

“Peter’s Failure”
Mark 14:27-31
(Preached at Trinity, February 25, 2015)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we came to **Verse 17** the time of the Supper was finally at hand. The joyous meal immediately turned to confusion and sorrow. Jesus spoke words that crashed upon their hearts: **“One of you will betray Me”**
 - a. This was shocking. These men had spent three years together. They had shared together in the life of Christ. They witnessed His miracles; they heard His teaching; they had seen firsthand His amazing authority. They shared these things together. They were a united group.
 - b. Now they hear the shocking news that one of them would be a murderous traitor. Each one of them began searching their own heart. “Lord, is it I.” Jesus knew each of their hearts, but they were not perfect in examining their own hearts.
2. Quickly Jesus exposes Judas as the traitor:
John 13:24-26 NAU - "So Simon Peter gestured to him, and said to him, "Tell us who it is of whom He is speaking." ²⁵ He, leaning back thus on Jesus' bosom, said to Him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus then answered, "That is the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him." So when He had dipped the morsel, He took and gave it to Judas, *the son* of Simon Iscariot."
3. With this Judas departs leaving Jesus and His eleven disciples alone.
John 13:27 NAU - "After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."
John 13:30 NAU - "So after receiving the morsel he went out immediately; and it was night."
4. With Judas gone out of the room our Lord institutes what has become known as “The Lord’s Supper.” Then Jesus drops another bombshell. Not only was Judas about to betray Him. The rest of them would soon fall away and be scattered.
Mark 14:27 NAS - "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.'"
5. That was more than Peter could bear. Upon hearing these words he rose up and proclaimed:
Mark 14:29 NAU - "*Even* though all may fall away, yet I will not."
Mark 14:31 NAU - "*Even* if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
6. Peter’s bold words encouraged the rest:
Mark 14:31 NAU - "And they all were saying the same thing also."

7. Tonight I want us to turn our attention once again to Peter. Peter was a fisherman, probably rugged in appearance with rough hands from pulling heavy oars in strong seas and from hauling in nets full of fish. He was a man of action, impulsive, hasty, confident. Remember, it was Peter who pulled his sword and swung it at the head of Malchus slicing off his ear. We've seen this impulsiveness many times as Peter would often be the first to speak – he was a natural leader.
- A. But Peter often spoke when he should have listened. He rebuked Jesus when told of the crucifixion. He boasted that he would never allow Jesus to wash his feet, but then asked to be washed all over.
 - B. In the account before us tonight, again we see Peter, speaking with great confidence but with little consideration of his words. His bold words encouraged the rest. Peter was probably older than the other disciples but it was his strength of character that led them.
 - C. But Peter failed to understand his own weakness. Peter would ultimately fall into the sin of forsaking Christ.
8. Tonight I want to examine Peter's path to failure. May it serve as a warning to us. Peter was an Apostle; he was an eyewitness to Christ. He knew Christ personally and intimately. Yet Peter denied Him. May we continually be suspect of our own hearts and propensity to sin.
What are the things that led to Peter's sin?
- I. He doubted the Word's of Christ – which is the Word of God
 - A. The fastest road to sin is to deny the Word of God
 1. The Word of God is the essence of our faith. Our salvation is basically trusting God's promises regarding His Son.
Romans 10:17 NAU - "So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
 2. Peter's problem is that he did not see the words of Christ as the Word of God
 - a. Peter does this twice in this passage
 - (1) **Jesus: Verse 27** - "You will all fall away, because it is written"
Peter: Verse 29 - "But Peter said to Him, "*Even* though all may fall away, yet I will not."
 - (2) **Jesus: Verse 30** - "Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times."
Peter: Verse 31 - "But *Peter* kept saying insistently, "*Even* if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
 - b. This wasn't the first time he had done this
Mark 8:31-32 NAU - "And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him."

3. Jesus had previously clearly taught His disciples concerning His word
Mark 8:38 NAU - "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."
Mark 13:31 NAU - "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."
John 14:23-24 NAU - "Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. ²⁴ "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."

B. The Word of God is our chief means of sanctification – it must be trusted and obeyed absolutely

Psalms 119:11 – "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

John 17:17 NAU - "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."

