

PETER #7 Peter's Failure & Restoration

I. Peter's Failure

1. Foretold by Jesus (Luke 22:31-34)

Jesus told Peter & Co.: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." Peter replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison & to death." Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny 3 times that you know me." (Luke 22:31-34)

Notes: *Simon:* The use of Peter's pre-Christian name forebodes his denial. *Satan demanded to have you...to sift you like wheat:* "You" is plural in these 2 instances, indicating all the disciples are in view, not just Peter. Or "*Satan seeks to shake you all violently, as one does wheat, to cause you to fall*". In Peter's case, the shaking is his panic-prompted, thrice-repeated denial that he knew Christ. *I've prayed...that your faith may not fail.* "Your" here is singular, so Peter alone is addressed. "*Not fail*" means "*not fail completely*." Peter's restored faith (subsequently) wasn't his own accomplishment but a result of the Holy Spirit's work in response to Jesus' prayer for him. The Greek for *turned* (*epistrephō*) is often used of repenting or turning back to God. ESV

Peter once told the Lord, "Everyone can deny You, but I'll never deny You." Afterwards, Peter failed. The Lord Jesus told him in advance, "...Satan has asked to have you all to sift you as wheat. But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; & you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32). Because of this word, Peter was able to rise up again after he failed. Not only was he able to rise up, but he was able to help many others. Many people have risen up even today because of Peter. Peter's turning again was not out of himself. It was the power of the Lord's prayer that was holding him all the time. Later, when he remembered the Lord's word, he wept & repented. All this came about by the power of the Lord's prayer. God listens to the Lord's prayer. [W Nee, *Gospel of God*, Chap. 16, Sect. 7]

2. Self-confident Peter rejects Jesus' Warning (Matt. 26:30-35; Mk. 14:27-31)

"Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, & the sheep will be scattered.' But after I'm raised up, I'll go before you to Galilee.'" Peter said, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." Jesus replied, "Truly...this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me 3 times." But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I'll not deny you." And they all said the same." (Mark 14:27-31)

Note: In most manuscripts of Mark's Gospel, though not all, Mark mentions the rooster crowing "twice", but roosters could crow a number of times separated by a few minutes. Mark specifies the first 2 individual crowings (as evidently Jesus did), while Matthew, Luke, & John focus on the shameful fact of Peter's denial. They therefore drop this detail & report Jesus' referring to the entire set of crowings when the rooster crows.

3. Peter asserts he will die for Jesus! (John 13:37-38)

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord...***I will lay down my life for you.***" Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me 3 times." (John 13:37-38)

Note: If Peter had laid down his life (died) in Jesus' place it would merely be a human martyrdom. Plus Peter's death instead of Jesus' death would prevent (or postpone) Christ's redemptive death—Jesus dying for the sins of the world. That would have frustrated God's plan of redemption for sins & regeneration of the believers!

4. When Jesus is Arrested, Peter uses his Sword (Luke 22:36-38; John 18:7-11)

Jesus "asked them, 'Whom do you seek?' They said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, '...I am he. So...let these men go.' ...Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it & struck the high priest's servant & cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?'" (John 18:7-11)

5. Peter's Failure—3-fold Denial (Matt. 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22: 54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27)

"They seized Jesus & led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, & Peter followed at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard & sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing Peter as he sat in the light & looking closely at him, said, 'This man also was with him [Jesus].'" But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." A little later someone else saw him & said, "You also are one of them." But Peter

said, “Man, I am not.” After an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned & looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the Lord’s saying, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me 3 times.” He went out & wept bitterly.” (Lk 22:54-62)

“Simon Peter was standing & warming himself. They asked him, “You’re not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it & said, “I’m not.”...A relative of the man whose ear Peter cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?” Peter again denied it. At once a rooster crowed.” (John 18:25-27)

No doubt Peter was deeply disappointed with himself (due to his failure). Probably the other disciples were also disappointed in Peter (the recognized leader among ‘the Twelve’). The OT warns against trusting in man: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man... Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water...’” (Jeremiah 17:5-8) “Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man in whom there is no salvation....Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God.” (Psalm 146:3-5)

6. **Jesus’ Good Confession** (Mark 14:61-64):

