

THE STORY of THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Lesson 9
Matthew 26.69-75
DO YOU CLAIM TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST...OR NOT?

All of the eleven disciples forsook Jesus at the moment when He most wanted them to stand with Him. The only ones who made their ways back to Jesus were John and Peter. We have record of them being in the courtyard outside the High Priest's house where Jesus was undergoing His preliminary hearings (more truly known as "*railroaded*"; "*kangaroo court*"; "*travesty of justice*" -- but more of that in another lesson).

This is when Peter vehemently and passionately denied that he had any personal association or identification with the Lord **Jesus**.

He committed this major failure of spiritual adultery (**James 4.4**) and treason, even though Jesus had repeatedly warned him personally and specifically that he would. **Matthew 26.34; Luke 22.31-34.**

**BUT, WE, TOO, NEED TO TAKE OUR OWN PERSONAL WARNING
FROM PETER'S FAILURE.**

Simon Peter is not the only one who has DENIED THE LORD.
We may not have committed our denials of Jesus Christ as boldly and brazenly as Peter did.

But, every time we act inconsistently or contrarily to WHO WE SAY WE ARE --
we have denied in practice that we know Jesus Christ.
WE PROFESS THAT WE ARE HIS DISCIPLES AND FOLLOWERS...
but, in effect, WE DO NOT FOLLOW HIM.

Paul taught Pastor Titus that he must warn the churches to avoid this kind of inconsistency.
**Titus 1.16: They profess to know God, BUT IN WORKS THEY DENY HIM,
being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified from every good work."**

Since they DENY ANY REAL SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST
BY THEIR DISOBEDIENCE, Jesus Christ will DENY THAT KNOWS THEM
when they stand before Him at the last day.

**Matthew 7.21-23: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven,
but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.**

²²**Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name,
cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'**

²³**And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me,
you who practice lawlessness!'** "

Peter didn't plan to deny the Lord.

He didn't deliberately go to the High Priest's house that night with the intention of denying that he knew Jesus Christ. It just worked out that way.

But, it worked out that way because Peter didn't seriously listen to Jesus' warnings to him --
and he didn't follow the positive and preventive spiritual exercises that Jesus gave him
to keep him from sin.

HE MAY NOT HAVE PLANNED TO WALK THAT PATH THAT NIGHT...
BUT HE DID CHOOSE THE STEPS THAT LED HIM DOWN THAT PATH.

**WHAT WERE THOSE STEPS?
IF WE POINT THEM OUT...CAN WE KEEP FROM FOLLOWING THEM?**

1. HE BOASTED TOO LOUDLY

Peter boasted because HE HAD TOO MUCH CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF...
and TOO MUCH DEPENDENCE ON HIS OWN STRENGTH AND RESOURCES.

***1 Corinthians 10.12:* Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.**

This is what God warns us about as PRIDE. Peter suffered from over-inflated ego.
He was arrogant. ARROGANT means to be overly impressed with your own importance...
and especially to think that YOU are so much better than everybody else.
Peter certainly thought HE was much stronger...
much more devoted and committed to Jesus than the others.

***Mark 14.29:* Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be."**
(Of course, they ALL thought and said the same thing of THEMSELVES also. *Verse 31*)

It was not a haughty kind of arrogance -- but a deceptive kind of arrogance
that led him to believe in himself just because he had good intentions...
he had a good heart...he meant well.
But, this is the fatal pride that led to the downfall of Lucifer...and made the Devil who he is.

***Proverbs 16.18:* Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.**

2. HE PRAYED TOO LITTLE

PRAYING is our supreme expression of humility and dependence upon Christ.
You just CAN'T walk in pride when you are praying in the Spirit.
The Holy Spirit always leads us IN THE LIGHT OF TRUTH.

PRAYING is what Jesus told them all to do. And especially Peter.

When He told Peter that Satan wanted to shake him away from loving Jesus,
He told Peter that HE (Jesus) WOULD BE PRAYING FOR HIM.

What does that tell you about how much Jesus believes in praying?
The Lord Jesus knows that PRAYING is the way we put on the Whole Armor of God...
and the way we strengthen ourselves against the assaults of the Enemy. (*Ephesians 6.10-11, 18*)

It's interesting that after these experiences of failure, Peter never again forgot the necessity
and importance of those lessons that Jesus had told him to practice.

***1 Peter 4.7:* But the end of all things is at hand;
therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.**

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE WAY YOU PRAY?

