

Matt. 26:69-75: Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. & a servant girl came up to him & said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." ⁷¹ & when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, & she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷² & again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up & said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself & to swear, "I do not know the man." & immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ & Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." & he went out & wept bitterly.

Intro: Article: Last Saturday marked the 10th anniversary of 21 Christians who were slain by the Islamic State in Libya on Feb. 15, 2015, because they refused to deny Christ as their Lord & Savior . . . The men were abducted in the months leading up to their deaths & given multiple opportunities to deny Jesus & convert to Islam. They were subjected to torture, sleep deprivation, & beatings, yet none of them denied Christ.

Last Sunday, we saw the unjust trial of Jesus before the leaders of Israel, & the amazing revelation of the reality of Jesus' true identity: Jesus is the God-Man Messiah! Jesus is God! Jesus is the only Savior! Jesus is Judge! Tells truth! You are weak & sinful, so cling to your strong, spotless, God-Man Savior-Judge Who violently died to save sinners!

Today, we see the most terrible denial of the greatest Man Who has ever lived by one of His closest disciples: Peter's denial of the LORD Jesus Christ. This has got to be one of the greatest sins ever committed in the history of the world! Yet, because of this, we also see the greatest mercy ever shown in the history of the world! & this mercy is for you! Context! Behold the great sin of Peter! Behold the great mercy of Christ! So hope in His mercy!

The sinful failure of man/The perfection of Jesus: Daniel Doriani: Matthew placed the trials of Jesus & Peter side by side. This sets up a dramatic contrast between them. Jesus is falsely accused of sedition & blasphemy; Peter is rightly "accused" of being Jesus' disciple. Jesus is questioned by high priests; Peter is questioned by the priest's servants. Both men take oaths, swearing that they tell the truth. But while Jesus stands before His questioners "denying nothing, Peter cowers before his questioners & denies everything." Indeed, he denies that he even knows Jesus. Because Jesus stood firm, he offered his life for Peter. Because Peter swore, "I don't know the man!", he saved his skin

1. Behold The Great Sin Of Peter

Matt. 26:69-75: Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. & a servant girl came up to him & said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." ⁷¹ & when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, & she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷² & again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." ⁷³ After a little while the bystanders came up & said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." ⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself & to swear, "I do not know the man." & immediately the rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ & Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." & he went out & wept bitterly.

a. Peter was Jesus' close friend: Peter had seen Jesus live, love, preach, & perform miracles! One of the inner 3!

Was Peter a true believer?: Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus called Peter the rock. Jesus had declared at the last supper that Peter was clean. Jesus called Peter & the disciples His friends in John 15.

b. Jesus had just warned Peter about his denial: Matt. 26:31-35: Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, & the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" ³² But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." ³³ Peter answered him, (1) "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." ³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." ³⁵ Peter said to him, (2) "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" (3) And all the disciples said the same. [**Mark Dever Sermon End:** You don't think you need this sermon]

We see Peter's pride: Proverbs 16:18: Pride goes before destruction, & a haughty spirit before a fall.

- **1 Corinthians 10:12:** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

- **1 Peter 5:5-6:** Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God

c. Jesus had taught Peter the horrible consequences of denying Him: Matt. 10:28-33: do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear Him Who can destroy both soul & body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? & not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. ³² So everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father Who is in heaven, ³³ but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father Who is in heaven.

d. Notice the wicked manner of Peter's denial: 1) Not once, not twice, but three times!; 2) Before a servant girl; 3) With an oath & cursing & swearing; 4) He wouldn't even say Jesus' name: **V. 72:** & again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man."

Luke 22:60-62: But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." & immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ & the Lord turned & looked at Peter. & Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." ⁶² & he went out & wept bitterly. **GOSPEL!**

Behold the great sin of Peter! Behold the great mercy of Christ! So hope in His mercy!

2. Will You Deny Jesus?

Is there anything in this world that would drive you to deny that you know Jesus Christ?

a. There is a denial of Jesus from which there is no return: like Judas: Matt. 13:18-23: Hear then the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom & does not understand it, the evil one comes & snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word & immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, & when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world & the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, & it proves unfruitful. ²³ As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word & understands it. He indeed bears fruit & yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, & in another thirty.

- **Heb. 6:4-6:** For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, & have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ & have tasted the goodness of the word of God & the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm & holding him up to contempt.

b. True, Genuine Christians still sin & battle with sin: Peter was a true, genuine follower of Jesus, & we see he still committed grievous sin!

1 Jn. 1:8-2:1: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, & the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful & just to forgive us our sins & to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, & His word is not in us. ^{2:1} My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

c. But praise God! There is sin, backsliding, & even denial of Jesus from which there is a return & mercy, restoration, & forgiveness: Heb. 3:6: Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. & we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence & our boasting in our hope.

- **Heb. 3:14:** For we share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

- **1 John 2:19:** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

Of the Perseverance of Saints: We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; & they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

3. Behold The Great Mercy Of Christ

a. Peter repented & Jesus had mercy on Peter: As soon as Peter heard the rooster crow, he wept! & this weeping was a true godly sorrow & repentance!

- **Luke 22:31-32:** Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. & when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

- **Mark 16:6-7:** he [an angel] said to them [the two Mary's], "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples **& Peter** that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you."

