

Peter Denies Christ

[Mark 14:66-72](#)

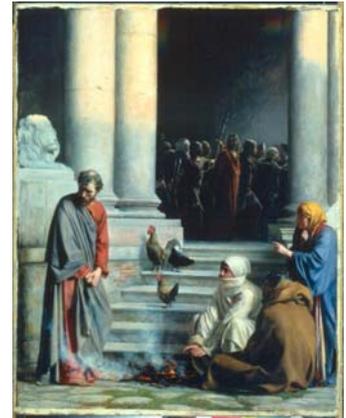


We are studying the last day of Jesus' life. We saw in our study last week that Jesus was arrested by Israel's leaders and taken to trial. Once the arrest had taken place, Peter followed the band of soldiers at a distance to the court of the high priest.

What we see in our text this morning is that Peter denies that he even knows Jesus. Peter totally turns his back on his Lord. Before we look at the text, let's remind ourselves just who Peter was. Peter was an apostle of God:

And as He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:16-17 NASB)

Here we see Jesus beginning to call His apostles. What was Peter's response to Jesus' call?



And they immediately left the nets and followed Him. (Mark 1:18 NASB)

When Peter is called by Jesus, he drops everything to follow Him. Peter considered this call so important that he was willing to leave everything behind to answer it. In leaving his nets, he was leaving the very means of his livelihood. Peter was serious about his commitment to Jesus. Luke tells us that Peter was called to be an apostle:

And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.¹³ And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: (Luke 6:12-13 NASB)

After His all-night prayer vigil, Jesus called a larger group of "disciples" to Him, from which He chose twelve, designating them as His apostles. These were to be the leaders of the church. They were to be apostles. Apostle is from the Greek word *apostolos*. Thayer says of *apostolos* that it is "*a delegate, messenger or one sent forth with orders.*" That Jesus spent all night in prayer before their appointment is an indication that these names were not "pulled out of a hat," but were chosen in consultation with God the Father.

There are four lists in the New Testament that give us the names of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus: [Matthew 10:2-4](#), [Mark 3:16-19](#), [Luke 6:14-16](#), [Acts 1:13,26](#). Let me give you a few facts about these lists of disciples. Peter is always listed first among the disciples. There is no disciple of Jesus with whom we are more familiar than the person of Peter. Jesus gave Peter a new name; the name given was actually [Cephas](#) (kepha), which means: "*a rock*" ([John 1:42](#)). Peter was the oldest of the twelve, and he was the leader and spokesperson.

Peter had been in the Lord's company from the very beginning of his ministry. He had seen the mightiest and most stupendous of Christ's miracles. He had been in the innermost circle as far as the teaching of Jesus was concerned. He had heard the "[Sermon on the Mount](#)" the first time any human ear had heard it.

Peter walked on water:

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." ²⁹ And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. (Matthew 14:28-29 NASB)

Peter is the only human being, apart from Jesus, to ever walk on water. That's something to brag about. Peter not only walked on water, he also received divine revelation:

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began asking His disciples, saying, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matthew 16:13 NASB)

Peter answers the Lord:

And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 16:16-17 NASB)

Think for a moment about what Peter confessed. Even though his understanding would certainly increase in the days after the resurrection, Peter had come to terms with the whole of Biblical revelation. Jesus Christ is the Promised One of God. He is the One that God promised Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the other prophets. All of the Scripture pointed to this one Person that stood before Simon Peter. All of the sacrificial system, the metaphors found in the holy days, and even the pictures represented by the temple, pointed to Christ. The focal point of human history centers on Him. All of the worship and adoration of God belongs to Him since He is God.

Peter was an eye witness of the Transfiguration:

And six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. And He was transfigured before them; ³ and His garments became radiant and exceedingly white, as no launderer on earth can whiten them. (Mark 9:2-3 NASB)

Peter had later been with them on the Mount of Transfiguration beholding the glory of Christ and Moses and Elijah brought from heaven to talk with him. He had heard the voice of God saying to Jesus, "*Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*"

What I want you to see here is that Peter was no casual church attendee, he is no nominal Christian. He was the Lord's right hand man and the leader of the apostles who had watched the Lord feed the five thousand and then the four thousand with a few fish and a few loaves of bread. He had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead after four days in the tomb. He had walked on water and spoken under divine inspiration. Peter was "the man." With that in mind, we go to our text this morning of Peter's denial of his Lord. As we go through this text, keep in mind who Peter is:

