

Denied

May 9, 2021: Luke 22:54-62

It is painful when someone betrays our trust. If our property is stolen it can be replaced. If our personal loyalties are broken, they are extremely difficult to rebuild.

When Peter was faced with staying loyal to Jesus or protecting himself, he did what many of us would do. Peter displays his full humanity by the way in which he so quickly flipped from being willing to protect Jesus to

denying Jesus three times. We would be wise to pay attention to Peter's empty promise to Jesus.

One of the most dangerous things we can do is to promise ourselves, others, or even God with things we would 'never' do. There is no sin which any of us are incapable of committing.

When Jesus saw and heard Peter deny him three times, he and Peter's eyes met. Not a word was transacted between the two. Peter came face to face with his own sin, then went out and "wept bitterly." Although Peter had betrayed him, Jesus refused to deny Peter.

Jesus is always watching and always forgiving, never denying us, even if we deny him. Jesus looks beyond the denial to the person. It's never too late to follow Him. [excerpts from Glen Schmucker]

Distance (Luke 22:54-55)

- When Jesus was arrested, the disciples fled (Matt. 26:56). However, Peter followed from a distance as the guards took Jesus to the palace of the high priest. John was known at the palace and gave word to allow Peter into the courtyard (John 18:15-16)
- **"took Him and led Him"** – to seize someone was a technical term meaning to arrest someone.
 - It appears the guards used force, but Jesus offered no resistance.
- **"brought Him into the high priest's house"**
 - The palace (see figure lower right) included extensive rooms and a large courtyard.
 - A protective wall surrounded the palace, so entry to the courtyard was through a gate.
- **"Peter followed afar off"** – Peter had assaulted the high priest's servant, so it's understandable he kept his distance from the mob. He was willing to follow Jesus but not so close as to endanger himself. (Unfortunately, that description applies to many believers today.)
- Jesus was taken inside and interrogated by Annas and then Caiaphas, the current high priest.
 - Annas was chief priest AD 6-15 and Caiaphas (Annas' son-in-law) was chief priest AD 18-37.
- On this cold night, a fire was lit in the courtyard for the temple guards and servants - **"Peter sat down among them"**
 - Peter was able to sit among them without being recognized.
 - He wanted to know what was happening to Jesus.
- As believers, we must be careful not to spiritually distance ourselves from Jesus and the life He calls us to live!

➤ **Have you ever kept your Christian faith 'under the radar'?**





Denial (Luke 22:56-60a)

- ***“a certain maid beheld him”***
 - As Peter set by the fire, he was scrutinized by others.
 - The maid who let Peter pass through the gate at the request of John (John 18:16-17) saw him clearly by the fire.
- ***“This man was also with Him”*** – Peter was with Jesus
 - Peter denied it. He may have pulled his garments around his head and turned away from her.
- Finally, Peter said in a convincing voice ***“Woman, I know him not”***.
 - Peter again spiritually distanced himself from Jesus by denying he even knew Jesus.
- A short while later, a man said to Peter ***“Thou art also of them.”*** The accuser must have been part of the arresting mob since he referred to them meaning all the disciples.
 - Peter quickly replied ***“Man, I am not.”*** Peter’s second denial of being a follower of Christ.
- The group in the courtyard must have talked about Peter for some time. Finally, after an hour had passed, another man said ***“Truly, this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean.”***
 - Peter’s northern accent from Galilee was distinct.
- Then Peter *began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”* Mark 14:70 - Perhaps Peter was so frightened he reverted to the salty language of his fishermen days. Peter clearly denied knowing Jesus three times in that courtyard
 - Remember what Jesus said: *“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”* Mathew 26:34
- **When has fear affected your ability to stand up for Jesus?**

Defeat (Luke 22:60b-61)

- Note the timing in these verses – it’s important.
 - The cock crowed just as Peter denied Jesus a third time.
 - ***“The Lord turned and looked upon Peter”***. Jesus and Peter made eye contact in that moment. Jesus knew what was happening in the courtyard and turned to gaze upon Peter.
- Peter had good intentions by following Jesus to the high priest’s palace, but he failed in these moments of testing due to fear.
- ***“And Peter remembered the word of the Lord.”*** The third denial, the cock crowing, and the eye contact with Jesus all must have been overwhelming for Peter.
 - Peter had promised he would never fall away from Jesus, and he had broken his promise.
- ***“Peter went out and wept bitterly.”*** – Peter had succumbed to the temptations of Satan who used fear to distance him from Jesus. Peter loved Jesus and yet he had denied even knowing Him. Peter did not try to rationalize his behavior. His heart ached at what he had done.
- When Christ’s followers falter, we need to treat them with the same mercy and forgiveness that Jesus demonstrated to Peter. See John 21:15-19.
- **What was on Jesus’ mind when He looked at Peter?**



Biblical Truth:

Denying Jesus leads to sorrow and guilt.

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” Matthew 16:18