- **John 21:15-19:** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the **third time**, "Do you love Me?" & he said to Him, "Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. ¹⁸ Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself & walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, & another will dress you & carry you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹ (This He said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) & after saying this He said to him, "Follow Me."

b. Jesus' finished work transformed Peter's life: Jesus never denied God His Father! Jesus never denied the truth! Jesus always loved the truth! Jesus always lived the truth! Jesus always spoke the truth! Jesus always was & is the way, the truth, & the life! Jesus died for Peter's sins! Jesus rose again! Jesus ascended! Jesus reigns!

- **Sinclair Ferguson:** Here Mark takes us down into the foundations of Peter's spiritual leadership. He was emptied first of all, that Peter might be filled; Jesus was broken down, that Peter might be made strong; Jesus wept, that Peter might know the joy of true forgiveness. Your experience will not be quite the same as Peter's. But God has not discarded that pattern for molding men & women into the Christians He wants them to be, has He?

- **Charles Spurgeon:** Whenever God means to make a man great, He always breaks him in pieces first.

- **A. W. Tozer:** It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.

What Peter meant for evil, God meant for good! Peter went on to preach the crucified & risen Christ boldly! He was imprisoned for his boldness & commitment to Christ! And ultimately he was killed for preaching Jesus Christ! Jesus transformed him! Jesus made him as bold as a lion! & Peter goes on to write about suffering for Jesus:

- **1 Pet. 1:6-7:** In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise & glory & honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- **1 Pet. 2:4-5:** As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen & precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house

- **1 Pet. 2:11-12:** Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds & glorify God on the day of visitation.

- **1 Pet. 3:9-11:** Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For "Whoever desires to love life & see good days, let him keep his tongue

from evil & his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil & do good; let him seek peace & pursue it.
- **1 Pet. 3:14-18:** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God

- **1 Pet. 4:12-14:** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice & be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory & of God rests upon you.

- **1 Pet. 5:6-11:** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, & establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Behold the great sin of Peter! Behold the great mercy of Christ! So hope in His mercy!

**Jesus Was Wickedly Denied; By A Close Friend On The Inside; With Curse And Swearing “No!” He Cried;
In Pride And Fear To All He Lied; But Jesus Faithful Went And Died; To Save His Faithless Cheating Bride!**

Jesus is worthy for us to lose all things
All hopes and dreams and diamond rings
All joys this world to your life brings
For all true pleasure from Him springs
He bids us fly and gives us wings
And when the persecution stings
His Bride – to Him – She tighter clings
And of His grace forever sings
For He's the mighty King of kings!

Peter is a trusted friend
Which makes denial worse offend
Peter's heart to pride does tend
“I'll stay with You until the end!”
But on his words Christ can't depend
He cursed and swore and played pretend
Not once or twice but three times bend
And Jesus' name he won't commend
Denying Christ to hell will send
Before His Father He'll suspend
All knowledge of this wicked friend
But wait – there's mercy to transcend
All failures that our God offend
Because the Christ did condescend
And never once did He offend
But lived God's will as He'd intend
At the cross His wrath expend
And to the grave He'd soon descend

Then rise alive to all death end
On Him alone we must depend
His love we cannot comprehend!

Judas turned away and never came back
But Peter took a different track
Though his faith was slack
And he failed when the devil attacked
Jesus prayed for all he lacked
Christ is all – great power packed
The devil He smacked, cracked, and destroyed in fact
And showed mercy to poor Peter who lacked
So after his fall he'll never be sacked
But have a strong faith intact
He died for His King – his final act
This King does ravish and attract
And has an eternal impact
He'll supply all you ever lacked
And when you fail He'll never turn back
But turn you back on the right track and that's a fact!

Jesus the truth would never deny
But every evil He'll defy
Unlike Peter He cannot lie
He's the faithful God on high
He created the sky
From greatest wrath He did not fly
But took the cross and there He'd die
And end His life with bitter cry
My God forsaken, tell me why?!
But then He'd rise to life apply
So death forever say goodbye
For He's the King Who rules the sky
And is beheld by every eye
He's purest beauty – our supply
So come and trust Him – don't deny
And to His every Word comply!

Christ Jesus Mercy-Heart Denied
The Greatest Sin You've Ever Eyed
By Jesus' Closest Friend Beside
With Swearing, Cursing, Oaths He Lied
"I Do Not Know The Man!" He Cried
Three Times The Truth In Fear He'd Hide
Wept Bitterly And Ran Outside
Yet Even For This Sin Christ Died
And Bore God's Wrath For All His Bride
Then Rose Alive And Death Defied
So Though Christ's Warning Sure Applied

If You Deny Me Before Men Worldwide
I'll Deny You Before My Father's Side
Christ's Mercy-Heart Shall Turn The Tide
He Welcomes Peter, Love Spread Wide
Restores Him To His Spotless Bride
Transforms Him, Everywhere He Cried
The Gospel News, For Christ He Died
For You Great Mercy He'll Provide
So Trust In Christ, In Him Abide
By Him You'll Never Be Denied!

Behold the great sin of Peter! Behold the great mercy of Christ! So hope in His mercy!