

June 1, 2014
Jesus on Trial, Peter's Denial
John 18:12-27

Introduction:

It's the bottom of the ninth, two outs, bases are loaded. The crowd looks at your every move. Strike one. Strike two. Homerun! You win the game the crowd goes wild!

That has never happened to me! Wish it did, but it hasn't. That's a lot of pressure for one person to bear. The whole game comes down to just one person's ability.

In sports, there is nothing wrong with focusing on your own abilities. In fact, many sports (such as the Olympics) are all about personal ability.

In the Christian life, there *is* something wrong with focusing on your own abilities. Why? Because abilities can be deceiving. If we look to ourselves for holiness we will eventually be disappointed. None of us are to look to ourselves, but Christ. None of us can live by our own self-will determination. We *will* fail.

In our passage of scripture today, Peter failed because of his pride.

Turn with me to **John 18:12-27**

Pray

CPT: While Jesus was on trial, Peter was in denial

While Christ was being wrongfully accused and beaten inside, Peter was outside self-destructing. Jesus was humbly taking unfair criticism and evil attacks from the chief priest. Peter was pridefully saving his own skin. This is the same Peter who boldly declared to Jesus, "*I will die for you!*" Now, a little girl has reduced him to ball of fear.

All-throughout Peter's life, he relied on his own *grit* to get him through but now everything is falling apart. Peter was a man of great pride in himself. Now, he's being humbled.

This morning the sermon boils down to this question for you and me:

CPS: Do I rely on my own grit in following the Lord?

In other words, when you face temptation do you look to yourself to overcome the temptation (your own will, your own abilities like Peter did) or do you ask God for the grace to get through it?

You see, every world religion other than our faith teaches that *you* must overcome *your* sin in *your* life by following some moral code, but Jesus says, "*Come to me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, I will give you rest.*" The Christian faith is not about you overcoming *your* sin, it's about Christ overcoming sin for you!

When you realize that all your sins have been overcome by the blood of Jesus on the cross, it humbles you. You no longer depend on self, you depend on Christ. This is what Peter learned.

TS: This morning I would like to share with you three lessons every Christian needs to learn.

1. Self-confident Christianity won't get you far (Jn. 13:37; 18:10,17, 25-27)

E: Peter's confidence was turned to fear. During the last supper Peter boldly declares that He will die for Christ. Last Sunday we read about Peter even wielding a sword in defense of Jesus. Now, he cowers in the dark. Peter was the oldest disciple; the leader of the disciples and even he's denying he ever knew Jesus.

A: Christians cannot survive on mere self-confidence. Just look how far Peter swung. From extreme loyalty, to extreme fear. If he can fall, what about us?

I think if Peter was preaching this morning he would tell us that we cannot depend on their own self-will determination when following Christ. Whenever we depend on our own abilities to abstain from sin, we fail like Peter.

I: What was your last New Year's Resolution? Mine was to eat healthier. Why do New Year's Resolutions fail? Maybe it's because we promise too much to ourselves? Maybe because we really don't want to change? How many of us live our Christian life continually making resolutions only to fail time and time again?

A: Self-confident Christianity won't get you far. Have you ever tried to stop a bad habit only to find yourself in the same predicament?

Paul did. He said in Romans 7:15 *For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

Paul continues in chapter 8 and says, *"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

Understanding the fact that you are not condemned of any sin will cause you to naturally turn away from sin and towards Christ.

Will you still sin?-Yes. Will it be as much?-No. What do you do once you realize your sin?-beat up on yourself, call yourself worthless, not a Christian anymore?-No. Run back to the cross and preach the Gospel back to yourself, "I am not condemned, I am free by the blood of Jesus!"

I don't think if you asked Peter two days prior to this event, "Hey do realize you are about to deny your faith?" Peter would not have believed you! -But that is the nature of sin; it comes up without warning and encircles us before we know it.

The Christian faith is not about you overcoming sin in your life, it's about Christ overcoming sin in your life, but all too often we fall back into a lifestyle of *"I can do it myself!"* and when that happens we fail.