“...The high priest asked Jesus, “**Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed** [i.e., God]?” Jesus said, “**I am**, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, & coming with the clouds of heaven.” The high priest tore his garments & said, “What further witnesses do we need? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” They all condemned him as deserving death.” (Mark 14:61-64)

Note: While Peter was denying, saying “I am not,” Jesus was confessing/affirming “I am”—‘I am the Christ (the Messiah)’, ‘I am the Son of God’ & ‘I am the Son of Man’ who rules the universe on God’s throne (Dan. 7). *Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* This question may be drawn from Jesus’ teaching in the temple, in which he claimed to be the Son of the God of Israel & the messianic Lord of David, who shares exclusive honor with God himself. *I am*. Jesus answers affirmatively, then applies to himself messianic prophecies from Psalm 110:1 & Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus’ statement is considered *blasphemy* [speaking against God] in that he claims divine Sonship & an exclusively exalted position at God’s right hand. Following the high priest’s lead, the whole Jewish council *all condemned him as deserving death*. The one option they disregard is that Jesus is indeed speaking the truth & has the full endorsement of his heavenly Father ESV

• **Jesus, as ‘the Word’ is God & God’s ‘only Son’** (John 1:1-2, 14)

“In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was with God, & the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God... And the Word became flesh & dwelt among us, & we’ve seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace & truth.” (John 1:1-2, 14) **Note:** Jesus is the “Son of God,” not in the sense of being created or born (see Jn. 1:3), but in the sense of being a Son who is exactly like his Father in all attributes, & in the sense of having a Father-Son relationship with God the Father. The Greek word underlying “only,” *monogenēs*, means “one of a kind, unique,” like Isaac, who is called Abraham’s “one-of-a-kind” son in Heb. 11:17 (in contrast to Ishmael; cf. Gen. 22). “Only” is a better translation than “only begotten” (familiar thro’ the KJV). ESV

II. **Peter’s Restoration**

1. **In Resurrection Jesus says “tell Peter”** (Mark 16:6-7)

After Jesus’ resurrection, his female disciples were told, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples **and Peter** that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him...” (Mark 16:6-7)

Among the 4 Gospels, only the Gospel of Mark records this matter. Mark was a young man who followed & learned from Peter. The Gospel of Mark [probably] was dictated by Peter & written down by Mark. The words “*tell His disciples and Peter*” were specifically dictated by Peter. These words might not have been important to other people, but they were very important in Peter’s heart. [W. Nee, *And Peter*, Chap. 1, Sect. 1]

2. **Jesus Restores & Recommends Peter** (John 21:15-19)

“When they’d finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” Peter replied, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Jesus said a 2nd time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter replied, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Tend my sheep.” Jesus said the 3rd time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved that Jesus asked the 3rd time, “Do you love me?” & he said, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when

you were young, you...walked where you wanted, but when you're old, you'll stretch out your hands, & they'll ...carry you where you do not want to go." (...showing that by death he'd glorify God.) Then Jesus said, "Follow me." (John 21:15-19)

Note: Peter has denied Jesus 3 times; now Jesus asks him 3 times to reaffirm his love for him and recommissions him. Jesus' question, "*do you love me more than these?*" probably means, "Do you love me more than these other disciples do?" rather than, "...more than these fish [i.e., his profession]?" or "...more than you love these men?"—though all 3 senses are, of course, important. In these 3 questions & answers, Peter uses the same verb for "love" all 3 times (Gk. *phileō*), but Jesus uses a different verb for "love" in the first 2 questions (Gk. *agapaō*) & then switches to Peter's word *phileō* in the 3rd question. There may be a slight difference in nuance between the verbs...But most modern commentators are not persuaded that there's any clearly intended difference of meaning here because the 2 words are often used interchangeably in similar contexts & because John frequently uses different words where little discernible difference in meaning can be determined, perhaps for stylistic reasons. While there may be no difference in the meanings of the 2 verbs, Peter is grieved because Jesus kept asking him if he loved Him. ESV

3. **Robert Robinson "Prone to Wander, Lord I feel it..."** Saved at the age of 20 thro' George Whitefield, Robinson made peace with God and became a Methodist preacher himself. 2 years later, in 1757, he wrote a hymn which expressed his joy in his new faith:

*Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise...*
In the last stanza, Robert wrote:

