

Causes of Peter's Denial

Mark 14:66-72

- We live in a time of tragic paradox.
Our younger generations (especially) are pleading for tolerance and understanding of others. But when someone questions them about their views and morals, they become hostile and offended.
- This is especially true against those who dare to stand firm with God's word and authority.
- Efforts are underway to further challenge Biblical morality. In time we could face the decision to choose between Christ and man's laws.
- When that day comes, where will we stand?

- The Bible is clear that we must stand with Jesus when faced with such choices.
- **Matthew 10:32-33,**
Matthew 12:30
Luke 9:26
- When we are among friends and brethren, it is easier to do. But what about when we are facing hostility and conquests against our faith?
- In this lesson I would like to consider the lesson of Peter who failed to stand for Jesus on a very important occasion.

The Account

- Peter's denial of Jesus is found in all 4 gospels.
Matthew 26:69-75
Mark 14:66-72
Luke 22:55-62
John 18:15-18, 25-27
- It began earlier that evening.
Mark 14:26-31 records Jesus telling the apostles they would all stumble that night.
- Peter rebuked Jesus saying he would NEVER deny Him. Jesus said he would deny Him – 3 times before the rooster crowed (twice).

The Account

- Jesus is then betrayed by Judas and arrested. He is taken to the house of the high priests (Annas & Caiaphas), where they search for witnesses.
- **John 18:15-17** records that Peter (and likely John) followed at a distance. He is allowed into the camp because John was known to the high priest. She asks if he is one of the disciples of Jesus. Peter denies it the first time.
Mark 14:68 records the rooster crowed the first time.

The Account

- Shortly thereafter, Peter is recognized again as one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth (**Matthew 26:71**). With an oath, Peter swore he was not.
- About an hour later, he was again identified as with Jesus. He was asked if he was in the garden, told he was Galilean and that his speech betrayed him (**Luke 26:53-55**). This time Peter swore and cursed (invoked a curse) that he did not know Jesus.
- The rooster crows the second time (**Mark 14:72**). **Luke 26:61** says that the Lord turned and looked at him.

The Account

- He remembered the words of Jesus and went out and wept bitterly.
- This sad series of events shook Peter's faith, especially in himself. And while Satan had a part, so did Peter.
- **John 21:15-19** records his restoration.
- Peter then becomes a very bold leader, faithfully defending his Lord throughout his life, with courage.
- **WHAT can we learn from Peter to keep us from denying Jesus?**

WHY did Peter deny Jesus?

He was overconfident

- **Mark 14:27-29**, he declared to Jesus that he would NEVER deny Him. He would go to prison or die for Him. He repeated it even after Jesus told him what would happen.
- The sincerity of Peter is not in question. He believed it. **Luke 22:50-51, John 18:10** – in the garden he drew his sword and swung.
- PRIDE and overconfidence was a catalyst.
- Consider **Matthew 25:3** – the foolish virgins

WHY did Peter deny Jesus?

He did not pay attention to the warnings

- Jesus told Peter it was going to happen.
- Did he dismiss the warnings?
- **Mark 14:68** – did he hear the rooster crow the first time? (NOTE: Mark the writer was likely very close to Peter – **cf. 1 Peter 5:13** – Mark, my son (likely in the same way as Timothy was to Paul).
- Had he heeded the warnings, would matters have been different?

WHY did Peter deny Jesus?

He followed Jesus from a distance

- **Luke 22:54.** He was concerned, but like the rest he had left Him in the garden.
- Distance indicated he was not close to his Master where protection can be found.
- WHY at a distance? Was there now something in his mind to keep him from openly defending the innocence of Jesus and his Lord?

WHY did Peter deny Jesus?

He warmed himself in the camp of the enemy

- **John 18:15-18.** He was in “enemy territory” now. He was also cold and there was a fire.
- He makes his way to the fire surrounded by enemies of Jesus.
- Being there opened him up to greater risks of being challenged and attacked. He was outnumbered and he was alone!
- When in Satan’s territory, we are at greater danger of being exploited by him.

WHY did Peter deny Jesus?

He failed to courageously defend his Lord

- **Mark 14:66-72**, the result is he denies Jesus 3 times.
- This is where his courage failed.
- Each time, his denials became more intense and offensive. That is the nature of a lack of courage when pressed. When challenged, we will make excuses.

WHY did Peter deny Jesus?

He forgot the warnings of Jesus

- **Matthew 26:75.** After his 3rd denial and seeing Jesus, he remembered the warnings.
- Similar to previous points, recall that Jesus had given plain instructions on multiple times.
- He taught with warnings and how to overcome and avoid temptations. Recall **Matthew 26:41** in the Garden of Gethsemane.

WHY did Peter deny Jesus?

The denials of Peter, while the work of Satan, happened with a series of events. It began with pride and like a chain of dominos, everything else fell into place

Are We in danger of denying our Lord?

Can we be overconfident?

- Pride is a dangerous attitude that often stands in the way of doing the right things. It may put us in a situation where we are more vulnerable.
- **Proverbs 16:18**
- **1 Corinthians 10:12**
- **James 4:6, 10** – humility is the answer!
- **James 1:22-24**, be doers and not hearers only.

Are We in danger of denying our Lord?

Am I alert to warnings around me?

- Spiritually, we live in a dangerous and ungodly world. Overconfidence may cause us to let down our guard. We fail to see the warnings of spiritual danger.
- **1 Peter 5:8** – Be sober, be vigilant...
- **1 Corinthians 16:13**, Watch, stand fast in the faith. Be brave. Be strong.

Are We in danger of denying our Lord?

How close am I to Jesus?

- Recall our recent studies about being a disciple.
Luke 9:27 – deny self, take up your cross, follow Him
- **Galatians 2:20**, I am crucified with Christ...
- You cannot “sort of” follow Jesus. He demands total commitment.
- **James 4:8**, Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
- **Hebrews 2:1** – give the more earnest heed lest we drift

Are We in danger of denying our Lord?

Who Am I associating with?

- As our circumstance progresses because of pride, we will find ourselves in the camp of the enemy. The farther we drift FROM Jesus, the closer we drift TO the world.
- Soon, we begin to prefer the ungodly. They draw us father away.
- **2 Corinthians 6:14**, do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers
- **1 Corinthians 15:33**, evil company corrupts good habits
- **Proverbs 6:27**, Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

Are We in danger of denying our Lord?

Am I willing to stand up for Him?

- Because worldliness has crept in, standing up for Jesus becomes far more difficult.
- We are called to be courageous.
- **1 Corinthians 16:13**, ...be brave, be strong....
- **2 Timothy 1:7**, God has not given us a spirit of fear...

Are We in danger of denying our Lord?

How much time do I spend with His word?

- Are we taking steps to keep from being tempted to deny Him? The more time we spend in Bible study and prayer, the stronger our faith will be.
- **Hebrews 2:1-3**, ...give heed to what we heard....
- **Acts 20:31-32**, commended to the word of His grace which can build us up.
- “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”
- The answer to NOT denying our Lord is to prepare!

Concluding thoughts

In **Matthew 10:32-33**, Jesus warned us that we can either confess Him or deny Him. But what we choose will have consequences.

- Thankfully, Peter repented.
- If we find that we have denied our Lord, we can change that today, while there is still time.
- But an even BETTER solution is to have never put yourself in a situation you can avoid because of poor choices.

Are you in danger of
denying the Lord?

Let us pray!