

Following Jesus
From Denial to Difference-maker
Luke 22, Acts, 1 Peter

I. Peter, an example of the difference Jesus can make in a life

- a. Jesus knew Peter would fold like a house of cards when things got really scary
 - i. He wasn't fully prepared for what was to come
 - ii. In the garden, he wasn't even able to pray
 - iii. Kept falling asleep with the others
- b. This was the guy who boldly proclaimed his readiness a few hours earlier
 - i. **Luke 22:33-34**
 - ii. But Jesus knew something else about Peter
 - iii. Though a denier of Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, he would become a real difference-maker!
 - iv. **Luke 22:31-34**
 - 1. He WAS converted
 - 2. Fully turned back to Christ and committed
 - 3. "From Denier to Difference-maker" (How possible?)
 - 4. **Read Luke 22:54-62**
- c. There is surprising irony in Peter's life and influence on the church
 - i. He is the original apostle of boldness in the face of death
 - 1. **Acts 2:22-23**
 - 2. **Acts 4:1-20**
 - 3. **Acts 5:25-32**
 - ii. But he is also the apostle of fearlessness in his letters
- d. What happened after his denial that changed him?
 - i. First, the resurrection of Jesus
 - 1. **Acts 5:30-31**
 - 2. **Acts 10:40-43**
 - ii. Second, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

II. Message (lessons Peter apparently learned as a committed follower of Jesus)

- a. **Satan loves to take down followers of Jesus – 1 Peter 5:8-11**
 - i. You need to be perfected, established, strengthened, and settled – v.10
 - ii. You need to be aware of your own spiritual vulnerability!
 - iii. You need some sobriety and vigilance in your life! – v.8
- b. **(If we do fail) God is a God of merciful forgiveness – 1 Peter 2:9-10**
 - i. Peter utterly failed
 - ii. Satan totally sifted him!
 - iii. He denied Christ publicly!
 - 1. But he learned see himself differently in Christ b/c of God's mercy

2. Notice how he describes forgiven believers in this passage:
3. He focuses on the fact that all followers of God are special!
 - a. They have obtained mercy!
 - b. They no longer walk in darkness
 - c. Welcome to the light!
 - d. You don't need to be defined by your failure

c. The followers of Jesus do not need to fear boldly associating with Christ!

- 1 Peter 3:13-17

- i. You can actually be "happy" in the face of suffering for Jesus - v.14
- ii. But you need to be ready to give an answer - v.15
- iii. "Don't be afraid of their terror, neither be troubled!" - v.14
 1. You don't need to panic
 2. Get your answer (your testimony) ready
 3. Live above reproach
 4. Find happiness in associating with Jesus

d. Suffering for Christ is suffering with Christ and glorifies God! - 1 Peter 4:12-16

- i. Suffering for Christ will result in eternal joy - v.13
- ii. Suffering for Christ brings the spirit of God upon you - v.14
- iii. Suffering for Christ brings glory to God - v.16

e. Remember God is faithful in your suffering for Jesus' name - 1 Peter 4:19

- i. Peter was in self-preservation mode at the arrest of Jesus
- ii. I'VE got to do something to keep me safe!
 1. He learned to commit the keeping of his soul to His faithful Creator
 2. We don't have to preserve ourselves
 3. God is faithful and will "keep your soul"

III. Conclusions

- a. Be aware of Satan's plans to take down Jesus' followers
- b. Be ready to speak up, associate with, and suffer for Jesus' name
- c. Be focused on the power of the Jesus' resurrection