



Luke Sermon Series
Supports Session 10: Denied
Sermon Title: Avoiding The Fall
Passage: Luke 22:54-62

Connection to Luke 22

In Jesus' time of prayer on the Mount of Olives He demonstrated by His selfless surrender to the will of God that He was intent on dying on the cross. Jesus prophesied that one of His disciples would betray Him and that Peter would deny Him. Verses 54-62 demonstrate that Jesus had sovereign knowledge of future events and that He alone had embraced the cross life.

Introduction/Opening

We expect our heroes to be larger than life. We see them perform, lead, and act, forgetting that they have flaws just like us. When one of our heroes falls, the impact can be almost crippling for us. We just don't want to believe that our heroes are capable of tarnishing, especially in public.

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples experienced a big fail—one that has been preserved in Scripture for all time. On the night Jesus was crucified, Peter denied Him three times. Luke's record of Peter's fall highlights what led to his fall and serves as a warning to avoid the fall. It also serves as a picture of grace and hope.

Outline

1. Peter fell because he neglected prayer (vv. 40,46).
 - a. Minutes after Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and shortly before His season of prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus warned Peter that Satan had asked to sift him like wheat. He even told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. (22:31) Jesus not only warned Peter, but commanded him and all the disciples twice to "pray that you may not fall into temptation." (22:40,46)
 - b. Luke is clear in 22:45,46 that neither Peter, nor the other disciples prayed. Exhausted from their grief, they replaced what they needed most, prayer, with what they believed they needed, sleep.
 - c. No doubt, having recorded that the disciples slept instead of prayed, Luke intended his readers to see in Peter's three-fold denial of Jesus, the reason for his failure. Peter, who was willing to draw a sword and fight for Jesus' freedom, failed to recognize that his weapon was not physical, but spiritual. His weapon was prayer.
 - d. Paul, in Ephesians 6:12-20 clearly teaches that a follower of Christ doesn't fight a physical battle against flesh and blood but a spiritual battle against world powers of darkness and spiritual forces of evil. Therefore, his or her weapon must be spiritual. Paul

called Christians to take up the armor of God for the fight, and one of the pieces he mentioned was prayer. The follower of Jesus who fails to take up the weapon of prayer will eventually fall.

2. Peter fell because He feared men (vv. 55-60).

- a. After Jesus was arrested and led to the home of the high priest, Peter followed, but not too closely. Luke states in verse 54 he “was following at a distance.” Peter was curious, but afraid.
- b. Because Judean spring nights are historically cool, a group of people lit a fire to stay warm. Peter joined them and three different people in the group recognized him as being with Jesus. Three times, as Jesus had foretold, Peter denied knowing Jesus or even being associated with His other followers. Afraid that he might suffer the same fate as Jesus, Peter turned his back on the Lord.
- c. Jesus had warned His disciple that following Him would be dangerous (Luke 6:22). He explained that they would be excluded, insulted, and slandered because they were His followers. Just days before His own arrest, He warned them they would be arrested and persecuted. He told them they would be betrayed by family and hated by many. Some, even, would be killed. Jesus told them all of this to prepare them and call them to courage.
- d. The truth is, followers of Christ will be hated and persecuted. Paul promises in 2 Timothy 3:12 “all those who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” But Jesus, in Luke 12:4 reminds us not to fear those who can kill our bodies and then do nothing more. We are to fear God, who has authority over eternal matters. The follower of Jesus who fears the opinions and actions of men will eventually fall.

Conclusion

After Peter’s three denials and the after the rooster crowed, he and Jesus somehow locked eyes. The penetrating look of Jesus was convicting, but also loving and gracious. Peter immediately went out and wept tears of repentance and forgiveness, for after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter boldly followed the Lord and God used him in mighty ways.

Followers of Jesus can avoid the fall by learning from Peter, but when we fall we can also know that If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

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