

AN EXAMPLE OF FORGIVENESS

MARK 14

Text:

Introduction:

Our study of Mark's Gospel has brought us to one of the saddest and most tragic passages in the Bible. Every time I read this story, I am reminded of how fast and how far a saint of God can fall. Yet, in this tragic account of Simon Peter's fall, I find a message of hope and encouragement.

Today we will see a picture or example of forgiveness.

Peter had failed in a big way.

Peter's story is important to us, because we all find ourselves in the place of failure from time to time. When we do, it is a comfort to know that our heavenly Father is a God of boundless love, unending mercy, and absolute forgiveness. It is a blessing to know that, just because we are down, does not mean we are out.

Notice:

1. PETER AND HIS REJECTION

It might be helpful at this point if we set the scene. Jesus has just been arrested by the Jewish leaders. They were aided in His arrest by Roman soldiers. Jesus has been taken to the palace of the High Priest, where He endured a sham trial, in which the Jewish leadership did everything it could to guarantee that He received a guilty verdict and a death sentence.

As Peter sits at a fire in the courtyard warming himself, **v. 54**, he is approached by a woman. **John 18:17** tells us that it was the same woman who kept the door. She comes up to Peter and she identifies him as one of the Lord's disciples, **v. 67**.

When Peter hears her words, he immediately denies any connection to the Lord Jesus. He gives this loud denial, then he walks away **v. 68**.

As soon as Peter makes this first denial, the sound of a rooster crowing can be heard in the courtyard, **v. 68**. That rooster was a warning to Peter.

Mark 14:68

⁶⁸ But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

Jesus had told him very clearly that before the rooster could crow twice, Peter would deny his Lord three times, **v. 30**. When Peter heard that rooster crowing,

he should have walked out of that courtyard. He should have removed himself from danger.

At this point, Peter was not thinking about roosters, he was just trying to deflect attention from himself. I can imagine him standing around trying to look nonchalant; just trying not to draw attention to himself.

No sooner does he walk away than another girl sees him and yells, “***This is one of them!***”, **v. 69**

Mark 14:69

⁶⁹ And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

Peter denies any ties to Jesus for the second time. According to **Matthew 26:72**, this time Peter denied the Lord with an “***oath***”.

Matthew 26:72

⁷² And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Peter is left alone for a while. **Luke 22:59** tells us that an hour passes. By this time, surely Peter has started to relax. He may think the people gathered there have forgotten about him. He could not have been more wrong.

Luke 22:59

⁵⁹ And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.

Peter is approached for the third time. He is accused of being one of the Lord's disciples again, **v. 70**. Peter's accent has identified him as being from Galilee, the place where every one of the Lord's disciples but Judas called home.

Mark 14:70

⁷⁰ And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

When Peter hears this accusation, he loses all hold on himself. Peter begins to "***curse and to swear***", **v. 71**.

Mark 14:71

⁷¹ But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

He has fallen fast and he has fallen far. He has come to a place where he has no fear of God. First Peter lies. Then he tells a double lie to cover up the first lie. Then he tries to prove his lies by taking God's name in vain. It is just the grace of God that Peter was not struck down by the Lord where he stood that night.

2. PETER AND HIS REASONS

Peter would have never believed that he could have done what he did. The Lord tried to tell him, but he refused to believe the Lord. Peter fell and he fell fast!

What happened to bring him to this place?

There are some clear signs that show us that he was headed for trouble in his spiritual life. These signs can also reveal the presence of spiritual problems in our own lives.

Note:

- Self Confidence

After Jesus and His disciples finished the Passover meal earlier in the evening, Jesus told His men that they would all forsake Him that very night, **v. 27**. Peter spoke up and told Jesus that the rest of them might leave, but he never would, **v. 28**. Peter believed that he had reached a place in his spiritual life where failure was an impossibility! That is a dangerous place to be.

Mark 14:27-29

²⁷ And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. ²⁸ But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. ²⁹ But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

Never think that what happened to Peter can't happen to you. It can happen to you as quickly as it took place in the life of Peter.

- Defiance

Even though Peter was told very clearly by the Lord what would happen, Peter rejected the Word of the Lord, **v. 31**. He was defiant in that he stood in open opposition to the clear Word of God.

Mark 14:31

³¹ But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

Another sign that a believer is headed for trouble is when they refuse to listen to the Word of God. You can do as you please, but the Word of God will always be right! If you want to be right, line up with the Book. If you want to fall into trouble, stand in defiance to this Bible. Any believer is in trouble when they refuse to obey the Word of God!

- Prayerlessness and Indifference

In **verses 33-38**, Jesus went to pray and told His disciples to pray with Him. They were indifferent to the needs of the moment and instead of praying they fell asleep. They fell asleep not one time, but three times! They showed a callous indifference to the warnings of the Lord. They refused to pray and seek God, which would have served them well when the attacks of the devil and the flesh came.

