

"the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about Jesus"

THE DAILY JESUS NEWS

An ATJ Ministries Publication

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #284 Thursday... Day of Instruction and Arrest: The Last Supper

Jesus Predicts Peter's Threefold Denial

MT 26.31-35 (Parallel Texts: MK 14.27-31; LK 22.31-34; JN 13.33, 36-38)

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"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come."

36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, *"Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."*

37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." (JN 13.33, 36-37)

31^{MT} Then Jesus told them, *"This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:*

*"I WILL STRIKE THE SHEPHERD,
AND THE SHEEP OF THE FLOCK WILL BE SCATTERED."* (Zech. 13.7)

32 *"But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."*

33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.

^L"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

^JJesus answered, *"Will you really lay down your life for me?"* 34^{MT} Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, *"this very night, before the rooster crows* ^M*twice,* ^{MT}*you will* ^L*deny me by* ^{MT}*disowning me three times."*

35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	An Upper Room in Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	D. Thursday: Day of Instruction and Arrest
	The Last Supper
Title	Jesus Predicts Peter's Threefold Denial

COMMENT:

Jesus next demonstrated his unconditional love at the last supper by the way he cared for his disciples in their time of spiritual failure. Peter was the greatest example of this, but it applied to all the disciples in the same way.

Judas had just departed on his mission to betray Jesus. Now the Lord had to face the universal "falling away" of all of his disciples. They would all temporarily deny him in order to save their own necks. How did Jesus handle this?

Like his attitude toward Judas, Jesus did not get angry with the apostles. He did not withdraw from them in frustration, or call them to account by haranguing them with descriptions of their many failures. Jesus loved them. That meant their failures were not about him. He continued to do what was in their best interests, by preparing them to learn and grow in every way they could through their coming failure. It was all grace, because it was Jesus.

Peter was the leader and representative of the twelve. The way Jesus dealt with Peter to prepare him for failure and future growth was recorded in detail by all four gospel writers because it was the same way he ministered to all of the apostles, and to all of us as well. So let's look at five specific things that Jesus did for Peter to shepherd him through this crisis.

1. Jesus prayed Peter through his failure into growth. **"Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you..."** Jesus anticipated and covered every step in Peter's descent into denial of Jesus, and climb out of the pit of despair into full restoration as a leader, in prayer. He does the same for us.

Prayer is a vital dimension of his ongoing ministry for each of us as our High Priest in heaven, even as it was for Peter on earth. Jesus' prayers made the decisive difference for Peter in this time of need.

2. Jesus prepared Peter by telling him exactly how he would fail in advance. Neither Peter, nor any of the other apostles were humble and wise enough to listen to Jesus when he told them. However, the fact that Jesus had seen it all beforehand, and prayed in advance became a major factor in Peter being able to forgive himself, and learn from the experience later on. This became a great comfort when Peter was ready to receive it.

3. Jesus personally paid the price for Peter's failure by dying in his place. Jesus' forgiveness set Peter free to learn and grow through the experience with no lasting negative consequences. This is true for every one of us as well.

4. Jesus planned to use Peter's failure in a special way in his ministry in the future. **"When you have turned, I command you to strengthen your brothers."** The truth is that we all fail. Many times. We are totally sinful. Learning to grow through failure is probably the most important lesson of spiritual growth.

The growth-blessings of obedience are easy to see and rejoice in. The blessings of growing through failure are much harder to come by. Peter's victory over failure equipped him in a special way to minister to all of his brothers.

What we need in the body of Christ are leaders who can relate to us in our failures and come alongside us there, because they are authentic and honest about their own struggles. The only perfect leader the Church needs is Jesus himself. The rest of us are wounded healers, still in the process of learning and growing like everybody else. It is Jesus' plan to use all of our failures for his glory.

5. After the resurrection Jesus publicly restored Peter to his position of leadership. Jesus made it clear that instead of disqualifying him for ministry, Peter's failure combined with Jesus' love and grace in such a way that it qualified him to minister to his brothers. The process was complete. Isn't that amazing?

So Jesus loved Peter enough to turn his greatest, most humiliating failure into the ground for his growth and transformation into Jesus' likeness. This was true for all the disciples, even as it true for each one of us.

In light of all of this, it seems unbelievable that Peter (and the rest of them) could so vociferously declare his great loyalty and faithfulness to Jesus when he was in the act of again spurning Jesus' warning. They did not have a clue. They were tragically blind. Yet Jesus loved them and graced them through it all anyway. That is unconditional love.

APPLICATION:

We too are equally blind. Our sinfulness is real, and deeply rooted within us. Sometimes only the deepest pits of despair that follow profound failure are what it takes to makes us **"poor in spirit, mourn,"** and **"hunger and thirst for righteousness."** Then we are transformed to rise with Jesus from the pit to our seat with him in heaven, so that we can glorify him for his grace, and minister to others on the journey into the wholeness of holiness.

Is Jesus working in you now to bring you through failure into victory? Then just keep on!

Is there some you know who needs encouragement in their struggles? How can you give it to them?