- _____ I pray constantly. Prayer is as necessary to my day as the very air I breathe.
- _____ I pray regularly. I have a daily prayer time when I meet with God.
- _____ I pray intermittently. Here a little, there a little. I pray when I think of it and feel like it.
- _____ I pray routinely. For example, I wouldn't start a meal without thanking God with prayer.
- _____ I pray occasionally. I do not say "no" when I am called upon to lead in prayer.
- _____ I pray systematically. I have a list, and I keep a record of answered prayers.
- _____ I pray sporadically. I send up quick, hurried, desperate prayers when I am in dire need.
- _____ I pray when absolutely necessary. When there is nothing else I can do, I turn to God in prayer.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE LORD JESUS WOULD TEACH YOU TO PRAY...
AND WANT YOU TO PRAY...AND COMMAND YOU TO PRAY?

3. HE SLEPT TOO MUCH

He slept too much PHYSICALLY...but he also slept too much SPIRITUALLY.

At least when they slept physically in the Garden (after Jesus had specifically told them to STAY AWAKE AND WATCH WITH HIM) -- they at least had two reasons:
(1) they were exhausted (*Matthew 26.43*); (2) and they were depressed (*Luke 22.45*).

But, when he slept SPIRITUALLY (and when WE sleep spiritually),
it is because HE WAS JUST NOT GIVING THE ATTENTION HE SHOULD HAVE
TO WHAT WAS HAPPENING AROUND HIM.

Romans 13.11-14: And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

¹²***The night is far spent, the day is at hand.***

Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

¹³***Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.***

¹⁴***But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.***

1 Thessalonians 5.6-8: Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

⁷***For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.***

⁸***But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.***

**We need to WAKE UP...KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS...BE ALWAYS WATCHFUL...
AND ALWAYS LOOKING FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE
WHICH THE LORD JESUS GIVES US.**

4. HE ACTED TOO QUICKLY

Just suffice it to say that few of us can learn like we ought to WITH OUR MOUTHS OPEN.

It is almost impossible to operate an open mouth...and keep your mind open to learn at the same time.

And again, Peter is not the only one of us who had to learn this lesson -- but he did have to learn it.

Peter is the one whom the Lord Jesus rebuked in *Matthew 16* because he had the nerve and audacity to take Jesus aside and correct Him... and tell Him that all this suffering and mistreatment and dying at the hands of His enemies couldn't happen to Him --

and in those few short hours before Jesus' arrest and abduction,
PETER WAS ACTUALLY TELLING JESUS THAT HE (Peter)
WOULD KEEP THIS FROM HAPPENING TO HIM.

(That's what the "sword talk" was all about.

That's what Peter was doing when he took it upon himself to attack the High Priest's servant in his bodacious attempt to "rescue" the Son of God!)

HE JUST ACTED BEFORE HE LISTENED TO WHAT HE SHOULD BE DOING.

So, if we want to avoid the tragic mistakes that Peter made...and end up doing something ourselves which will IN PRACTICE...DENY THAT WE HAVE ANY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST -- then let's learn to be quiet enough to hear the voice of God.

Let's quit spouting off at God with our own desires...our own preferences...our own suggestions... our own agenda for our lives -- and LEARN TO LISTEN TO HIM.

James 1.19-20: So then, my brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

5. HE FOLLOWED TOO FAR AWAY **Matthew 26.58; Mark 14.54; Luke 22.54**

He did come back with John to see what was happening to the Lord.
But he still wasn't following closely to the Lord Jesus with his HEART...and his LOVE.

That's what made him choose to deny those three times that had anything to do with Jesus -- because he was loving something or the other more than Jesus:

- he was loving his own life
- he was loving the praise and approval of Jesus' enemies...more than Jesus'
- he was loving his own disappointed ideas of the Kingdom Jesus should have established than He was the Kingdom Jesus Christ was purchasing through His death and resurrection

HOW DO WE FOLLOW CLOSELY TO JESUS?

It's called:

ABIDING in His love...
ABIDING in His Word...
ABIDING in prayer...
and ABIDING in obedience.

If Peter had followed these instructions the Lord Jesus clearly gave him,
he would not have denied that he even knew who Jesus was.

**And, IF WE LIVE IN THESE INSTRUCTIONS,
we, too, will follow closely enough to the Lord Jesus to go where He goes...and be where He is --
and enjoy His Presence and companionship and His power working through us
AS HE DOES THROUGH US the works He gives us to do.**