Mark 14:33-38

³³ And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; ³⁴ And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. ³⁵ And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶ And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. ³⁷ And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? ³⁸ Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

When you stop seeking God's face and show clear indifference to His will and His Word, you are headed for failure in your spiritual life. Beware when your prayer life starts to suffer!

- Impulsiveness

Jesus told His men that He was going to be arrested and that it is the will of God that this happen. When it does, Peter reacts impulsively and strikes out with his sword, cutting off the ear of a man named Malchus, **v. 47**.

Mark 14:47

⁴⁷ And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Peter was operating outside the revealed will of God. He was doing what he thought was right with no thought for what God was doing around him.

The Lord didn't need Peter to defend Him.

He could have summoned a limitless number of angels to protect Him. He could have defended Himself.

We are headed for a fall when we walk impulsively. When we take no thought for the will of God, we are headed for trouble! When we take no thought for what God is doing around us, we are headed for trouble. When we walk like we want to, we are headed for trouble.

- Following “afar off”

We must give Peter credit. His love for Jesus refused to allow him to stay away. He followed the Lord, but we are told that he followed “*afar off*”, v. 54.

Mark 14:54

⁵⁴ And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

When Peter was near Jesus, he was filled with confidence and faith. When he was separated from Jesus, he was filled with fear and doubt.

The same is true for us. The Lord's will is that His children walk as close to Him as possible. When we are close to Him, we will live clean, holy lives. We are given faith, power and love. We have the faith to stand for

Jesus, the power to work for Jesus, and the love of Christ that will lead us to serve Him and the world around us for His glory.

When we walk afar off, we do not serve Him, love Him and obey Him as we should. When our love for Him and our desire to be close to Him fades, we are headed for a fall.

- **Bad Company**

While Jesus was being tried, spit upon, and beaten, the chief of His disciples was warming himself at the enemy's fire. Peter's downfall was accelerated because he found himself in the company of people who had no love for Jesus.

When we surround ourselves with people who do not honor the Lord, we are headed for trouble.

Wrong company will result in wrong living, wrong loving and brutal falls.

1 Corinthians 15:33

³³ Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

1 Corinthians 5:6

⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

Proverbs 13:20

²⁰ He that walketh with wise *men* shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

3. PETER AND HIS REMORSE

Peter denies the Lord three times. As soon as he does, a rooster crows for the second time, just like Jesus said it would, **v. 72**. When this happens, Peter instantly realizes what he has done.

Mark 14:72

⁷² And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

According to **Luke 22:61**, when Peter denied Jesus this last time, the Lord Himself turned and looked at Peter. When their eyes met, Peter remembered the Lord's words. He remembered that Jesus had told him he would do what he had just done.

Luke 22:61

⁶¹ And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

When Peter saw those eyes, the Lord's words came back to mind. When Peter remembered, he ran from the courtyard and "**he wept**". We are not allowed to watch Peter as he weeps his way back to the Lord. This

is a time of private repentance and it is none of our business.

4. PETER AND HIS RESTORATION

Here is where this story begins to be a blessing. There is no question that Peter failed the Lord in a huge way. There is no question that the fall was his fault. There is no question that Peter was way out of God's will. But, there is no question that when he truly repented, Peter was forgiven and restored. The facts prove this to be true.

After the Lord rose from the grave, the angel who came to the tomb said this:

Mark 16:7

⁷ But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

A few days later, Jesus met Peter by the Sea of Galilee, **John 21:15-17**. While they are there, Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves Him. Three times Peter affirms his love for the Lord and Jesus promises to use Peter. This promise is fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when Peter is filled with the Holy Ghost, and when he preaches the Gospel, three thousand souls are saved. Then, all the way to the twelfth chapter of Acts, Peter is the dominate figure in the early church. Yes, Peter failed God, but he repented and he was forgiven and restored by the very God he denied.

John 21:15-17

¹⁵ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. ¹⁶ He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. ¹⁷ He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Close:

This time in Peter's life was a time of extreme embarrassment and spiritual pain. Did Peter take anything away from this time of failure? Did Peter really learn any lasting spiritual lessons? I think he did.

If you will read the books of First and Second Peter, you will see that Peter addresses some of the problems that led to his own failure.

- He writes about pride

1 Peter 5:5-6

⁵ Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. ⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

- He writes about disobedience

1 Peter 1:2

²Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

1 Peter 3:1

¹Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

1 Peter 4:17

¹⁷For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

- He writes about prayerlessness

1 Peter 4:7

⁷But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

- He writes about compromise

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

2 Peter 3:17

¹⁷Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

- He writes about diligence

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

2 Peter 1:10

¹⁰ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

Peter learned his lesson and he repented and he was restored.

If you have wandered away from God, you can come home. If you will, the Lord will receive you and He will forgive you. He will do more than that, He will restore you and He will use you again for His glory.