And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene." (Mark 14:66-67 NASB)

The word translated "courtyard" is the Greek noun *aule* (ow-lay), it means: *"an area open to the sky, frequently surrounded by buildings, and in some cases partially by walls."* We know from John's Gospel that the courtyard is not open to the public. Entrance is restricted by a gatekeeper:

And Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought in Peter. (John 18:15-16 NASB)

In this text we see how Peter got into the courtyard of the high priest. Leon Morris states, *"The other disciple had the advantage of being known to the high priest, and it seems agreed that the word known means more than casual acquaintance. It seems to indicate that the man belonged to the high priest's circle."* (Leon Morris, *Reflections on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), IV, p. 613).

Most people see this "other disciple" as the Apostle John and thus realize the problem of John, a Galilean, knowing the high priest. Commenting on the "other disciple" knowing the high priest, one commentator writes, *"Some have conjectured that John came to Jerusalem where he sold fish to the high priest's family. That would explain John's words here, perhaps. It could also be as simple as the high priest owning a vacation cottage on the Sea of Galilee where John met and befriended one of his sons, and thereby became known to the family."*

Well, he sees a problem with the high priest knowing John, and he tries to reconcile it. Do you think the high priest had a vacation home on the Sea of Galilee? I'm sure he didn't, because there are no homes on the Sea of Galilee. The Jews fear the water and don't build homes on it. There are no homes on it today. Did John sell fish to the high priest? From Galilee to Jerusalem was about 70 miles; that's a long way to transport fish with no ice. I doubt that John was selling fish to the high priest. As a matter of fact, I know that John and the high priest did not know each other.

Acts 4:1-23 tells us what happened to Peter and John following the healing of a crippled man. Peter and John were seized and brought before the [Sanhedrin](#):

And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; ⁶ and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. (Acts 4:5-6 NASB)

Now remember, this is the same group that Jesus is being tried by, and whom Peter is watching. Now notice carefully what is said:

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13 NASB)

Notice here what these Jewish leaders recognized: It was in that moment that they suddenly understood that these men had been with Jesus. The principal thing that we need to get out of this passage is that it was at that point that the high priest and the other rulers became acquainted with Peter and John for first time. But our text in John 18 tells us that the *“other disciple”* was known by the high priest. This teaches us that the high priest did not know John or Peter before this incident. So the *“other disciple”* could not have been John.

As we have seen in the study, [“The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved,”](#) this *“other disciple”* was not the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee, but was Lazarus whom Jesus rose from the dead.

So how did Lazarus get in to the court of the high priest? Lazarus is the Greek rendering of the name *Eleazar*. *Eleazar* is a name found *only* in priestly lineages. As I said last week, I believe that Lazarus was a priest. As a "priest," he would be able to enter into the [Beth Din](#), while Peter, who was a laymen, was required to remain *“outside.”*

Let me give you several reasons why I believe that Lazarus was a Jewish priest. These are also reasons why the Apostle John, a Galilean, could not have written John.

1. He knows the name of the high priest’s servant–Malchus ([John 18:10](#)). All the Gospels record Peter cutting off the High Priest’s servant’s ear, but only Lazarus records his name.
2. Only the Fourth Gospel records the name of the High Priest Annas. He knew the high priest by name.
3. He was familiar with the family relationships of the high priest. Only in the Fourth Gospel do we learn that Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas.
4. Lazarus is known to the palace household. Peter has to wait outside, but Lazarus is let right in. He could have only entered if he were also a priest.
5. He was acquainted with the relationships of palace staff ([John 18:26](#)). Only the Fourth Gospel tells us that one of those who questioned Peter’s association with Jesus was a relative of Malchus.
6. He was aware of the motives of the priests. Only the writer of the Fourth Gospel explains why the priests would not enter Pilate’s Judgment Hall:

They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. (John 18:28 NASB)

It is my opinion, based upon these facts, that Lazarus was a priest, and that is why he could enter the court of the high Priest, and that is why he could get Peter in.

And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene." (Mark 14:66-67 NASB)

So Peter is in the courtyard of the high priest, and many say we must give him credit for being brave enough to be there. I don’t think that it was bravery that brought Peter there that night; I think it was his pride. I think that he was so determined not to let the Lord down and also determined to show that Jesus was wrong when He said Peter would deny Him. But now that he is there in the midst of the enemies of Jesus, fears begin to possess his heart, the power of the male ego is fading.

