he did not know Jesus. Peter denied Jesus publicly and "in front of everyone" (v. 70).

III. Peter's Future Comeback

- a. Thank God that He gives us second chances. As we learn from Peter's life, failures do not have to damage us forever. Peter made a comeback. Peter's comeback began that same night in verse 75, where the Bible records Peter weeping bitterly. It is often suggested that his bitter tears were Peter's initial steps of repentance. But the Bible also records that the comeback continued in John 21: when Peter was fishing, the Lord came to speak with him. That day, Peter told Jesus "I love you" three times. After failing Jesus by denying Him, Peter moved beyond that moment of failure to have a tremendous ministry for the Lord.
 1. He became a powerful, spirit-filled preacher (Acts 2).
 2. He was miracle worker (Acts 3; 5; 9).
 3. He was the speaker at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15).
 4. He wrote the Books of 1 and 2 Peter.

Conclusion

As Christians, like Peter, we often fail our Lord. Sometimes, failure may cause us to lose our passion for serving Jesus. The guilt and shame may be too much to overcome. Peter overcame his failure through repentance and by reaffirming his love for the Lord.

If we are honest, we have all denied Jesus either by our actions or words. Anytime our walk is unworthy of bearing the name Christian, we fail Him. Maybe we have allowed the devil to use the guilt and shame of these failures to impede our service to God. Just like Peter, we must

search our life to see if we need to make a comeback. Or maybe there is someone you know who could use some help to make a comeback in his or her walk with the Lord.

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