

Peter: Failure & Forgiveness
A CRACK IN THE ROCK

Thursday, October 22

Reading: Luke 22

Luke 22:31 *"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."* **33** *But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with You to prison and to death."* **34** *Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that You know Me."*

As their time together is nearing an end, Jesus tells His disciples that they will all fall away and desert Him this night (Matthew 26:31-35). Peter boasts that even if all the others fall away he will not. He is ready to go to prison and death for the Lord. Jesus sadly informs the proud disciple that not only will he desert his Lord; he will deny knowing Him three times!

In the garden, Peter begins his desertion of Christ. While Jesus asked him and the others to pray, they instead fall asleep. Perhaps if they had spent time in prayer as Jesus had asked they would not have been so despondent and unbelieving after His death. They had not prepared spiritually for what lay ahead. When Jesus is arrested, it is Peter who swings the sword that cuts off the servant's ear - yet another example of Peter not understanding what God's plan was for Jesus (see John 18:10-13).

After Jesus' warning of denial, it may not have been a wise move on Peter's part to follow Jesus to the trial. He is putting himself in a situation surrounded by Jesus' enemies where he would be tempted to deny Christ. He fulfills Jesus' words and denies knowing Jesus three times. Luke records something the other gospels do not. When Peter hears the rooster crow, he turns to look directly into the face of Jesus as He is being led out from His midnight trial. Jesus' look broke Peter's heart and he "went outside and wept bitterly" in repentance.

LESSON ONE: Satan had wanted to destroy Peter's faith, but Jesus was praying for him. Jesus' prayer was not that the test be removed but that Peter's faith would endure the test. He knew Peter would falter, but Jesus also knew that he would not permanently lose faith. His testing, failure, and repentance would help Peter to better strengthen the other believers. Why is it important to know that Jesus is praying for us? (see Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). What have you learned from your own trials and failures? How can you use these to help others?

LESSON TWO: The disciples' reactions to Jesus' death and resurrection may have been different if they had prepared themselves by prayer as Jesus wanted. Have you ever "fallen asleep" in your Christian life? What will happen during trials if we don't build our relationship with God through His word and prayer during the quiet times of our lives?

LESSON THREE: We all are prone to deny the Lord. Whether out of fear or indifference, every time we refuse to share Christ when God brings an opportunity across our path, we are in a sense denying the Lord. But Jesus' loving and forgiving look is still there for us today. May our eyes see people the way Jesus sees them and answer those who ask about our faith with the gospel of Jesus Christ.