

Even though we read Peter's declaration of his ability to remain faithful to the death, we see that all the others said the same. While this might be viewed an admirable intention, it is also a display of arrogance. Jesus had just stated what was going to happen. What response and attitude would have been more appropriate?

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. - 1 Peter 2:23 NIV

Peter eventually understood that following Jesus meant suffering, humility and even martyrdom (Peter himself was crucified upside down.) Ultimately, he was able to trust in God rather than himself.

Take a moment to reflect on the ways you rely more on your own abilities than on God's grace. If you find areas you are still trusting in your own efforts more than God, pray that He would grant you the humility to accept your limitations and trust Him instead.

WRAP-UP

This passage reminds us how difficult it is for us to accept our own limitations, especially when we are confident in our intentions. Like the disciples, we often believe our faith or determination will keep us from failing, only to discover our weakness at the most painful moments. Peter's bold promise mirrors our own tendency to rely on ourselves rather than on God's strength. Yet even when we fall short, Jesus meets us with compassion, not condemnation, assuring us that He remains faithful and goes ahead of us toward restoration. Through our failures, we learn to trust less in our abilities and more in God's grace, allowing Him to work His Kingdom through imperfect people like us.

MEMORY VERSE

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. - 2 Timothy 2:13 NIV

Challenge – *Be aware this week of the ways you trust more in your own abilities than relying on God. And when you recognize them, redirect your focus from yourself to God's grace and mercy.*

Peter's Denial **Gospel of Mark Ch. 14 - Week 3**

INTRODUCTION

It's never easy to accept our own limitations. They seem to surface at the most inconvenient times. In this week's passage Jesus tells His disciples that they are destined to abandon Him. After accompanying Jesus in a triumphal entry into Jerusalem and witnessing His miracles and teachings and seeing Him expell the money changers from the Temple, it was during an intimate Passover observance that Jesus announced they would all desert Him. The disciples did not see that coming, nor could they accept it. Peter was the most vocal and the most arrogant in proclaiming himself immune to this fatal flaw. He was determined and adamant that he would rather die than deny Jesus. But often our best intentions prove impossible to keep. Regardless of how hard we try; our own efforts often fall short of what we wish we could do.

Ice Breaker

What is the first thing you remember discovering that you couldn't do, no matter how hard you tried?

Key Passages

27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." 29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." 30 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today--yes, tonight--before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." 31 But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same. - Mark 14:27-31 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. A God Who Is Faithful

7 "Awake, sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the LORD Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones. - Zechariah 13:7 NIV

The simple fact is that humans are imperfect. The nation of Israel was God's chosen people, but time and again they were faithless and turned away from God to idols.

In Mark 14:27 Jesus indicates that He was the shepherd who Zechariah prophesied would be struck and His followers were His sheep who would be scattered. Scattering of the sheep was a fulfillment of Israel's prophetic story, but it is also our story. Describe what it was like when you first became aware that you needed a "a Good Shepherd, a savior, or higher power". Did you search in other directions before you found Jesus?

27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." - Mark 14:27-28 NIV

13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. - 2 Timothy 2:13 NIV

Jesus knew that He was about to receive the punishing blow for the sins of the people in the fulfillment of prophecy. However, what message was He trying to tell them in verse 28 that should encourage them as they were being scattered? In what way is 2 Timothy 2:13 both a reassurance of our salvation and a lifeline in times we fall into sin?

2. A God Who Grieves

29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." 30 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today--yes, tonight--before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." - Mark 14:29-30 NIV

Jesus had every right to be angry and condemn Peter as He revealed how near they were to his denial. But His words were not bitter nor demeaning. He was very factual in His explanation, even giving Peter details of what was to come.

How do you typically respond when someone fails you; are you more likely to be forgiving or "teach them a lesson"? How does that inclination influence how you think God sees you when you fail Him?

Are you able to accept God's forgiveness readily, or do you continue to condemn yourself for past sins long after God has forgotten them?

Unfortunately, the lens through which we view God is often colored more by our own natural inclinations than by God's character. Let's consider how God described Himself to Moses.

6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, - Exodus 34:6 NIV

13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. - Psalm 103:13-14 NIV

In light of these verses, let's put ourselves in Jesus' place as He tells His closest friends what was going to happen. What might be the response of a loving parent when they know their child is heading toward imminent heartbreak or disaster?

Even in the face of His own betrayal and painful death, Jesus had compassion for His friends and grieved what they would face. He set aside His right to accuse or shame them but instead grieved over what they too would suffer.

3. How the Kingdom is Brought About

Peter failed. All the disciples failed. But that did not disqualify them from the promise of God's Kingdom. God uses imperfect, flawed people to bring about His Kingdom.

29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." ... 31 But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same. Mark 14:29, 31 NIV

Peter intended to follow Jesus faithfully, but he was trusting more in his abilities than in God's power. Peter needed to learn to walk in step with the Spirit and trust in God.