1. Everything we know about the Christian life comes from God's Word
2. We can only measure our lives by the standard of His Word

C. The Word of God is our only weapon in our spiritual battle

Ephesians 6:17 NAS - "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

1. It is our only weapon – all of the other protections for the Christian are pieces of armor and a shield.
2. If you do not believe it is sufficient and infallible, you have a broken sword.

II. He had an unrealistic, prideful view of himself

A. He elevated himself above all others – a place of pride

Verse 29 - "*Even* though all may fall away, yet I will not."

1. Peter did not deny the power and intensity of the temptation
Verse 31 - "*Even* if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
 He saw himself more able to face temptation than anyone else
2. The proper Christian view is to see ourselves just as capable of sin as anyone else
Galatians 6:1 NAU - "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted."
3. We are no better than others, possibly worse
 Paul called himself the chief of sinners
1 Timothy 1:15 NAU - " It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*."

- B. Peter failed to understand the weakness of his flesh
Peter did not know what his heart would be capable of in just three hours
1. Jesus would expose his weakness in the garden
Mark 14:37 NAU - "He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?"
 2. Jesus is telling Peter, "You have professed to follow Me to the death; can you not watch with Me one hour."
 3. Again Jesus tells Peter, you have great willingness to follow me but you do not understand your own weakness
Mark 14:38 NAU - "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
- C. We must never underestimate the power of temptation
1. How far will we push our liberties? How close will we venture towards sin? We must always be cautious in the things we allow
Romans 14:22 NAU - "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves."
 2. What will we allow in TV or movies? For us and our children
What will we allow in the use of our tongue?
What will we allow in how we dress?
 3. We have liberties but how close to the edge are we willing to go?
God calls us to a life separate and different from all
2 Corinthians 6:17 NAS - "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you."
- D. We must never presume upon our own strength
1 Corinthians 10:12 NAU - "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall."
1. Temptation can arise suddenly and unexpectedly
Remember, Peter would deny Christ just a few hours after they had quietly enjoyed a meal together – who could have ever predicted this?
 2. Peter would not only deny Him. He would do it three times.
What temptation will you face before this day is through?
- III. Peter failed to seek Divine help
- A. Peter made bold promises
"Even though all may fall away, yet I will not."
"Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
1. Peter made these bold pledges while trusting in his own strength
 2. Had he made the statement humbly trusting in the power and grace of God things might have ended differently
- B. Peter should have been in fervent prayer
Mark 14:38 NAU - "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
1. He failed to recognize the seriousness of the battle
Luke 22:31 NAU - "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat"

2. Jesus warns him to be about watching and praying about the great spiritual battle
3. Over confidence will cause us to leave off praying

Conclusion:

1. Before we come down too harshly on Peter, we need to remember several things.
 - a. Peter had left all to follow Jesus – many professing Christians today try to maintain two masters. Many profess to follow Christ but not absolutely.
 - b. It was Peter who drew his sword ready to fight to the death.
 - c. It was Peter that went to the courtyard while the other disciples fled. Many of us would have lacked the courage to have been in the courtyard at all.
 - d. It must also be remembered that Pentecost had not yet come. Peter's boldness occurred even before the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. How many of us would have been so bold?
 - a. It was Peter's love that drove him to follow Jesus after His arrest
 - b. It was love that brought Peter to stay in spite of being recognized
 - c. It was love that brought Peter agony of heart as he was convicted of betraying Christ. It is a true love for God that elicits true repentance.
 - d. And it was Christ's love for him that covered his sin with forgiveness
Peter testifies of this in his first epistle:
1 Peter 4:8 NAU - "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."
- 3 Yet, we must remember Peter sinned because he failed to take stock in his own weaknesses.
- 4 We must also remember that as a child of God Peter was fully restored. Although we might be unfaithful, yet God is always faithful.
 - a. Christ continued to look upon Peter with love
Luke 22:61-62 NAU - "The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly."
 - b. Peter would later demonstrate great boldness in preaching the Gospel. Tradition also tells us that he died a martyr's death standing firm in the faith.
5. We are not to be in a state of doubt and anxiety about our salvation but we also must never pretend that the race is over.
Philippians 3:13-14 NAU - "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."