

- 1) First, need to make a minor correction to our discussion last time – I was saying that Peter alone followed Jesus into the trials.
 - a) That is, according to John, not true – my BAD!

John 18:15–16 (NIV)

- 2) Obviously, we do not know who this disciple was however, Peter was NOT the only disciple who followed Jesus to the trials.
- 3) A second thing that might have bearing on our discussions of Peter’s denial and its consequences – I was reminded this week that Christ appeared to Peter alone.

Oswald Chambers comments on this:

Peter had denied Jesus Christ with oaths and curses, and yet after the Resurrection Jesus appeared to Peter alone. He restored him in private, then He restored him before the others. “Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.”

Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest: Selections for the Year* (Grand Rapids, MI: Oswald Chambers Publications; Marshall Pickering, 1986).

- 4) Of course that last comment “restored him before others” I assume refers to the meeting by the shore with the seven that we discussed last time.
- 5) Chambers’ dates were 1874-1917 so the use of the KJV is not surprising in his quote.
- 6) Getting back to where we were, in this next passage, we see the beginning of the end.
- 7) Jesus has prayed intensely and came through perhaps His greatest temptation.
- 8) Mark’s account of the events of Jesus’ capture is very short and to the point.
- 9) Though it is short, one thing is perfectly clear – Jesus faces the events that follow with bold resolve and in all that remains He is peaceful and loving.

Mark 14:43-50 (NIV)

- 1) We begin here with the coming together of Judas the betrayer and with the support of a crowd supplied by the religious leaders.
 - a) Mark says they, the suppliers, were the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.
 - b) The Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court was made up of men from these elite.
- 2) We are not told by Mark the details of what happened when Judas left the Passover meal.
- 3) John tells us a little about how he might have known where to lead the arresters.

John 18:2–3 (NIV)

2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

- 4) One way or the other, it all comes together and Judas proceeds to carry out his plan of betrayal.

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- 5) John 18 mentions a contingent of soldiers which were probably a small group of Roman soldiers.
 - i) They did not make the arrest but were likely there to make sure things stayed under control.
- 6) The rest of what Mark describes as “a crowd” and John describes as “officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees” was probably made up of members of the temple guard.
 - i) These were Jewish men given authority by the leaders to make arrests for minor infractions.
- 7) We really are not told of any others who we might call “just plain folks” were in the “crowd” or not.
 - a) We are told that some had “clubs and swords”.
 - b) This is not definitive but I would not think this would have been worthy of mentioning if it were just the temple guards and the contingent of soldiers – that would have been expected.
- 8) Judas pointed out Jesus with a formal greeting, a common kiss.
 - a) One commentary indicated that this was not because Jesus was hard to recognize but because in doing the identifying in this manner, Judas was agreeing to be a formal accuser in case a trial was called.
- 9) Next, one of the disciples pulls a sword and, likely in an attempt to cut off the head of one of those who had come to arrest Jesus, winds up cutting off his ear instead.
- 10) John 18:10 identifies that disciple as Peter, and the high priest’s slave as Malchus.
- 11) But the Lord put an abrupt end to Peter’s brash heroics which if escalated could have ended in a complete alteration of God’s divine plan.
 - a) A riot and physical confrontation with the armed crowd could have ended with some if not all the disciples being killed and perhaps even Jesus himself.
- 12) Knowing this, Jesus issued a direct command to Peter and the other disciples,
“Stop! No more of this” (Luke 22:51).
- 13) Then, in an act of mercy and divine power, the Lord touched the ear of Malchus and miraculously healed it.
 - a) In truth, He probably re-created it and healed any other injuries that might have accompanied such a blow.
- 14) Jesus then brings to focus the event.
- 15) Regardless of the make up of the crowd, many of them were either in the temple while He taught or knew of His presence and yet here it is after midnight and they come to seize Him in secret – away from the eyes of the rest of Jerusalem.
- 16) To state the obvious here, throughout His ministry, Jesus’ enemies had repeatedly tried to take His life, but without success.

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- a) These other attempts were not on the Father's timetable.
- 17) Despite His own desires that the cup would pass from Him, the Lord would lay down His life, but not until His hour had come.
- 18) In keeping with all that, Jesus acknowledged that the events surrounding His arrest were taking place to fulfill the Scriptures.
- 19) To complete this scene, in verse 51, we see a detail that is unique to Mark's account.