The servant girl questions him, and he denies knowing Christ:

But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch. (Mark 14:68 NASB)

Peter blurts out a denial. He plays stupid, "I don't know what you are talking about." The word "denied" is Greek *arneomai* (ar-neh-o-my), which means: *"to state that something is not true."* Related meanings are: *"to disclaim association with a person or event, repudiate, disown."* When Peter says, "I don't know Him," it is expressed by the Greek verb that can cover all kinds of knowledge, from information to understanding to intimate acquaintance. Here it seems to be used in the sense of "be intimately acquainted with or stand in close relation to."

Peter's denial was firm. "I do not know what you are saying." This was a legal, emphatic form of denial in Rabbinical law.

Peter, the big fisherman, who earlier that evening had drawn a sword and was willing to stand before the temple guard to defend his friend Jesus, now shrinks in fear at the accusations of a servant girl. What is up with that? This reminds me of Elijah at Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18. Elijah bravely stands against 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the [Asherah](#), but when threatened by Jezebel, he runs like a little girl.

Peter's pride is not strong enough to back his boastful statements:

But Peter answered and said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away." (Matthew 26:33 NASB)

Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too. (Matthew 26:35 NASB)

I'm sure that Peter meant this when he said it, but now his pride is falling apart under pressure.

And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them!"⁷⁰ But again he was denying it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too." (Mark 14:69-70 NASB)

Matthew and Mark tell us of Peter's denials before:

1. a slave girl
2. a slave girl
3. bystanders.

John's record of Peter's denials involves:

1. a slave girl
2. those warming themselves by the fire
3. the slave who was a relative of Malchus.

Peter denies Christ a second time. Rather than saying, "Alright, you got me! You're right, I'm from Galilee, and I've been following Jesus Christ for three years. He's the promised Messiah and the most remarkable person I've ever met. He is perfect in every way. What He speaks is absolute truth. I love Him and will follow Him to death." Instead of something along that line, Peter takes his denial to another level with

determination that he will not be put into a dangerous situation because of Christ.

Notice what the bystanders say to Peter, ***"Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too."*** There was no hiding for Peter. He was a Galilean fisherman with the distinctive accent from his region. They pegged him as a Galilean, and therefore, since most of Jesus' ministry took place in that region, Peter had to be part of Christ's followers. Galileans spoke in a totally different way than Judeans. This would be like a New Yorker in Georgia, his speech gives him away.

But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" (Mark 14:71 NASB)

This time Peter resorts to an oath, perhaps something common to him before becoming Christ's disciple. The oath put the denial at a deeper stage as he invoked the solemn curse on himself. Such an oath would have brought God into the picture: "I swear to God that I do not know the man!" "I swear by the temple that I do not know the man!" Or in Southern vernacular, "If I'm lying, I'm dying!"

As in the previous denial, the perfect tense of "know" is used to imply: "I don't know Him and I've never known Him!" He uses everything he knows to make it emphatic. Only hours earlier, Peter was determined to lay down his life for Christ. Now he is determined to keep his own skin at any cost, even if it means denying Christ.

Now let me ask you a very important question: Could Peter be a Christian and deny Christ? Before you answer that, let's look at the words of Christ:

"Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ "But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33 NASB)

Jesus is speaking in terms of preparing His disciples to withstand the pressure of persecution. He doesn't want the fear of persecutors to cause them to deny their allegiance to Jesus. Peter must have slept through this lesson.

The word translated "confess" is the Greek word [homologeō](#), which means: ***"declare (publicly), acknowledge, confess, declare allegiance to."*** It is used as the antonym of Greek [arneomai](#), which is our word ***"deny."*** This is exactly what Peter did, he denied the Lord. Now I'm not sure what the Lord means by denying men before His Father in heaven, but I know what it doesn't mean: It doesn't mean they can't be redeemed. John tells us of some Christian Jewish leaders who would not confess Christ:

Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God. (John 12:42-43 NASB)

Were these individuals saved? Were they Christians? The Lordship view would say, "No," because they did not confess Him. But the Scripture says, "They believed in Him."

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24

NASB)

Lordship theology causes people to doubt the testimony of Scripture. Faith is believing, and believing **alone** makes you a Christian. So to answer our question, Yes, Peter was a Christian. At this point he was not a very good disciple, he was denying his Lord, but he was still a Christian.