One word of caution, "Do not underestimate your ability to fall." It can happen to any of us. Do not take pride in yourself; your own goodness, but be humble and reliant on the forgiveness offered to us through the cross.

TS: Self-confident faith won't get you far and second...

2. Neglecting prayer today will set us up for failure tomorrow (Luke 22:39-46)

E: Peter's lack of prayer set him up for failure. In this passage of scripture, Jesus leads Peter, James and John to the garden where he commands them to pray. Jesus distances himself and prays himself. This time of prayer is the prayer we looked at in John 17 a few weeks ago.

Jesus is sweating blood in his prayer. His disciples are fast asleep. Jesus is fully aware of the coming separation he will have to endure from the Father when he bares the sins of God's people on the cross. The disciples, there catching up on their rest.

Jesus commanded them to pray so that they won't enter temptation. What would have happened if Peter was prayed-up? Do you think he would have been able to handle the servant girl's question?-I think so. Prayer would have strengthened Peter for his coming temptation.

A: Do you neglect prayer?-I hope not. You may ask, "Well, when should I pray?"-Pray early in the morning. Pray during the day. Pray at night. Pray when you think about prayer. Pray just to pray.

Prayer will set the tone for your day. Prayer is an admission of ineptness and a recognition of dependence. Christians must have a life anchored in prayer. Without it we will fail even quicker.

Do you know why we don't pray?-Pride. Pride creeps in and whispers, *"Don't waste your time praying, you got things to do. You're all right, you don't need it right now."* Don't blame Satan for your lack of prayer, blame yourself!

Do you remember the story in the Bible of the publican? Two men were standing in the temple: one pharisee, one a common man. The pharisee raised his hands to heaven and said proudly, *"Thank you God that I am not like that man a sinner."* The common man bowed his head low, beat his chest and humbly prayed, *"Have mercy upon me a sinner."*

The more pride you have in your heart the less you will pray. The more humble you are the more you will pray. So how often do you pray? If not much, then maybe you have unconfessed pride in your heart.

Self-confident faith won't get you far. Neglecting prayer sets us up for failure tomorrow and third...

3. **Pride comes before the fall** (Matthew 26:69-75)

E: Peter failed. His pride rose so high that his fall was big. The last verse says, "*He went away and wept bitterly.*"

Peter was the first one of the disciples to proclaim, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was Peter who stepped out of the boat and walked on water with Jesus. It was Peter fought to defend Jesus. But now, he's a bucket of tears.

A: When anyone of us fails in our walk with the Lord we may respond one of two ways. One, we may decide to go even further from God or two, we may respond with heart felt tears. There is a time for tears.

I dare say if you have never cried over your sins, then you are not a believer. If you have never been broken over your sin like David was when he committed adultery and murder, or like the people of Nineveh who repented when Jonah preached to them, then how can you boldly say, "I'm forgiven!?" You must repent if you want to be saved. Repentance means agreeing with God about your sin and turning from it.

There is a time for tears, but there is also a time of restoration.

E: In John 21 Jesus asked Peter three times, "*Peter, do you love me?*" Three times Peter affirmed his love for Jesus restoring him from his threefold denial.

A: If you find yourself in a destructive lifestyle brought on by your pride realize that there is forgiveness and restoration available to you.

Conclusion, Jesus was inside humbly taking accusation after accusation. Peter was outside pridefully proclaiming, "I don't know the man!"

If Peter fell, surely we can too!

The question of the sermon this morning is this: *Do I rely on my own grit and determination to resist temptation? Am I self-reliant instead of Christ-dependent? Am I full of pride, or humble in my walk with Christ?*

The Christian faith is not about you overcoming *your* sin by your might, it's about Christ overcoming sin for you through the cross.

When you realize that all your sins have been overcome by the blood of Jesus on the cross, it humbles you. You no longer depend on self, you depend on Christ.

Remember this:

Self-confident Christianity won't get you far

Neglecting prayer is a sign of pride

and Pride always come before the fall

"Pride must die in you, or nothing of heaven can live in you." — [Andrew Murray, Humility](#)