Mark 14:51-52 (NIV)

- 20) Because this detail is unique to Mark's gospel, some interpreters have suggested that perhaps the young man was Mark himself.
 - a) As you may recall, during the introduction to this series of lessons, we even discussed a scenario that would have explained Mark's presence in the garden that evening.
 - b) Again, speculation.
- 21) But nothing in the text indicates who the man was, making attempts to identify him entirely speculative.
- 22) One thing that we really should consider however is that the construction of the sentences here indicate that the young man in question was a follower of Jesus.
- 23) According to early church historians, Mark did not know Jesus. He received his knowledge of Jesus thru Peter as he wrote his gospel and of course before that, from Paul and Barnabas.
- 24) One commentary states:

Clearly, the man's identity is irrelevant to Mark's purpose for including this shocking detail in his historical record. Mark's point was likely to emphasize the complete isolation Christ experienced in that moment. The huge crowds who had heard Him teach in the temple were nowhere to be found.
- 25) Another comment I read suggested that Mark included this fact to make a connection to another Old Testament scripture – Amos 2:15-16

Amos 2:15-16 (NIV)

- 26) This is a description of the utterly defeated soldier. If indeed this is the case, it might show how Peter and the others must have felt at this point.
- 27) They had all declared that they would never leave the Lord and, would truly, die with Him.
 - a) Now, they know they have absolutely failed in that promise.
- 28) There are times in our lives when we feel compelled to commit to an action just as the disciples did that night – circumstances, emotions, etc. make it the "thing to do".
- 29) At other times when we feel safe in our surroundings or we take life lightly, it is easy to consider ourselves prepared for anything.

In living our lives as Christians, how do we assure that our commitments are always true? Or can we?

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Mark 14:53-65 (NIV)

- 1) Mark does not record the first interrogation which took place at the house of Annas the deposed high priest.

John 18:12b-14 (NIV)

- 2) Annas had been Israel's high priest from AD 6 to 15, when he had been deposed by Roman rulers.
 - a) According to Josephus, Valerius Gratus, a Roman procurator, removed Annas from office in 15 C.E. for imposing and executing capital sentences.
 - b) As we have discussed before, the Jews were not allowed to impose capital punishment under Roman law.
 - i) Ishmael ben Fabus served from 15 to 16 then he was deposed.
 - ii) Eleazar ben Ananas 17 to 18 and he was then followed Caiaphas (son-in-law of Annas) who was high priest until 36. Obviously a time of upheaval in the Jewish leadership.
 - c) Not unexpected that Annas would have a key roll in the crucifixion 15 or so years later.
- 3) Then Caiaphas had been appointed high priest. He held that position from AD 18 to 36/37.
- 4) This is where Mark picks up. After the stop at the home of Annas, Jesus was taken to the home of Caiaphas to face the assembled Sanhedrin.
- 5) The irony of their law keeping is so prevalent throughout all this that it is striking.
 - a) Trials could only be held during the day – not at night.
 - b) In order to comply with this, they did all the preliminary work here at Caiaphas' house and then had a more formal sentencing take place in the temple at daybreak.
 - c) This is recorded in chapter 15:1
- 6) Peter followed to Caiaphas' house and was warming himself by the fire along with the soldiers.
- 7) We will pick up the rest of his story in verse 66.
- 8) Verses 55 thru 59 show a dismal failure of the Jewish leadership's plan.
- 9) Their hopes were frustrated when their witnesses failed to agree or provide any evidence whatsoever that would be worthy of condemning Jesus to death.
- 10) They were frustrated – no doubt but, they were also resolved to see this threat to their very existence removed permanently from their midst.
- 11) The verdict of this mockery of trial was sealed before Jesus was ever arrested.
- 12) As you may recall, Caiaphas had stated some time before that this was going to be the plan and final outcome of this entire situation.

John 11:49-53 (NIV)

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- 13) His idea of “die for the Jewish nation” was different from God’s but the outcome was going to be the same – Jesus would indeed “die for the Jewish nation” and all mankind.
- 14) At verse 60, we have arrived at a point where legally, Jesus was free to go.
- 15) Obviously, physically and truly He was not.
- 16) The Sanhedrin and especially Caiaphas were totally frustrated.
- 17) Next, we see the tipping point. Caiaphas in his frustration had hoped to prod Jesus into denying or answering in the affirmative to one or all of the accusations that had been leveled against Him.
- 18) Instead Jesus, despite His predicament remained composed and answered nothing.
- 19) Jesus made no attempt to answer any of the confusing and erroneous evidence which all these witnesses had brought against Him.
- 20) Then came the question:
Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"
- 21) Matthew indicates that Caiaphas added a special accent to the question:

