

# PETER

*A FLAWED, YET FAITHFUL  
FOLLOWER OF JESUS*

August 23, 2020  
“I Will Not Deny You”

## OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we come today with thankful hearts. We know that we are like Peter, both flawed and faithful. Forgive us for the times we turn away from you, the times we deny you, the times we fail to serve others in your name. Thank you for your never-ending love and your grace-filled forgiveness. We look to you for courage and strength, for guidance and direction, as we continue to be your faithful, yet flawed, disciples. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

### Matthew 26:31-35 (CEB)

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Tonight you will all fall away because of me. This is because it is written, *I will hit the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will go off in all directions.* <sup>32</sup> But after I’m raised up, I’ll go before you to Galilee.”

<sup>33</sup> Peter replied, “If everyone else stumbles because of you, I’ll never stumble.”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, “I assure you that, before the rooster crows tonight, you will deny me three times.”

<sup>35</sup> Peter said, “Even if I must die alongside you, I won’t deny you.” All the disciples said the same thing.

### Luke 22:54-62 (CEB)

<sup>54</sup> After they arrested Jesus, they led him away and brought him to the high priest’s house. Peter followed from a distance. <sup>55</sup> When they lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

<sup>56</sup> Then a servant woman saw him sitting in the firelight. She stared at him and said, “This man was with him too.”

<sup>57</sup> But Peter denied it, saying, “Woman, I don’t know him!”

<sup>58</sup> A little while later, someone else saw him and said, “You are one of them too.”

But Peter said, “Man, I’m not!”

<sup>59</sup> An hour or so later, someone else insisted, “This man must have been with him, because he is a Galilean too.”

<sup>60</sup> Peter responded, “Man, I don’t know what you are talking about!” At that very moment, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup> The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered the Lord’s words: “Before a rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” <sup>62</sup> And Peter went out and cried uncontrollably.

## INTRODUCTION

During the Last Supper, Jesus predicted that all the disciples would soon abandon him and that Peter would deny knowing him three times. Peter adamantly proclaimed that he would never desert or deny knowing Jesus. However, before the night was over, Peter not only deserted Jesus but he denied knowing him three times. It's a night that Peter would talk about over and over again. If Peter's story is our story, what can we learn from Peter's failure?

We probably won't deny Jesus with our words like Peter, but we all will deny Jesus at times by our actions or inactions. When that happens, we seek forgiveness and remember that God is a God of second chances. Our lives are not defined by our worst or most embarrassing moment.

Our failure may very well be something God can use in our ministry in the future. Telling the stories of how we failed on our faith journey encourages people and helps them find hope.

## QUESTIONS

- 1) It's been five months since our nation began a lockdown because of COVID-19. How are you doing in this turbulent environment? Take time to share your feelings with the group.
- 2) On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = you **never** think of others first, 10 = you **always** think of others first) how are you doing at humbly serving others? Why did you give yourself that score?
- 3) Read Matthew 26:31-35 on page 1. Do you believe the disciples would have handled things any better if Jesus had given them a pep talk rather than this somber warning? Spiritually, which is more important for you—to believe you've got the strength to handle anything, or to be aware that you need to rely on God's power, which is greater than yours?
- 4) The night Jesus was arrested, he asked James, John and Peter to come with him deeper into the Garden of Gethsemane as he prayed. Mark tells us Jesus was anxious and in despair. Do you try to hide your hurts and your needs from your friends, to handle them on your own? Or are you, like Jesus, open to asking people you trust for the friendship and support you need?
- 5) When the Temple guard came to arrest Jesus, Peter tried to fight, and Jesus stopped him. We still live in a world where violence often feels like the only viable response to evil. Is it? To what extent do you believe Jesus was right, and to what extent was his situation different from "real life"?

## FINAL APPLICATION

This week, reflect on what story of failure in your life you could share with others to give them hope and encouragement.