

## **The Pitfalls of Peter's Denial** **Mark 14:66-72**

**I.** Did you know that in all likelihood, W.W.II could have been avoided. There were so many things that went wrong early on which perpetuated this war. But looking back we have a clear picture of the events that lead to this war. And in this picture we can see some pitfalls that we can avoid in the future to keep something like this from happening again.

**II.** I believe this is the point of these passages dealing with Peter's denial of Jesus. It is true we see the temporary fall of Peter but we also see the means to avoid this in our own life.

**III.** In the gospel of Mark we are fast approaching the death of Jesus and a battle is taking place

**IV.** As we are going to see, for one disciple it's a battle that for the moment is lost. But at the same time, in this battle we are also going to see an avenue of escape.

**VII.** Now we might think that we would never do this; yet Peter denied Jesus, despite his relationship with Him.

- 1) Peter was there from the beginning - **Mark 1:14-18**
- 2) He witnessed the healing of his own mother-in-law - **Matt. 8:14-15**
- 3) Peter walked on the water - **Matt. 14:22-33**
- 4) Peter saw Jesus with Moses and Elijah on the mount- **Mark 9:1-8**

**Trans:** So what are the pitfalls we should avoid which lead to Peter's denial of Jesus?

### **1. Peter's Pride**

- A. He boasted that he would never deny Jesus...
  1. Proudly proclaiming that even if all left Jesus, not him! **Mark. 14:27-29**
  2. This was Peter's first step towards falling away, **Prov. 16:18**
  3. We can also be overconfident in our service to God, **1 Cor. 10:12**
- B. Later in Peter's ministry later commanded humility...
  1. To be clothed with humility - **1 Pet. 5:5**
  2. To humble ourselves before God - **1 Pet. 5:6**

**Appl:** Peter learned the hard way about the danger of pride. Will we learn from the mistake of Peter, and value the importance of humility?

**Trans:** Pride was not the only struggle Peter faced.

### **2. Peter's lack of alertness**

- A. Peter could not stay awake.
  1. At a time when he needed to be watchful - **Mark 14:37-41**
  2. His lack of alertness left him unprepared
  3. The same can be true for us!
    - a. Without diligent preparation, we too can be unprepared, **Lk 21:34-36**
    - b. More often than not, we gradually "drift away" because we are too lazy to "give the more earnest heed" **Heb. 2:1-3**
- B. Later Peter instructs Christians in diligence...
  1. Commanding vigilant resistance against the devil - **1 Pet. 5:8-9**
  2. Calling for diligence that we might:
    - a. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus - **2 Pet. 1:5,10**
    - b. Be found in peace, without spot and blameless - **2 Pet. 3:14**

**Appl:** Do we allow simple laziness to keep us from careful preparation? Do we fail to attend services, study God's Word, or even pray, because of a lack of alertness? If so, how can we hope to stand up for Jesus when put to the test?

### 3. Peter gave into his fears

A. He followed Jesus at a distance...

1. Peter still followed Jesus - **Mark 14:54**
2. But now that Jesus was unpopular...
  - a. He stays far enough away so not to be identified with Him
  - b. He was unprepared to face the challenge of ridicule and persecution
3. Might we be guilty of trying to follow Jesus, but with cowardice?
  - a. Ashamed to be seen carrying a Bible?
  - b. Ashamed to be seen giving thanks?
  - c. Ashamed to be seen with other Christians?

B. Peter later exhorted glorifying God **1 Pet. 4:16**

**Appl:** With Fear keeping him at a distance from his Lord, Peter was a prime candidate for sin to enter into his life.

### 4. Peter gave in to the world

A. He was influenced by the world...

1. By sitting with the servants of the High Priest, and warming himself by their fire, **Mark 14:54**
2. Ashamed to be seen with Christ, it was easy to mingle with those of the world and enjoy their comforts
3. But one cannot be "comforted by the fire" of the world, and not be "burned"!
  - a. Close association with things that can harm has an effect, **Pro 6:27-29**
  - b. So we cannot flirt with the world and walk away untouched, **1Cor 15:33**

B. Peter later called for us to be separate from the world...

1. To live as sojourners and pilgrims, abstaining from fleshly lusts and with honorable conduct among the nations - **1 Pet 2:11-12**
2. To look for that new heavens and new earth, being diligent to be found by Christ in peace, without spot and blameless - **2 Pet. 3:13-14**

**Appl:** Peter put himself in a situation where he could be influenced to deny His Lord.

We all have the capability to sin, but we don't need to be in a place where that is easily accomplished. This is the pitfall Peter came across.

**Con:** As we consider Peter's denial of Christ there is a great lesson to be learned.

First there is a recognition of the pitfalls that can lead to our own downfall.

1. Pride
2. Lack of alertness
3. Fear
4. Worldliness

But from this we also learn how to avoid these pitfalls.

1. Humility
2. Diligence
3. Glorifying God
4. Living as strangers and sojourners

We know that Peter, denied Jesus three times and wept bitterly, on the night of His betrayal. But we also know that in Peter's shortcomings we find a lesson which can help us avoid the pitfalls that led to his downfall.

Let's put that into practice.