One commentator writes, *“Open acknowledgment of Christ before men is necessary evidence that you are a Christian.”* Really, so “real” Christians can’t deny Christ. Peter proves this is wrong. He was a real Christian, and he denied Christ. We’ll discuss this further in a moment.

And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep. (Mark 14:72 NASB)

Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him, and Peter denied it. Now he is a broken man. Luke tells us that immediately after Peter’s last denial, Jesus was somehow able to look Peter straight in the eye, at the very time that the cock crowed:

But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, a cock crowed.⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times."⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:60-62 NASB)

While Peter is still mouthing his adamant denial, the rooster begins to crow. At that moment, Jesus is visible, turns, and makes eye contact with Peter. The word translated "looked at" is the Greek verb [*emblepo*](#), which means: *"to look at something directly and therefore intently."*

And he went out and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:62 NASB)

The word translated "wept" is the common Greek verb [*klaiō*](#): *"to cry."* Peter weeps intensely. The word "bitterly" is the Greek adverb [*pikros*](#). The adjective *pikros* originally meant: *"pointed, sharp,"* so the word carries the idea of sharpness, pain, severity.

What were the chances that any of our Lord’s disciples would avoid arrest and later be allowed to stand in the courtyard of the high priest as Jesus is being questioned? God had orchestrated matters so that Lazarus was personally acquainted with the high priest and, on the basis of this relationship, was allowed to enter the high priest’s courtyard and to bring Peter along with him. It is here, in this courtyard, that our Lord’s prophecies about Peter’s denials are fulfilled. Once again, God’s providential hand is evident in the life of our Lord, so that every prophecy pertaining to Him is fulfilled exactly.

Jesus’ words were prophecy, and they were fulfilled precisely at the time and in the way Jesus said they would be. Once again, we see that Jesus Christ is in control, even when life seems to be unraveling at the seams, at least for Peter:

And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep. (Mark 14:72 NASB)

What a difference a few hours make! Earlier, in the same dark hours of morning, Peter courageously unsheathed his sword to defend Jesus Christ against several hundred soldiers. Not even insurmountable odds could dissuade him from serving his Master, even at the cost of his life. Yet just a few hours later, in the chill of early morning, a lone slave-girl crushes Peter's courage and resolve. The immovable rock wilted beneath the sound of her voice. The man who would *never* abandon Christ became weak-kneed with the few words of a young girl, so much so, that he denied knowing anything about Jesus Christ.

What went wrong? Peter thought that he had everything under control. He was proud, and he boasted that he would never deny Jesus:

And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me."³¹ But Peter kept saying insistently, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing, too. (Mark 14:31 NASB)

There was no consciousness of his own infirmities; no awareness of the power, pressure, and subtlety of temptation. Peter was convinced that he would stand if everyone else ran off. Here Peter takes the first step in falling away:

Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling. (Proverbs 16:18 NASB)

Instead of Peter saying, "Oh Lord, please don't let it be so, please give me strength so that I won't deny you." Peter's pride says, "I will not deny You!"

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12 NASB)

Peter later, having learned his lesson, called upon all believers to be humble:

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, (1 Peter 5:5-6 NASB)

Thinking himself strong and able to handle any situation, he overestimated his ability to resist temptation and underestimated his own propensity for sin. Failing to heed the warning of Christ, Peter stepped right into the path of a spiritual fall.

Do you heed the warnings of Christ given in the Word? Do you heed the warnings against immorality, laziness, and complacency found in Scriptures? Do you heed the warnings in James against sins of speech and the tongue? Do you pay attention to the warnings of pride going before destruction and haughtiness before a fall? In a word, do you pay heed to what the Scripture teaches?

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12 NASB)

There are many Christian young people who think. "I would never commit sexual sin."

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; (1 Thessalonians 4:3 NASB)

We all know that it is God's will that we be morally pure. But too many of us think we are above this sin. Too many think, "I would never do that." If you think this way, you are in grave danger. None of us are exceptions to any type of sin. Stephen Olford once said, "*I am capable of committing any sin known to man.*" He went on to explain the need for depending upon Christ's strength and never relying upon the flesh.

Believers, we never outgrow the need for absolute dependence upon the Lord! He is to be relied upon, trusted in, looked to, and depended upon in every setting and phase of life. Christ told Peter:

"Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mark 14:38 NASB)

Spiritual vigilance through disciplining our minds and hearts through the Word of God, worship, meditation upon the Word, obedience to His commands, and prayer move us away from self-dependence so that we might constantly be looking to the Lord.