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love
Take my heart, O take and seal it
Seal it with Thy Spirit from above.*

Prone to wander Robert was. He left the Methodists and became a Baptist. Later on, he became a close friend of Unitarians. A widely-told, but unverifiable, story says that one day as **he was riding in a stagecoach a young lady asked him what he thought of the hymn she was humming. He responded, "Madam, I'm the poor unhappy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, & I'd give 1,000 worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then."**

III. The Bible is Brutally Honest

Do you "tell the truth, the whole truth, & nothing but the truth"? The book, *The Day that America Told the Truth*, states (p. 45) that 91 percent of Americans lie regularly (cited by Alistair Begg, "Cedarville Torch, Fall, 1994, p. 15). "Of the people interviewed, 92 percent said the main reason for their lying was to save face, and 98 percent said the reason they told lies was so as not to offend people" (*ibid.*). Many of us don't tell the whole truth or give full disclosure, because we want to present ourselves or people we care about in a good light. We want to look good, so we highlight our achievements and overlook our failures & mistakes. But the Bible isn't like that. Think about Peter's major failure—denying the Lord three times, with cursing. The gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, etc) know that Peter became an important leader in the early Church. Yet, they still didn't ignore Peter's failure; they didn't whitewash the record in order to burnish the reputation of a leading apostle. All 4 gospels record Peter's failure for all generations of Bible-readers to see. Why? Is it to show us (perhaps) that Jesus is the only perfect one, the only 'hero' who never failed? Is it to warn us not to exalt any man, any church leader, or 'servant of the Lord,' nor to put our confidence in any person (other than the Lord Jesus)?

- **"Why You Need to Read the 'Dirty Laundry' in the Bible"**

There are a million reasons why I love the Bible. One of those reasons: the Bible is brutally honest. It makes no attempt to sugar coat the mistakes of its heroes. We see countless examples of God openly sharing the 'dirty laundry' of our pillars [heroes] of faith: Abraham the liar, Moses the murderer, David and his adultery, Peter the coward ...I could go on and on.

How would you like your life's biggest mistake to be a sermon material in the best-selling book in the history of mankind? No? I'll pass as well. So why did God record the mistakes of our beloved heroes in scripture? Here are 3 reasons:

1. To Make Much of His Grace: Time and time again we see God's grace shown to these men and women after some of life's biggest blow ups. He doesn't ignore their sin. He deals with it head on and then extends amazing grace. This allows these great leaders go on to do incredible exploits for His glory. He turns what they meant for evil for good every time. God desires to make much of His grace so that we will.

2. So We Could Learn From Their Mistakes: Life's too short to try and learn from just our own failures. We can grow exponentially if we'll choose to learn from the mistakes of those we find in scripture. God knows that we can truly be mentored by the mistakes of others if we'll take heed and learn from those that have gone before us. We must be life-long students of others.

3. To Give us Hope: It's so easy to deify the men and women in the Bible and miss the point that they were flesh and bone just like you and I. [James] wrote that Elijah the prophet was "just a man like us" (James 5:17). When we see these mistakes recorded in scripture, we're reminded of their humanity and that God chose to use them in spite of their failures. Jesus makes this same hope available to anyone that will embrace him as savior and leader of their life. In your heart you should be yelling, "There's hope for me too!!!"

Embrace the honesty of scripture with a desire to grow. Don't allow the mistakes of your biblical heroes to spin you out. Listen to their counsel. They're teaching us even today if we'll listen.

Nathan Rouse (Raleigh, NC), "*Why You Need to Read the 'Dirty Laundry' in the Bible*" (Feb. 23, 2012)

Video Peter denies Jesus [Passion of the Christ] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzxyUBhX1Vs>

QUESTIONS:

The Facts:

1. What do the different gospels (Matt., Mark, etc) tell us about Peter's response to Jesus' warning that Peter would deny Jesus 3 times? How does Peter's recorded response differ between the 4 gospels?
2. While Jesus was being tried, who were the 3 parties who challenged Peter, 'putting him on the spot,' by accusing him of being Jesus' disciple? How are these 3 accusers identified/described in the 4 gospels?
 - Accuser #1.....
 - Accuser #2.....
 - Accuser #3.....
3. According to Mark's gospel (Mk. 14:61-64), at Jesus' trial before the Jewish Council (Sanhedrin) what did Jesus affirm or confess about Himself?

