

Recap of 6/9/24 message by Pastor Steve (Mark 14:66-72):

Peter denying Jesus is one of the biggest blunders in the Bible. It is easy to chastise Peter in our minds and move on thinking "I would never do that." However, a better course of action is to examine the circumstances and look at Peter's broader story to get some valuable lessons learned for the Christian life. Peter's failure teaches us:

1. Beware of our expectations. We can infer from Peter's actions earlier in Mark (Mk 8:27-33, 14:26-31, 14:46-47) that Peter knew Jesus was the promised Messiah and was willing to follow Jesus to death. When he attacked the arresting mob, Peter was willing to take on hundreds with the sword, likely because he knew that with God on his side, he couldn't lose. However, because he had missed the meaning of Jesus' teaching regarding His death and resurrection, Peter was surprised when Jesus gave up; Peter wanted to fight for Jesus, not submit for Jesus. Consequently, Peter's faith failed; his fear took over when Jesus willingly gave Himself over to be tried and beaten. We need to keep our expectations in-line with God's plan otherwise our faith may fail instead of standing firmly during the unforeseen situations in life.

2. We must live in God's strength instead of our own. In addition to Peter's wrong expectations, he was also trying to live in his own power. We deduce this by looking at Luke's account of the prediction of Peter's denial (Lk 22:31-34). Peter's vehement proclamation that he would not fail and Peter falling asleep instead of praying against temptation in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:37-42) shows us that Peter underestimated the power of sin and overestimated his own strength. Relying on God instead of ourselves is a common theme throughout the Bible (2 Co 12:8-9, 2 Pt 1:3, Php 1:6 and Php 2:13-14). Fortunately, the Holy Spirit indwells and fills believers. We have all the power we ever need to live the Christian life when we are submitted to God and rely on His strength instead of our own.

3. God's grace is inexhaustible. Peter's story is one of great encouragement. In Jn 21:15-19 we see the account of Peter's restoration. Peter's failure was great; God's grace is greater. Our failures are great; God's grace is greater. Like Peter, we are useful to God no matter what happened in our past. Accept God's amazing grace and serve faithfully.

Peter learned these lessons well as we see from the marvelous way, he served God and proclaimed Jesus. Take time to read Acts chapters 2-5 and 11 as well as 1st and 2nd Peter to see his amazing teaching and strength in the Lord. I pray that we learn these lessons too.