Before you're too hard on Peter, let me ask you, "Have you ever denied the Lord?"

Before you answer that, you need to understand what it means to deny the Lord.

1. **We can deny the Lord by an explicit and open denial**—this is the kind of denial that Peter was guilty of here. In other words, there is a straightforward question, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" and the answer immediately is, "No." If you're thinking, "I would never do that," you're not listening! You're thinking you stand. We may think that there is no need for this kind of denial because we live in a free country. True, but it may not always be.
2. **We can also deny Christ by our silence**—how many times have you had the opportunity to speak for Christ and you said nothing? So often our silence is denial. Later in Peter's life, he wrote:

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; (1 Peter 3:15 NASB)

3. **We can deny our Lord by hypocrisy**—when we live in a way contrary to the teaching of the Lord, we deny Him. I know a business man who is continually preaching the Gospel to people, but is also continually violating the Scripture's moral principles of loving each other.

We are called to "*Love our neighbor as our self,*" and if we are not doing this, we are in fact denying Christ. According to our study entitled, "Who's My Neighbor," who is it that we have to love? The Samaritans, which culturally meant their enemies. Jesus was teaching that: Even my enemy is my neighbor. Jesus says to all believers: You go, love your enemy!

So in case we are feeling a little smug when we read of Peter's denials, let me ask how many opportunities

you and I have had to “stand up and testify of our faith in Jesus Christ,” and yet we have chosen to remain silent? We are not that different from Peter.

Who among us has not made strong resolves of faithfulness to Jesus Christ only to fall flat at the next bend in the road? It frustrates and shames us. We tell ourselves that it will never happen again. Yet, again it happens.

I have some good news for you this morning: **Peter’s Fall is not Final.** Remember the resurrection morning when Jesus met the women at the tomb? Notice what He tells them:

"But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you.'" (Mark 16:7 NASB)

After he denies Christ, Peter drops out of the picture; we know nothing more about what happened to him until the women come with the good news of the resurrection.

Peter repented of his sin, and the Lord forgave him and continued to use him. Peter was the first apostle to publicly preach the Gospel after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and three thousand were added to the church in one day. He was the first to have the Holy Spirit work through him in miraculous ways. We’re all familiar with the first recorded instance of a healing through Peter:

But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!" ⁷ ***And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.*** ⁸ ***And with a leap, he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.*** (Acts 3:6-8 NASB)

It was this same Peter, in light of this incident with the crippled man, who boldly confronted the religious leaders of Jerusalem in such a way as to rebuke them for not being true to their Scriptures regarding the Messiah:

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, 9 if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, 10 let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-- by this name this man stands here before you in good health. 11 "He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone. 12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:8-12 NASB)

It was Peter who was used by the Holy Spirit to put the fear of God in the church when [Ananias and Sapphira](#) lied to God about what they had done with their possessions. As each came into Peter’s presence, he pronounced God’s displeasure with them, and they immediately fell dead.

Peter was a heavy weight in the church, and people loved him and admired him and respected him for his work in the church and among the Jews of his day. It’s no coincidence that the Roman Catholic Church places Peter on the pedestal. Though they are entirely wrong about declaring him to be the first Vicar of

Christ on earth, or the first pope, it shows us that early on Peter was held in high esteem.

Just in case you are losing touch with Peter and all his boldness for Christ, let me remind you that even post-Pentecost Peter has his issues. In [Galatians 2](#) we are told that Paul had to confront Peter in Antioch, he rebukes him to his face for what would be a denial of the true Gospel. Peter, out of fear, compromised his convictions, even though he knew it was wrong. God had personally shown Peter that it was okay to eat with Gentiles. But his fear of men weakened his faith in God. And worst of all, his bad example caused the other Jewish Christians to follow his example. We often hear that Peter was a different man after Pentecost, and he was, but we see here that Peter still struggled with the same weaknesses.

We are a lot like Peter, aren't we? When was the last time fear tainted your faith? When was the last time fear caused you to shrink away from what was right so that you could avoid discomfort? When was the last time fear led you to push away people that God had led into your life? Discomfort, distress, fear, and embarrassment will always leave us looking back with remorse and regret.

Believers, there will never come a time in our Christian lives when we won't need to live in dependence upon God. And whenever we think that we can stand in our own strength, we are in trouble. The Christian life in every area is to be lived in the power of the Spirit. We are to ever and always be walking by means of the Spirit.

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