

Mark 14:27-31 – It is easy to Abandon the Lord

TSK, GreekLexicon, Brink, Family, Clarke, Poole, Vincent, Robertson, Trapp, JFB, Geneva, PNT, Henry, Rienecker, Calvin, Gill, Barnes, Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Peter and the disciples were **nourished by 3 ½ years of faithful teaching** so their faith was strengthened. More recently they were **nourished by the Lord's Supper** so their faith was strengthened even more. **But they were arrogant. Yes, even those in church in good standing and close to Christ could become arrogant.** Anyone can fall! You can fall! I can fall! Hear today how the disciples fell.

Our headings are:

The Declaration: You will abandon me

The Defiance: I will remain faithful

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Our goals are: **That you will guard your hearts even as you are regularly nourished by the Word and Sacraments so you won't abandon serving the Lord.**

The Declaration: You will abandon me

27 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be **made to stumble** because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will **strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.**' 28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

1. Jesus declared that all this disciples would abandon him because of the hardships he was about to face.

The word "stumble" is the root of our word "scandal." And what a scandal that would be. The disciples left their Lord who had loved them, taught them, and provided for them for such a long time! Maybe they thought Judas was worse than they when he left after the Passover Meal to betray Jesus, but they weren't far behind.

2. What would be that hardship the Lord Jesus would face that would cause his disciples to abandon him?

The Lord Jesus would be struck – tortured and killed – so his disciples would flee.

(God ordained that the Jews and Romans would **torture and kill Jesus** and God ordained that the disciples **would flee**, but the Jews and Romans would kill him **of their own will** and his disciples would flee of **their own will.**)

The disciples would think they were safer the further they were from Jesus!

3. But even with knowing that his disciples would abandon him, Jesus told his disciples that after he was killed, buried, and raised from the dead he would meet his disciples in Galilee.

What love! Jesus would not hold his disciples' failures against them. He would go to Galilee to reconstitute his flock and gather his needy ones – his children – together.

Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," Says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn (to) the little ones.

Jesus would instruct Peter to feed his lambs after his repentance. John 21. **What amazing love!** What an encouragement this must have been to the disciples later: **Jesus would meet them and forgive them even after they abandoned him.**

But why would Jesus want to meet them in Galilee when he would be killed in Jerusalem? They would meet in Galilee because it was a much safer place to meet without threats from the Jewish leadership.

4. Lessons:

a. You will always have temptations in your Christian life and many of them might unexpectedly appear. Some will come when you are sick, unemployed, lonely, or frustrated. **You will be tempted to abandon serving the Lord and you will abandon serving him** from time to time. Satan is always busy. Those who tell you that the Christian life is easy are lying to you. **In order to face these temptations you must constantly strengthen yourself with the Word, Sacraments, and prayer.**

b. God's ordination of events (the prophecy that the disciples would abandon Jesus) did not negate the disciples' responsibility – their guilt – for abandoning Lord). Never use God's providence as an excuse for failing to do your duty. Don't ever say: "Since God ordains everything that happens, he wanted me to commit adultery, so I am not really bad." God ordains whatever happens, but **you are responsible for every one of your sins!**

c. Jesus took your sins of abandoning him, complaining about your hard life, and giving in to temptations - all your sins, for that matter - when he died on the cross. And it is he alone who strengthens you to face the difficulties in your life. Such wondrous love!

The Defiance: I will remain faithful

29 Peter said to Him, "**Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.**"

1. Peter then arrogantly doubted Jesus' words, asserting that he would not abandon Jesus.

Peter had great confidence in himself...in his own ability... In Luke's account in Luke 22, **Peter's confession flowed from a discussion about who would be the greatest in Christ's kingdom.** The craving for glory caused him to ignore the Scriptures and have a magnified view of himself. **He had forgotten to be humble and wash his brothers' feet!** The Scriptures did not sink in.

2. Peter also contrasted himself as being better than the other disciples.

He was saying: "I am greater. The other disciples might fail you, but I won't." It is interesting that the word for "I" in Greek is "ego." ("Ich" in German) Peter surely thought highly of himself.

Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

3. Lessons:

a. If you think you are spiritually stronger than you are, you will be prone to become intoxicated with human strength and abilities. But only the drunk thinks he can fight a lion. When pressure comes, you will run away from your duties. **So put ego to death in yourself.**

b. How can you put ego to death? Nourish your soul regularly with the message of Jesus Christ in his Word and Sacraments so you will be strong to face temptation. **Pray for humility** and for dependence on Christ for you and your brothers. **Let the Word and Sacraments penetrate to your soul, not just stay in your head.**

c. When you are strong spiritually, through the means given by God, you won't run from your duties. You will risk your life for your country, your wife, or your children. You will take insults for speaking of Jesus. You will die for him.

The Declaration: You will abandon me

30 Jesus said to him, "**Assuredly**, I say to you that today, even this night, before the **rooster crows twice**, you will **deny Me three times**."

