

## WHY PETER DENIED HIS LORD

Text: John 18:15-18, 25-27

Intro: Among the tragic events surrounding our Lord's death, ~~one~~ <sup>of the</sup> most tragic was Peter's denial of His Lord. The account is told in all four Gospels. I would like to read from John's account. (Read Jn. 18:15-18, 25-27.)

Why would such a story become so important that it is found in all four Gospels?

Is the Holy Spirit intent on exposing the apostle Peter?

Certainly not!

"THIS, LIKE ALL SCRIPTURE" is profitable for doctrine, ~~for~~ reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (2 Tim 3:16, 17).

Or, Rom. 15:14, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we..."

We are expected to learn from Peter's experience so that we will not make the same mistake, or another mistake for the same reasons.

Before we examine the reasons for his denial, let us understand what is meant by a denial.

Please turn to Jn. 13:36-38.

The verb "denied" (ἀρτίσθη) means to disown, desert his cause, reject. Strangely enough, this is the very word which Peter Himself uses in

Acts 3:14, when preaching on the day of Pentecost, he says, "But ye denied the Holy One and the just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you."

Therefore, in a more limited way, Peter did what they had done. How that word ἀρνέομαι, denied, could have haunted his thoughts - apart from divine forgiveness!

Why did he do it?

Some say, Because he did not pray with the Lord in Bethsemane.

Possibly.

But the act of praying does not in itself <sup>provide</sup> protection for us UNLESS THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN JUST THE ACT OF PRAYING.

E. M. Bounds, in Power Through Prayer says, "Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life." THE SAME CAN BE SAID OF PRAYER.

We are probably right in saying that instead of Peter's prayerlessness being the cause of his denial, his prayerlessness was caused by the same factors in his life which caused his denial. WHAT WERE THEY?

I. Let us pick up a factor from Luke's account. Please turn to Luke 22:31-34.

PETER'S FIRST MISTAKE: He underestimated the power of Satan: the adversary. Peter was to be the NT Job, but he did not realize it.

He is "the accuser of our brethren ... day and night" (Rev. 12:11).

Sometimes he appears as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14; sometimes, as "a roaring lion" (1 Pet. 5:8) - BUT HE IS ALWAYS THE SAME SATAN, INTENT ON OUR RUIN, AND DETERMINED TO DO WHATEVER HE NEEDS TO DO TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE.

What ominous words: "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired that he may sift you as wheat"!

"Simon" - his name before the Lord named him Cephas, or Peter (Jn. 1:42).

The whole purpose of Eph. 6:10 ff. is protection against the onslaught of Satan, the Devil.

But Peter also made a second mistake.

## II. HE OVERESTIMATED HIMSELF.

Read Mark 14:26-31.

Will you note that all the disciples had this same problem? "Likewise also said they all" (v. 31b).

Peter was yet to learn that he was still Simon!

He had yet to learn the profound weakness of the children of God - AND IT WAS TO BE THE MOST HUMILIATING EXPERIENCE OF HIS LIFE!

Are you learning this?

It is not a lesson we learn all at

once, but one we learn in ever increasing measure.

Please turn to 1 Cor. 1:26-31.

Look also at 1 Cor. 4:6, 7 - "puffed up"!

Also, 2 Cor. 10:12.

How did Peter look on these things?  
Refer to 1 Pet. 4:19 and 5:10, 11.

And remember what Peter said when he ~~met~~ <sup>congratulated</sup> <sup>the Gentile</sup> Cornelius, who had sent for him (Acts 10:25, 26):

"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."

The tendency we all have to over-estimate ourselves probably is responsible for more of our trouble than we ever realize.

How the words of that old hymn need to be written on our hearts:

Naught have I gotten but what I received,  
Grace hath bestowed it since I have believed.  
Boasting excluded, pride I abase,  
I'm only a sinner, saved by grace!

But there is a third factor which brought about Peter's denial of his Lord.

### III. HE BELIEVE IN HIS LORD, BUT HE HAD A HARD TIME ACCEPTING THE WORD.

In reading the Gospels have you noticed Peter's tendency to argue with the Lord?

Read Mt. 16:21-23.

See also Jn. 13:6-8

Then, in the incident before us

note the arguments in Mark 14:  
26-31.

Peter had to learn that when Jesus Christ said, "all ye shall be offended because of me this night" that He meant just exactly what He said.

That when He said, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice" that He meant just exactly what He said.

If you were asked, Do you believe that the Bible is the word of God? Is it always true? Most of you would say, YES!

BUT, IN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE DO YOU ARGUE WITH GOD? Are you like Peter in that you think <sup>you know</sup> more about what is going to happen than He does?

Are your goals in life, your service, your evangelism, everything brought into conformity to the Word?

If not, you are headed for failure, disappointment, despair as a Christian.

THE BIBLE SAYS IT  
I BELIEVE IT  
THAT SETTLES IT.

Concl. Where did it lead Peter? Let me point out two things as I close.

(1) Luke 22:62 - "and Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

Have you ever wept over your own sins? Do you know how Peter felt? Could you

describe the pain, the grief that filled his heart?

But notice also.

(2) John 21:15. Peter had gotten into trouble before when he had tried to tell the Lord how much he loved Him.

Now he does not say, "Although all forsake thee, yet not I."

Now - note the sweetness, the brokenness when, as the Lord addressed him again as, "Simon," Peter responds, "You Lord, How knowest all things, How knowest that I love thee!"

Before, Peter didn't feel like the Lord knew very much; now that is all changed.

DO YOU SEE WHY HE FAILED? WILL YOU TAKE THE LESSON TO HEART. THAT IS WHY IT IS HERE - SO YOU AND I WILL SEE HOW MUCH WE NEED HIM!

Rev. 1, 3