Digging Deeper:

Q: In what ways did Jesus reach out in order to restore Peter in view of his failure?

Heart of the Matter:

Q: How would you counsel a Christian believer who says, "I have failed the Lord so badly that He's given up on me and I've given up on Him"? How would you respond? Have you ever felt like this? If so, what helped you?

PETER #7 Peter's Failure & Restoration [Script]

PIX: Peter Jesus & Eyewitnesses

PIX: Peter Eyewitnesses to Jesus

PIX: Peter Saint with Halo

PIX: Peter Saint with Halo 1

PIX: Peter cuts off Malchus' Ear

PIX: Peter Jesus Never Fails

I. The Bible is Brutally Honest—

Because it's based on eyewitness accounts

Because God is a God of truth (He's honest, gives full disclosure).

Because the truth is everyone fails, **only Jesus never fails**

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PIX: Peter Bible miniseries

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PIX: Peter denies Jesus

PIX: Peter denies Jesus 1

PIX: Peter denies Jesus 2

PIX: Peter denies Jesus by Fire

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PIX: Peter after Denying Jesus

PIX: Peter Disappointed Man

PIX: Peter Disappointed Woman

5. Peter deeply disappointed with himself

No doubt Peter was deeply disappointed with himself (due to his failure). Probably the other disciples were also disappointed in Peter (the recognized leader among ‘the Twelve’). The OT warns against trusting in man: “Thus says the LORD: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man... Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water...’” (Jer. 17:5-8)

PIX: Peter Caiaphas High Priest

PIX: Peter Jesus B4 Caiaphas o

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PIX: Peter Jesus is My Hero

PIX: Peter Zero Man

Jesus is the Hero,

Peter, us & Everyone else is a Zero

III. Peter’s Restoration

1. In Resurrection Jesus says “tell Peter” (Mark 16:6-7)

After Jesus’ resurrection, his female disciples were told, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples **and Peter** that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him...” (Mark 16:6-7)

PIX: John 21 Great Catch

PIX: John 21 Great Catch to Shore

PIX: John 21 Jesus Cooked Fish on Shore

PIX: John 21 v15 Do You Love Me More?

2. Jesus Restores & Recommissions Peter (John 21:15-19)

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Note: Peter has denied Jesus 3 times; now Jesus asks him 3 times to reaffirm his love for him and recommissions him.

PIX: Peter Come Thou Fount

PIX: Peter Prone to Wander

3. Robert Robinson “Prone to Wander, Lord I feel it...”

Saved at the age 20 thro' George Whitefield, Robinson made peace with God and became a Methodist preacher himself. 2 years later, in 1757, he wrote a hymn which expressed his joy in his new faith:

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In the last stanza, Robert wrote:

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3. Peter asserts he will die for Jesus-- *"I'll lay down my life for you."* (John 13:37-38)
 - Peter's dying in Jesus' place would be mere human martyrdom
 - It would have prevented Jesus' redemptive death & regenerating resurrection
4. When Jesus is Arrested; Peter used his Sword (Luke 22:36-38; John 18:7-11)
5. Peter's Failure—his 3-fold Denial (Matt. 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22: 54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27)
6. Jesus' Good Confession, contrasts with Peter's Denial (Mark 14:61-64):
 - Jesus is the Christ (Messiah)
 - Jesus is the Son of God (cf. John 1:1, 14)
 - Jesus is the reigning Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14)

II. Peter's Restoration

1. In Resurrection Jesus says "tell Peter" (Mark 16:6-7)
2. Jesus Restores & re-commissions Peter (John 21:15-19)
3. If the Lord can restore Peter, then the Lord can restore all of us!

III. The Bible is Brutally Honest

1. Scripture doesn't "whitewash/sanitize" the historical record of people's lives, incl. leaders.
2. The Bible honestly records their failings & mistakes—e.g.
 - Abraham the liar--claiming his wife, Sarah was "his sister"
 - Moses' disobedience—striking the Rock when God said "speak to the Rock"
 - King David's adultery with Bathsheba (Uriah's wife),
 - Peter the coward—he denied Jesus 3 times (with curses)
3. The only perfect One, who never failed, is Jesus—Let's 'make much of Him'!