

Mark 14:66

by Chuck Smith

Peter's failure to deny Jesus was a result of his own steps of danger, including boasting in himself, arguing with the Lord, and failing to pray.

Scripture: Mark 14:66

Topics: "Denial", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Chuck Smith discusses Peter's denial of Jesus, emphasizing the steps that lead to such failures, including self-boasting, arguing with God, neglecting prayer, and distancing oneself from Christ. He highlights how Peter's initial confidence and subsequent actions, such as drawing a sword and warming himself by the enemy's fire, ultimately led to his denial. Smith encourages believers to remain close to Jesus and to rely on prayer and scripture to avoid falling into similar traps. He concludes with the hope of repentance and restoration, as seen in Peter's later boldness after being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Steps to Denial

Intro. Here we find Peter tasting the bitter tears of failure. I think that most Christians have tasted those same tears as we go through the growth process. Peter had just failed His Lord big time, and it was a little maid that had perpetrated his fall.

Little maids are often the cause of failure in commitment. But such failure is seldom just the spur of the moment, there are often steps that lead to failure. As we look at this story, let us follow the steps that led to his denial of His Lord, with cursing and swearing.

I. The first sign of danger, boasting in himself. vs29

A. He was setting himself above the others, when he declared,
"Though all shall be offended, yet not I."

1. There had been an ongoing dispute among the disciples
as to which of them would have the greatest positions,
when the Lord set up His kingdom.

2. James and John had the gall to recently ask the Lord if
one could sit at His right hand, and the other at His
left when He set up the kingdom.

3. This rivalry had been going on, and I believe that
Peter was seeking to make a subtle point, you may not
be able to count on them, in a crisis, but you can
always count on the rock.

B. Paul had the right evaluation of himself.

1. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no
good thing.

2. He wrote to take heed when you think that you stand
lest you fall.

3. He said, Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to
think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency
[is] of God;

C. The world seeks to teach you self confidence, but in spiritual
things the Bible tells us to have no confidence in our flesh.

1. Jesus said, "Apart from Me, you can do nothing."

2. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ, who
strengthens me."

II. The second sign of danger, arguing with the Lord, and with the
scriptures. Vs.31.

A. If you find yourself arguing with the Lord or challenging the scriptures, know this, "You are wrong."

1. It is amazing how that some people seem to think that they have some kind of special case so that the plain teaching of the word does not govern their particular situation.

2. God wrote this for others, but it does not apply to my case, and we begin to put up an argument.

B. The Greeks had a saying, "The dice of the god's are loaded." That is you cannot go against the gods and win. Their concepts of God were wrong, but the conclusion was correct.

1. The minute you go against the word of God, you are going to lose.

2. The prophet Isaiah said, "Woe unto Him who strives with His maker."

3. You are in a no win situation when you strive with God, for if you do win, if you refuse to surrender to His love and stubbornly resist His grace, then you have truly lost.

III. The third sign of danger, sleeping instead of praying. vs.37

A. Jesus had positioned the disciples in the garden, and had brought Peter, James and John a little closer.

1. Perhaps feeling the weight of the hour, knowing that before this day would be over, He would be hanging on the cross. He was bringing them closer to Him for prayer support. He had said, "My Soul is sorrowful, even unto death."

2. After an hour when He came to them and found them asleep, He asked, "Peter, are you sleeping, could you not watch one hour?"

B. I believe that one of the greatest weaknesses in the church today is in the lack of prayer. I believe that when a person is in prayer and in the word, that he has a first line of defense against the enemy. I believe that Satan realizing the power of prayer does all in his power to keep you from prayer.

1. We are in a spiritual war, and prayer is the deciding factor in the spiritual conflict.

2. Eph. the spiritual armour, when you have put on the whole armour, he then tells us to, "Pray, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

3. Writing to the Corinthians he said, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy."

C. The song, "What A Friend We Have in Jesus." The one line declares "O what needless pain we bare, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."

IV. Another step toward failure happened in the garden as they were arresting Jesus, Peter drew his sword and began swinging away.^{vs47} It is John who reveals the identity of which one.

A. Seeking to use carnal weapons in a spiritual battle.

B. He had failed at prayer, now he will strike out with the sword.

C. So often our reverting to carnal methods is the result of our failure to walk in the Spirit and to keep in the word and prayer.

V. Another step toward his failure is found in his seeking to follow the Lord afar off. vs.54

A. This is a mistake that people often make, they want to be in the Lord's secret service.

1. "I believe in Jesus, I just don't want everybody to know it."
2. They are unwilling to confess Christ publicly.
3. Jesus said, that if we would confess Him before men, He would confess us before His Father in heaven, but the other side of the coin is that if we deny Him before men, He will deny us before the Father.

B. Following the Lord afar off is never successful.

1. You need to stick as close to Him as possible, the closer the better.
2. Some are always testing as to how close they can live to the world and still be a Christian, they are always asking about questionable things. Can I still be a Christian and do this or that?
3. My desire is not to see how close I can live to this world, but how close I can live to Jesus.

VI. Finally we find Peter warming himself next to the fire that the enemies of Christ had built.

A. Trying to find warmth by the enemies fire is always a sign of having moved away from the warmth of His love.

1. Some of you who are seeking again to find warmth in the things of the world, are close to the denial of your Lord.

2. As you are among the worldly crowd, doing the worldly things, sitting their at the bar some little maiden will come up and declare, "Someone said that you were a Christian, what are you doing here?"

a. After swallowing hard, and a little stuttering, you may hear yourself saying, "O yeah, I went down to the church for a while, I was just checking it out, but I don't really believe that stuff."

b.

It may be that the Spirit will convict you and you will feel immediate repentance. You will excuse yourself and go out into the night and weep. I hope so. For in repentance is forgiveness.

B. Many in the hour of pressure as Peter are guilty of denying the Lord by our words or actions.

1. Peter's denial did not surprise the Lord, He had predicted it.

2. It was a surprise and disappointment to Peter. He thought he was above that.

3. All like Peter can fail in the hour of testing, but as Peter we must repent and confess our sin, and we will find Him faithful and just to forgive us our sin.

C. There is one thing about failing a test, you will have to take it over again.

1.

In Acts we find Peter again in the presence of the priests and the religious authorities.

2. This time he is on trial before those who condemned His Lord to death.

3.

We read,

ACS 4:5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

ACS 4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

ACS 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

ACS 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

ACS 4:9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

ACS 4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, [even] by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

ACS 4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

ACS 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

ACS 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and

perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

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