

STUDY ON PETER

Unlikely

April 2, 2023

OPENING QUESTION

If you could redo one thing from the last week, what would it be?

Of the many stories included in the gospels about Peter, this week's is one that must have been difficult to get over. When Jesus had been taken for questioning at the high priest's house, Peter denied knowing Him. We all know moments of failure – when we fall short of our expectations for ourselves, and short of the person God has called us to be. As we read Peter's story this week, consider the unlikely God who would use stumbling disciples to build His church.

READ Mark 1:29-39

From the information in the passage, what different priorities do Peter and Jesus seem to have?

- What does this suggest about what Peter thought was the goal or purpose of Jesus' work?
- When have you discovered you have a different goals or purposes in your life than Jesus has for you? (This could be on the small scale (individual activities of experiences) or bigger things like relationships, careers, etc)
 - How can we practically grow in understanding our purpose in God's story and work in the world?

Knowing what we know about Peter, reflect on what it suggests about God, His will, character and purposes, that He would use someone like Peter to build His church. What does this show us about who God is, and how He chooses?

READ Luke 22:31-34

This conversation takes place during the Last Supper, the night Jesus is arrested, not long before Peter's denial of Jesus.

What stands out to you in this passage?

- What comfort do you find in this passage for your own times of trial and difficulty?
- How do you think Peter felt when he reflected on this conversation after denying Jesus three times?
 - What hope, comfort and courage can you find in the actions and character of Jesus here when you think about your own areas of sin and failure?

In Luke 22:32, Jesus says that He prayed "that your faith may not fail."

- What is the difference between Peter's failure of nerve – denying knowing Jesus – and a failure of faith?
- Have you experienced a failure of courage or nerve in your faith walk? (This could be like about proclaiming your faith, like Peter, or about a failure of courage to act or speak in the ways the faithful are called to.)
 - What experiences or encouragements helped bring you back and strengthen your faith?

FROM THE MESSAGE

During Jesus' trial before the chief priests, elders and scribes, Peter remained outside in the courtyard, denying even knowing Him. (Mark 14:53-72) Although in the moment of his denial, Peter was ashamed and pained, he later writes in 1 Peter 3:14-15, "But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. 'Do not fear their threats; do not be

DAILY TIME

Mark 13
Mark 14
Mark 15
Mark 16
Luke 24
John 21

As you read each day, consider:
What is Jesus like, what's His character?
What do I learn about human behavior? What reminds me of myself here?
How should I respond? (thanksgiving, confession, asking, praise, change, etc)

Good Friday

April 7, 6:30 pm Fulton Heights

SIGN UP TO SERVE!

Encounterchurch.org/serve

NOTES AND QUOTES

In both the Mark and Luke passages, Jesus reveals that He knows more than Peter does, both about God's purposes and about Peter himself. Do you often consider that He knows you better than you know yourself?

On Luke 22:31-34:

"In restoration, the ultimate success of Jesus' intercession emerges, showing how even after a disappointment, his work can lead to recovery. ... Despite all the instruction and the benefits Jesus has graciously given his disciples, they still have much to learn about depending on Him." (Bock, p 560)

Much later in his life, Peter would write these words in 1 Peter 5:8-10:

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9Resist him, firm in your **faith**, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, **strengthen**, and establish you."

frightened.' But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...**"

What might a "prepared answer" have been from Peter in those moments outside Jesus' trial?

- What is a situation in your own life where you might need to be prepared to explain your faith? Maybe, from this verse, to share about the hope you have in Christ?

This could have been a devastating moment for Peter, but it appears that as he was later equipped by the Holy Spirit, it became an opportunity for strengthening others.

- How has an experience in your faith life that felt like a weakness, a stumble, or even a failure at the time, later become wisdom and strength that you've used to encourage others?
 - Or, how *could* your experience become a way to strengthen others?

In light of these moments of denial in Mark 14:63-72, consider what Peter says in 1 Peter 2:24: "'He Himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.'"

- Based on this verse, how do you think Peter processed the importance of Jesus' death for him personally?
- How does it seem to have changed him?

EXTRA Read 1 John 1:5-2:2, focusing especially on 2:1-2

How do these verses add to your understanding of the encouragement Jesus gave to Peter in Luke 22:31-34?

- John's writing is very poetic and full of depth of meaning; what truths stand out to you in these verses?
- How do you feel challenged by these verses, especially in light of what we've been reading and learning about Peter?

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

Spend time in prayer for one another, about the needs in your lives, asking God to be at work forming you into an unlikely follower, transformed by Christ.

PRAYER AND CARE

Reminders for the week ahead:

Mark 1:29 And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. 31And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 32That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. 36And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, 37and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." 38And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." 39And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Luke 22:31-34 31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, 32but I have prayed for you that your faith may

"We need for our daily struggles some encouragement that in a time of suffering and weakness we will not abandon the faith and curse God. We need some reassurance that the ups and downs of our faith will not end someday in a permanent down and fail utterly. ...It is encouraging to know that God is infinitely stronger than Satan, and that if we simply trust God to the end, he will give us eternal life. But it is doubly encouraging, doubly hopeful, that Jesus Christ and God the Father do not stand back and watch to see if we will have the strength to endure in faith. In fact, I am sure that if the Holy Trinity were not busy day and night strengthening my faith, it would evaporate in a minute."

[John Piper](#)

not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." 34Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

1 John 1:5-2:2

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2:1My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.