

PETER DENIES JESUS

This week inaugurates a new era. An era into the purpose of God! The purpose of God was to deal with sin on the cross; this week everything that God does, is very deliberate. Deal with the sting of death, & God deploys several means to get this done. It's very purposeful! God lines up events including this one of Peter to demonstrate that there was going to be hatred for the son of man; that even the closest will not be willing to associate with him. He recognized the hand of God through out the journey of the cross. That's why in (Luke 22:22) he said, “ *The son of man will go as it has been decreed.* ”

So right from the beginning we should know that Jesus understood his death to be an act of divine necessity! Jesus was not an unfortunate victim who got caught in the cross fire; his death was a deliberate target of the power of God, each incident moving against him for our own sake! All the combined efforts were as a result of the outworking of divine necessity; and we are just going to look at one of them; which is Peter's denial of Jesus.

Peter, as prophesied failed to confess his Lord when opportunity arose. In (Luke.22:33) he had just said, “*Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!*” But now, His boast that he would go to Prison and die for Christ proved worthless, when an opportunity arose! (*somebody say, ‘when opportunity arises, I will stand for Christ*)

When the time came, Peter expressed denial and not discipleship. God is looking for men and women that will express discipleship in various areas of deployment. Peter was deployed amidst non-believers, he expressed hatred for Christ! As soon as the cock crowed, he knew his failure and went outside, and wept bitterly! (**vs. 62**) But there are several things that Peter's denial did: Peter's denial showed that:

1. Human failure and Man's independence is dealt with

Peter's failure to take a stand for Christ drove a nail into the body of Jesus on the cross. But you see, we have a God who specializes in bringing good out of evil. Peter's failure had a positive result in his life, because the cross is the place where God's love embraces failure, tragedy, and human incapability, there was no better place for Peter to fail, than on the way to the cross.

From that time on, he understood that human failure could only be dealt with on the cross.! Failure was not going to be dealt with through trying again by himself, it wasn't going to be through education, it would only be through Christ and submission to him. Many times we are so independent of God!

2. Peter's denial of Christ challenged his identity:

In Luke 23: 56 it says, *"Then a slave girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight, stared at him and said, 'This man was with him too!'"* But Peter denied it: he said, *"Woman, I don't know him!"* you see, by associating Peter with Jesus, the slave girl ascribed identity to Peter... she said, *"You were also there"* in other words, she affirmed to Peter what he was supposed to be identified with. In **Matt.10:33-ff**, Jesus had already taught Peter saying, *"Whoever, acknowledges me before people, I will acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before people, I will deny him also before my Father in heaven."* It is our identity in Christ, that determines our destiny. The slave girl was showing Peter his destiny! She was saying without knowing it, that *'You belong to Christ, you must reign with him!'* The slave girl was showing Peter that in order to reach that destiny, there's a process: there's a process to become a disciple! To reach the reigning destiny, you must first have been with Jesus! You must have identity with him! Your DNA must match with his! The slave girl looked at Peter and said, *'Your DNA matches that of Christ! (tell your neighbor your DNA must match with that of Christ!)* *(Father, let my DNA match with yours...!)* and when that happens, you will make a difference wherever God has placed you! Once your DNA matches with that of Christ, you don't need introduction that you are saved! People will recognize that you are different!

The bible tells us People 'sat down among them' so by sitting amongst them, yet with a different DNA, he told a story of his identity being different! Each time you sit amongst those people, tell a different story! *(Father! Each time I sit amongst those people, let me tell the story of my identity)*

3. That denial humbled Peter himself: The incident shattered Peter's illusion about himself; it humbled him and changed the way he would have liked others to think of him. You see, the cross forces us to see ourselves as we really are! It's not about *'I can make it!'* No! The cross deals with the reality

to deal with our self-righteousness! It demonstrates that only those who are ready to lose their pride, can succeed in the Kingdom of God! That's why according to **(James 4:6)** God opposes the proud, but shows favor to the humble! *(Lift your voice and say, Father! During this holy week, show me favour, as I learn deal with my own pride!)*

Listen, the world teaches us that only the strong can survive; in fact Peter wanted to show that he is the strong one; he is the survivor; he can make it on his own! the kingdom of God teaches us that it is failures and weaklings that succeed! Because they have accepted that on their own they can do nothing, but with Christ, they can do ALL THINGS! That's why St Paul in **1 Cor.1:27** *"But God chose what the world thinks is foolish to shame the wise, and God chose what the world thinks is weak to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, what is regarded as nothing, to set aside what is regarded as something"* God will humble the pride! As a disciple of Christ, you cannot partner with the man of the cross, if you don't part with pride! Peter's failure qualified him, to begin to be a disciple on the way to the cross!

Part of the humility of Peter was his cry! In **(Luke 22:61)** the bible says, *"Then the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him..."* The Greek word here shows that this was not just a glance, it wasn't a mere stare! It was a focused look that pierced the heart of Peter and tore it into pieces, & at the same time it was a look of assurance assuring him even though he had failed, to live up to his word, there was still an opportunity! Listen, during our moments of failure, may we sense the Saviour's loving look on us! May our hearts break and return to him for cleansing! The bible again tells us that Peter *'remembered the word of the Lord!'* Peter wept because he remembered the word of the Lord! The remembrance of the word of the Lord brought him to a place of repentance! That cry altered his life! When you read in Acts 1 when he is preaching, you will discover he is a changed man! During this lent & holy week, your repentance is going to alter your life! He felt sorry for having been proud of himself, rather than in Christ! You see, in (1 Cor.1:31), Paul said, *"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*