1. Even though Peter was defiant, the Lord knew his weakness and declared with absolute confidence that Peter would not only betray him once, but three times.

The Lord knew that Peter's arrogance was going to catch up with him. Yes, Peter thought he was better than all the other disciples, but **he would find out he was one of the worst.**

2. The Lord then said with certainty that before the rooster crowed twice, Peter would deny him three times.

There is a variant in the texts here.

Matthew says: "...before the rooster crows..." Mark said: "...before the rooster crows twice..." How can we reconcile this?

The Palestinian rooster crowed twice, once at about midnight, and then about dawn.

So Matthew was pointing only to the 2nd time the rooster would crow...just before dawn. This episode was after midnight.

Mark was including the 1st and the 2nd crowing of the rooster (midnight and before dawn). And in fact, the word translated "twice" should simply be translated "again." (So read it as "**before the rooster crows AGAIN** you will deny me three times.")

3. But Peter, terrible as he was, was not without hope; in fact, there was much grace from the Lord Jesus to him.

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 "**But I have prayed for you, that**

your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, **strengthen your brethren.**"

Yes, Satan sifted Peter like wheat, **trying to show him he was chaff**, but Christ would support him and save. (Agitation of the wheat kernel let loose chaff that is attached to the grain. So the grain becomes cleaner and purer.) Peter came out better. He wasn't chaff. He was solid grain!

And isn't it amazing that most the disciples, save John who died in prison, were killed for their faith in Jesus. They were strengthened by Jesus!

4. Lessons:

a. It is easy to be bold when there is safety and no danger. Don't gauge your strength based on how you feel in times of ease. True strength to stand up as a faithful Christian is measured by how you do under difficult circumstances: broken relationship, divorce, death, loss of job, and sickness.

b. God ordains "sifting" in your life. Hard times show you how much you need Christ. And even in your sifting, the Lord Jesus continues to daily pray for you. He never stops. Be encouraged.

c. Don't let your past failings keep you trapped as if God doesn't forgive. Ask God for the grace to get up. You may have failed as a husband, wife, child, father, mother, elder, deacon, or friend. It doesn't matter. Get up. Repent. Live (but be willing to die) for your Savior's glory! **He will meet you in heaven!**

The Defiance: I will remain faithful

31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.

1. Instead of asking the Lord for strength that he would not abandon him, Peter stunningly became he more defiant, arrogantly declaring that he would not deny the Lord.

If Peter had listened to, believed the Word of Christ, and let it sink in, he would not have made such a defiant statement. And if he had **realized his spiritual weakness** he would not have said the God of Glory was wrong. **Rather, he would have pleaded for strength from the Lord to remain faithful.**

2. To emphasize his defiance of Jesus' words, he said he would rather go to prison or die than deny Jesus.

Luke 22:33 - But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to **prison and to death.**"

But here is what he should have done:

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**; 13 for it is **God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure**.

3. And all the other disciples said the same thing; they all swore to never abandon Jesus.

The other disciples were simply playing, "Follow the Leader." Peter should not be the only one to get the bad rap here.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

The deferring to the de facto leader was dangerous. Peter made them ignore the words of Jesus.

Example: May Harvest Churches are changing their names because of the sin of their main leader.

4. Lessons:

a. Just blindly following men – even preachers - is not a healthy thing. Don't blindly say the same thing because the Pastor says it. Make sure it is true. Examine the Scriptures. **Don't do the same thing the Pastor does** blindly. Examine the Scriptures.

b. Don't be presumptive (and arrogant) about your children thinking they will be strong because they have some knowledge of the Bible and have been baptized. Feed them the Word of God and message of the glorious cross. Introduce them to the Lord's Supper. And pray for them that they would not abandon the faith but that the message of the cross might sink into their souls. The cross will humble them and make them bold to speak for Christ.

Conclusion:

Peter and the disciples were nourished by the Lord, physically and spiritually. But the knowledge was only in their heads. Their faith was weak. Yet they convinced themselves they would never leave Jesus. So they became defiant, even calling Jesus a liar. But we know what happened soon after. They all abandoned him!

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Jesus had to go to the cross in order to save those who were in darkness. The cross showed Christ's love and the cross showed you your needs. When this sinks into your soul it will embolden you to speak for Christ...and to suffer for him.

2. The more you are nourished by Christ's Words and Sacraments and reminded of his love and his promises, the bolder you will be for Christ!

3. If you do find yourself struggling to stand up and speak for Christ, like if you feel uncomfortable telling your friends how to find salvation in Jesus Christ, check to see if you

are abandoning his Word (and the message of the cross) and ask Christ to let his Word sink into your soul so you can become truly bold again.

Finally: If you are not for Christ, you are against him. And God threatened judgment on those against his Son. That judgment may come sooner than you think. The only thing that will save you is to have his anger against you assuaged. The only thing that can assuage God's anger is that you plead that your wrongs have been paid for when Jesus died on the cross.