

“The Path to the Cross: A Denier Restored, A Betrayer Rejected”

Matthew 26:69-27:10

Robin Boisvert

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Main Idea: The gospel offers a clear hope and issues a firm warning.

PETER:

What Peter Did (Matthew 26:69-75)

1. Peter was the preeminent disciple, the unspoken leader. He was bold, passionate, opinionated, forceful and confident. Peter also dearly loved Jesus.
 - a. At the Last Supper, he argued with Jesus that he would never deny Him, even if he must die.
 - b. In the Garden, Peter put up a fight and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant.
 - c. After Jesus’ arrest, Peter, with trepidation and courage, followed Jesus at a distance.
2. But his boldness soon evaporated. In the courtyard of the high priest, Peter denies Christ three times to two servant girls and some bystanders. Each denial intensified until Peter thoroughly repudiated Jesus by swearing and calling down a curse on himself.
3. Just after Peter denies Jesus for the third time, the rooster crows. At that moment, Jesus caught Peter’s eye. Peter remembered Jesus’ prophecy that he would deny the Savior three times before the rooster crowed. Peter realized what he had done. The weight of his sin crashed in on his conscience, and he went out and wept bitterly.

Why Peter Did It

1. Why did Peter fall? Peter was supremely confident in himself. He was not aware of his own weakness. When he was warned, he refused to take the point. He even argued against it.
 - a. Crisis reveals what is in the heart. In this crisis, there was pride, self-will, and a lack of humility in Peter’s heart. Peter was strong in himself, but weak in the Lord.
2. Peter’s estimate of himself was completely false and needed to change. So God engineered the perfect circumstances for Peter’s ultimate benefit—and for ours.

Why It Was Recorded

1. Peter needed a Savior. But before that could happen, Peter needed *to know* that he needed a Savior. This entire incident was engineered by the Lord to show Peter that self confidence and self- trust are entirely at odds with the humility that trusts in Christ.
2. As well, Peter's restoration, which happened after the resurrection, served as a wonderful demonstration of God's grace in forgiveness and restoration.

"It is a matter worthy of the deepest consideration, that not only is so very little told us of the Saints of God, but what is recorded is for the most part to their prejudice ... we may humbly venture to think that this melancholy failure in one so eminent and favored was permitted to occur to afford us encouragement and hope in similar derelictions and temptations. And that since our Lord could not give us an instance of human infirmity in Himself, He has given it to us in the person of the most exalted of His pastors: that all may fear, and none may presume, and all may hope." — Isaac Williams

JUDAS:

1. Judas looked and acted like the other disciples. But he wasn't.
 - a. His sin in betraying Christ was intentional and pre-meditated. Peter's sin was not planned but resulted from his pride and self-confidence.
 - b. When Judas changed his mind, he ran back to the chief priests and tried to give back the money. Judas tried to do something, but he did not repent. Peter repented and ran back to Jesus.
 - c. Judas' remorse led him to "worldly sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10), despair and ultimately death. Peter's remorse led him to godly sorrow, repentance and restoration.
 - d. Judas valued Jesus cheaply. He betrayed Him for the price of a slave. When he realized what he had done, the money meant nothing. Peter valued Jesus differently. Later Peter would write that we have been ransomed "*with the precious blood of Christ*" (1 Peter 1:19).

Fellowship Starters

1. Before his denials, Peter was supremely confident in himself, only to have the pride in his heart revealed in the caldron of crisis. In what ways do you tend to find confidence in yourself, in the strength of your spirituality, rather than in utter dependence on the grace of God?
2. Robin shared that God perfectly orchestrated events because Peter needed to *know* that he needed a Savior, that his self confidence and self-trust were entirely at odds

with the humility that trusts in Christ. In what ways are you aware of your need for a Savior? In what ways does your self-trust replace Jesus as Savior?

3. How does Peter's denial, repentance and restoration serve as an example: "*that all may fear, and none may presume, and all may hope*" (Isaac Williams)?
4. Robin taught us that Judas looked and acted just like the other disciples; but he was different. Why was Judas' sin and remorse different from Peter's? Why is it sobering to realize that appearance is not always a definitive indicator that someone is a disciple of Christ?
5. Judas valued Jesus cheaply, selling Him for the price of a slave. What value do you place upon the blood of Jesus? How highly do you esteem the ransom price paid for your redemption and forgiveness?