

Matthew 26:69

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith explores the story of Peter's denial of Jesus and the lessons we can learn from it, including the importance of humility, prayer, and seeking God's mercy and forgiveness.

Scripture: Luke 22:31

Topics: "Redemption", "Denial"

Description

Chuck Smith explores the theme of denial through Peter's experience, emphasizing the bitter taste of personal failure and the struggle of believers who, despite their commitment to Christ, may falter. He highlights Jesus' warnings to Peter about the dangers of pride, the need for prayer, and the consequences of following Jesus from a distance. Smith reassures that even in failure, there is hope for redemption and a second chance, as God's grace is abundant for those who stumble. The sermon encourages believers to recognize their weaknesses and rely on God's strength, rather than their own, to avoid the path of denial.

Transcript

The Road to Denial

Intro. We have all with Peter experienced the bitter taste of the tears from personal failure. There were things that I swore I would never be guilty of doing but yet I did it. How could I have ever let My Lord down like that? I weep for shame and weakness. How is it that a man who has walked in such close fellowship with the Lord, and who has made such a strong personal commitment to the Lord ever fail the Lord so completely?

I. The warnings of Jesus to Peter.

A. "Satan has desired to have you that he might sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith fail thee

not, and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren."

1. I believe that this is true of every servant of God, that Satan desires to have you that he might sift you like wheat.

a. I also believe that the greater your prominence in the ministry the greater is his desire to have you.

2. Jesus had told him that He prayed that his faith fail him not. Peter's courage failed, but not his faith.

B. Jesus had warned Peter that before the rooster would crow, Peter would deny Him three times.

1. Peter vehemently protested the statement of Jesus declaring that he would die for the Lord.

2. And yet, here we find him weeping bitterly.

C. Jesus warned him that the flesh was weak.

1. Why is it that we start out we think that we are super saints from the planet Krypton, and though others may be guilty of weakness, we are strong and will defeat the powers of darkness singlehandedly?

2. We so often make the mistake of thinking that we can do it on our own, somehow I do not need the Lord's help.

He is so busy helping all those other needy people He should give His time to them, I will be able to triumph on my own, and I will just bring the trophies of victory to Him.

II. Let us follow Peter on this road to denial, and hopefully learn from His mistakes. A. His first mistake was arguing with the Lord, and the scriptures. 1. When Jesus predicted that all of the disciples would be offended that night because of Him quoting the scripture "Smite the Shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." Peter responded, "Though they may all be offended, I will never be offended." 2. It was at this

point that Jesus predicted Peter's personal failure. That before the rooster crowed he would have denied Him three times. 3.

Peter continued to argue, declaring that he would die for the Lord. 4. It is a mistake to argue with Jesus, if ever you find yourself in the position of arguing with Him, know this for sure, YOU ARE WRONG ! B. We notice in his argument with the Lord, how he boasts of his commitment. He was not sure about the other disciples, the Lord may not be able to count on them, but you can always count on Peter. After all did not his name mean rock. "Lord, you can count on Rocky. He in a sense was setting himself above the other disciples. 1.

Beware of boasting in your flesh, or having any confidence in your flesh. 2. Paul said, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." 3. Paul writing to the Philippians declared "We glory in Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." 4. Jesus said, MAR 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, MAR 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: MAR 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. 5.

That is what is in my flesh. I am no different than anyone else, and if you think you are, you are only deceiving your self. 6. The wise man wrote, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." C. Next we find him sleeping when he should have been praying. 1. Jesus had asked the disciples to watch and pray with Him, in the garden of Gethsemane, when He returned to the disciples He found them asleep, He said unto Peter, "Could you not watch with Me one hour?

Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation." He then declared the problem, the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." vs. 40 2. I am certain that if would only pray more, we would sin less. 3. We so often find ourselves doing things other than pray. We are sleeping or watching T.V. D. In the next episode we find him drawing his sword and beginning to swing away and those who had come to arrest His Lord. vs.51 1. In this he showed courage and the truth of his commitment he indeed was willing to die for His Lord. 2.

Many times people find it easier to die for the Lord than to live for Him. 3. Isn't that interesting, it takes more courage to live for the Lord than to die for Him. E. As Jesus was being led away by the arresting officers we read, "But Peter followed Him afar off." vs.58 1. That is a great problem for many believers today, they seek to follow Jesus afar off. 2. They desire to walk on the fence with Jesus on one side, and the world on the other. a. The result is they have too much of Jesus to be fully comfortable in the world, and too much of the world to be happy in Jesus. b.

They are miserable when they are living in the worldly scene because of the conviction they feel. They are miserable in church for the same reason. 3. I do not advocate trying to follow Jesus afar off, it will usually end in denial of our Lord. 4. In following Jesus it pays to stay as close to Him as possible. F. In the next scene we see Peter outside of the judgment hall warming himself by the fire that the soldiers had made. 1. This is when the little maid began her probing questioning of Peter. 2.

Satan who has desired Peter now has him where he wants him. Proud and boastful of his own resolve, lacking in his prayer life, trying to follow the Lord afar off, now finally trying to find warmth at the enemies fire. 3. It is always a dangerous place to be, at the enemies fire. Trying to find warmth in the worldly scene. Seeking to find comfort or pleasure in a worldly environment. Before lone someone is going to ask you, "What are you doing here? I thought you were a Christian." 4.

As the soldiers joined the attack with the maid on Peter's commitment to Jesus, saying that his speech gave him away, probably referring to a Galilean accent. He began to swear and curse as he denied His Lord. He sought to prove by his speech that he was not related to Jesus. At this point the rooster nearby began to crow, and the sound of the rooster was like a dart going through the heart of Peter.

III. Is there any hope for one who fails his Lord so completely in the hour of trial? Can the Lord ever count on him again? Could he ever be used by God in a prominent place in the ministry again? Will God give a second chance to one who has failed?

A. You had better believe it, or there is no hope for any of us.

1. I have found Him to be a merciful, gracious God of the second chance, and the third chance and the fourth chance, loving, patient, forgiving.

2. The sin is not so much the stumbling in the mud, but that of just wallowing there making no effort to get up.

a. The Psalmist said, "He lifted me up out of the miry clay and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings."

b. That is something that we can all echo. We all know what that miry clay is about.

3. There are many of you who have stumbled this week, you failed the test, you by your action and maybe your words have denied our Lord, you have been tasting those bitter tears because of personal weakness.

B. Another gospel tells us that as the rooster crowed that Jesus turned and looked at Peter, in that fateful moment their eyes met. What kind of a look do you suppose it was?

1. Was it a "Peter, how could you?"

2. Maybe a "I told you so." look.

3. Maybe a "You spineless failure, get lost, I never want to see you again.

a. This is what Satan would like you to think.

b. One strike and you are out, two strikes, three strikes.

4. I know from the subsequent events that it was a look of tenderness, of compassion that said, "That's all right Peter, I understand, I forgive, I still love you."

5. How do you suppose Jesus is looking upon your failure today?

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