

1. Pride

Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "This very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." (Matthew 26:33-35)

- Connection: Peter had a trust problem—i.e. Disbelief (Jesus warned: This night you will all fall away)
 - A failure to take seriously the words of Christ (not placing self under the Word's authority)
 - **Too low** a view of God's Word and **too high** a view of self (pride) ("doesn't apply to me")
- Pride is an **ungodly self-reliance** that draws us away from a **God-dependent** (trusting) sort of living

2. Prayerlessness

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:40-41)

- Prayer is the way we **acquire** correct perspective (watch and pray)
- Prayer is the way we **resource** right living (not fall into temptation)
- Prayer is the way we **draw** strength from God (the flesh is weak)
- Prayerlessness deprives us of right **perspective**, and divine **resource** and **strength**
- We are left to **perceive**, **live** and **act** on our own (at really critical times especially)

3. Acting in the Flesh

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested Him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. (Matthew 26:50b-51)
(John 18:10 tells us the companion was Peter)

- At best, acting in the flesh is trying to achieve God's purposes **apart from God**. At worst it is ignoring God's purposes and **preferring our own**. (CALLED TO **WALK IN THE SPIRIT**)
- This was the **wrong perspective** on the situation and the **wrong resource** (it fell short of God's purposes)
 - How often that's the case in our lives!? (WRONG SWORD)
 - The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful... (2 Corinthians 10:4)
 - 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD (Zechariah 4:6)
- **(0) Ignoring Christ's words, (1) full of himself, (2) failing to pray and (3) acting in his own wisdom and resources, Peter finds himself...**

4. Following Jesus at a Distance

But Peter followed Jesus at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. (Matthew 26:58)

- Intimacy has been forsaken (Cnt. **Mark 3**)
- Slipping downhill / Falling away (check yourself)
- Spectator not a participant
- **Peter thought it would be better for him to get away from Jesus when it got too close to the Cross (wrong!)**

5. Warming One's Self at the Enemy's Fire

And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. (Luke 22:55)

- When our **relational connection** with and **obedience to Jesus** is distant we are attracted to and connect ourselves with the wrong people, places, and things (**Psalm 1**)
- Lacking the **peace, joy and satisfaction** that is relationship with Jesus we go looking for **warmth elsewhere**
- **False fires...** (Especially the false fire of unforgiveness)
- We are never closer to Jesus than when we are closest to the Cross (what it has done for us and does to us)

6. Denials and Disassociations

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowd. (Matthew 26:69-74)

- The invitation of Jesus is of us to **deny ourselves** (when we do not, we deny Jesus)
- Ways we **deny** and **disassociate** ourselves from Jesus... (really it was happening all along—full expression)

The Outcome

Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowd. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:60b-62)

- Peter **wept bitterly** (His choices ended in heartbreak)
- **John 10:10** (examine the roads you are on)
- **The look** from Jesus...

The source of Peter's bitter weeping was that he had missed out on all the good things Jesus had for him in His great love for Him (good things in the hardest place—the Cross)

Each of these failures of Peter's was a refusal to lay hold of a better invitation from Jesus:

- Distrust v. Belief
- Pride v. Humility
- Prayerlessness v. Resource
- Flesh v. Spirit
- Distance v. Intimacy
- False Fires v. True Fire
- Denial v. Confession
- Heartbreak v. Joy

The **good news** to remember is that when we are confronted with these slippery temptations, we have been offered better invitations! (that lead to better places)

Here is the ultimate Good News

- Peter had said at the beginning: "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will... Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."
 - Jesus would actually die for Peter... became a curse for him
 - Jesus would say to Peter, "I will never leave or forsake you... I am with you always"

Maybe you have fallen or are already far down this road...

- **On the first Easter Sunday when the women went to the tomb they were startled to find the stone rolled away and an angel there, and the angel said to them:**
 - "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. **But go, tell his disciples and Peter.** 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" (Mark 16:6-7)
 - Jesus wanted Peter to know that his great fall was **not the end of the story**

When they met Jesus on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, He was waiting for them with **a fire burning** and fish and bread cooking to eat (See John 21:9)

- A different fire; a better invitation; a better place to sit and warm yourself (God's love)
- If you find yourself travelling Peter's path—**repent** (the prodigal's Father)
- Confront your **prayerlessness** today