Matt 26:63 (NIV)

- 22) To not answer, or to answer this question any way but with the truth would have been denying His deity and His mission.
- 23) So, without hesitation, He answers, knowing full well that the answer would seal His fate:
- 24) As I read this in review, I felt as though Jesus was additionally saying – “Enough! Lets get this over with!!
- 62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."
- 25) To remove any ambiguity from His answer, He quotes the beginning of a passage from Daniel that anyone in that room would have known:

Dan 7:13-14 (NIV)

- 26) All that He had done in His life had come to this final statement.
- 27) This was Him overcoming the last temptation and completely submitting to the Father’s will.
- 28) The high priest tares his clothes and asks for a vote from the members of the Sanhedrin.
- 29) They all condemned Him.
 - a) There may have been at least two dissenting votes – Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus
 - b) We know that both were members of the Sanhedrin and that both were at least sympathetic to and had previously had contact with Jesus.
- 30) At this point, just before the guards take Jesus away, some of the members of the Sanhedrin began to spit on Him and demand that He prophesy.

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- a) Of course, the demand to prophesy is a taunt.
- b) They blindfolded Him and then struck Him and wanted Him to tell them who it was that hit Him.
- c) Ultimate viciousness of some of the men that were so filled with hate.

Mark 14:66-72 (NIV)

- 1) As we consider Peter's involvement in the writing of Mark's narrative, we have to know that this must have still been a sad memory for Peter.
- 2) We all know that God forgives our sins and "remembers them no more" but as humans, we do not have that ability – to remember no more.
- 3) Instead, some things we do or say, no matter how far in the past they are, they are still painful to remember.
- 4) We know we are forgiven but the very fact that we did them and perhaps the hurt we caused is always with us.
- 5) As we mentioned, Jesus was first taken to Annas, and then to the assembled Sanhedrin and Caiaphas Annas' son-in-law.
- 6) Likely, this was all in one place. As you may recall, we discussed a few weeks back the fact that many families in that time lived in dwellings called Insulas.
 - a) These were multifamily dwellings with a large courtyard in the center.
 - b) Likely this is what we have here.
 - c) So, even though Jesus is moved, Peter would still be in the same courtyard by the fire as mentioned here.
- 7) Basically, Peter gets called out three times over a period of time. We really don't know how much time elapses between each incident.
 - a) Luke tells us in one case that about an hour had passed between denials.
- 8) When we look at Peter's actions here, if we are honest, we probably see ourselves at various times.
 - a) I'm sure we do not call down curses on ourselves and become as vehement as Peter, but we do, in various ways deny our Lord.
 - b) Anytime we fail to be what we are called to be because we allow our own selfish desires override what we know is right – we deny Him.
 - i) That was blatantly Peter's situation – denial for self preservation!
- 9) Our way out of the situation is to come to the realization we have committed the sin, be sorrowful and request forgiveness.

10) I think John MacArthur sums this up as well as anyone might:

Incredibly, the man who fearfully disavowed the Lord Jesus would become the

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fervent preacher of the book of Acts—boldly proclaiming the gospel on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14–40) less than two months after the devastating collapse of courage recorded in this passage. Jesus had predicted that Peter, after he was restored, would strengthen his fellow believers (cf. Luke 22:32). That promise was fulfilled, not only in Acts (cf. Acts 4:14–31) but also years later when Peter explained to persecuted Christians in Asia Minor that true faith cannot fail, even when severely tested (cf. 1 Peter 1:6–7).

In his failings, Peter learned that pride and overconfidence make believers spiritually vulnerable. But God grants the victory to those who are humble, dependent on Him, and on guard in the face of temptation (cf. 2 Peter 3:17–18). As the forgiven apostle explained in 1 Peter 5:5–8,

And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. NASU

MacArthur, John. Mark 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series) . Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

What do we take away from what Peter did and what he says here? – How do we apply this to our lives everyday?

- Anytime we sin, we deny Christ – not just when it is in front of others as Peter did.
- We must be careful to not become “overconfident” in our walk.
 - When we begin to rely on ourselves more than the Lord we are vulnerable to fall.
 - No matter how strong we think we are we must realize that Satan is always there ready to inject himself into our lives.
 - Christ is our protector – not us!