

一位圣徒失败跌倒、破碎复兴的真实经历—马克福音 14:66-72

How a Saint Fell Into Sin, Became Broken, and Was Restored— Mark 14:66-72

Introduction and Outline

- Scripture Reading: Mark 14:66-72; 1 Peter 5:8-11; 1 John 1:8-10

Mark 14:66-72 (NASB1995)

⁶⁶ As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.” ⁶⁸ But he denied *it*, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.” And he went out onto the porch. ⁶⁹ The servant-girl saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, “This is *one* of them!” ⁷⁰ But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, “Surely you are *one* of them, for you are a Galilean too.” ⁷¹ But he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this man you are talking about!” ⁷² Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, “Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.” And he began to weep.

- Of all the gifts God gives to man, none is more precious than the forgiveness of sin. Without forgiveness, we’d have no cleansing of conscience, no courage to face ourselves honestly, no reconciliation with God, no capacity for genuine love, no victory over sin and death, no escape from eternal judgment in hell, and no hope of eternal bliss with the Lord in heaven. All spiritual blessings—both now and for eternity—are grounded in the fact that God forgives sin.
- **Exodus 34:6-7** "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin."
- **Psalm 86:5**, "For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in loving kindness to all who call upon You."
- **Isaiah 55:7** "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."
- Just how serious is Peter’s sin of denying the Lord three times?
- **Luke 12:9** “But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.”
- However, after Peter’s repentance, he was not only forgiven but greatly used by God, becoming one of the most important apostles in the early church. This encourages every believer who is humble enough to see his own sinfulness and reminds us that we need not lose heart over our failures. Instead, we can continue to rely on God’s grace and become vessels fit for His use.
- Title : How a Saint Fell Into Sin, Became Broken, and Was Restored
A Severe Caution—Our Total Weakness (vv. 66-71)
A Strong Comfort—God’s Abundant Grace (v.72)

A Severe Caution—Our Total Weakness (vv. 66-71)

- “As Peter was below in the courtyard”: Peter’s failure did not happen by chance; there were clear signs leading up to it. 1) Peter was **prideful and self-confident**, lacking self-knowledge (14:29); 2) Peter did not **listen carefully to Jesus’ words** (14:30-31); 3) Peter failed to **prepare himself through prayer** (14:37); 4) Peter tried to tackle Satan in an **impulsive and fleshly way** (14:47); 5) Peter did not know to **avoid temptation** (14:54).

【Analysis】 Some say Peter entered the courtyard out of love for Jesus, while the other disciples had already fled. But Peter’s love for Jesus was clearly mixed with over-self-confidence and utter ignorance of his own vulnerability. He failed to see the need to avoid temptation. If Peter had known in advance what he would do in that courtyard, he would have never entered. Publicly denying the Lord was the last thing Peter wanted to do.

【Principle】 If we know certain places or situations present strong temptations to us and we’re not spiritually prepared to face them, we must avoid them entirely.

- “one of the servant-girls of the high priest”: The first person to cause Peter to stumble was a female door-keeper (John 18:17).

【Principle】 If Christians are not spiritually prepared, even the weakest adversary or smallest temptation can overwhelm our faith. We can prepare ourselves for big events, but as soon as the unexpected happens in our normal course of life, we freak out and do not know how to tackle it by faith.

【Reflection】 How a person reacts instinctively to unexpected situations often reveals their true character more accurately than planned events. Here, Peter’s pride and self-confidence as well as his lack of trust in God were exposed by a simple challenge from a mere servant-girl.

- “‘You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.’ ... ‘I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.’” The differences in the details across the four Gospels are more than normal variation from different people telling the same thing. Each denial must’ve involved a series of deliberate rejections. Rather than saying Peter denied the Lord three times, it’d be more accurate to say he denied Him three rounds.
- “And he went out onto the porch”: Matthew says he “went out to the gateway”, perhaps the dim lighting there made it less likely for him to be spotted out, or perhaps he was still trying to prove his earlier boast (14:29).
- “And a rooster crowed”: This is a reminder from God that it’s time to consider Jesus’ prophecy (14:30)! However, Peter seems to have ignored it completely.
- 【Principle】 Pride has a strong blinding power that makes us blind to our own faults and prone to ignore anything that ought to prick our conscience.
- “The servant-girl saw him...”: Matthew mentions “another servant-girl” making the same accusation, and Luke records that a man also spotted Peter out. At least three different individuals challenged Peter’s identity in this round.

- “But again he denied it”: Matthew says Peter here began to swear, denying Jesus “with an oath” (Matt 26:72). Swearing an oath means to call upon God to bear witness so as to add weight to one’s words. Dare you ask God to bear witness to your lie? It is an outright insult to God’s character.

【Bonus Point】 This is exactly **the kind of oath-swearing Jesus forbade in the Sermon on the Mount** (Matthew 5:33-37)! We should never invoke God’s name simply to add weight to our words. Even if what we say is true, we must not use oaths to make our statements more convincing. This is treating God as our servant, which is pretty blasphemous. **Equivalents to oaths include abusing Scripture to say what we want to say, or presumptuously using others’ names to support our opinion, saying things like, “We all think this way!”**

- “And after a little while”: According to Luke, about an hour had passed since the previous denial. If Peter’s first denial was an unprepared stumble into sin, by this third round, it had become a deliberate, repeated, and unrepentant act.
- “curse and swear”: Cursing is even worse than swearing—it involves invoking divine punishment upon oneself if the statement is untrue. The words coming out of Peter’s mouth would be something like: “I swear by God, I do not know this man. And if I’m lying, may God strike me dead!”

A Strong Comfort—God’s Abundant Grace (v. 72)

- “Immediately”: compare this moment with what was happening inside the house (14:53-65).

【Strong contrast】 Inside the house, Jesus was standing trial and courageously testifying to the truth. Outside in the courtyard, Peter was frantically lying, swearing and cursing that he did not know Jesus. Inside, false witnesses accused Jesus with lies, yet He remained silent. Outside, truthful statements were made against Peter, but he responded with repeated denials. Inside, when Jesus was confronted with His identity, He boldly confessed who He was, fully aware this would lead to His death. Outside, when Peter was confronted with his identity, he kept lying desperately to protect himself, fearing his identity as Jesus’ follower would cost him his life. The contrast is striking, isn’t it? **Jesus, for the sake of granting Peter eternal life, was standing for the truth in the house; while Peter, for the sake of preserving his temporary life, was standing for a lie in the courtyard.**

【Insight】 It is precisely this contrast that gives us the hope that even after we have failed repeatedly, we can still trust God and be restored, right? Because Jesus stood firm inside the house to fulfill His mission from God—to atone for the sins of His disciples, **even for those, like Peter, who had failed so miserably.**

【Gospel】 **Jesus won the victory where we have failed. He stood firm where we stumbled. His perfect life satisfies God’s righteous requirements, so that we may be accepted as God’s children.**

- **2 Corinthians 5:21** “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”.
- “And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him”: **God’s Word has always been the key to restoring His people.**
- **Psalm 119:25**, “My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your word.”

【Details】 According to Luke 22:61, Jesus “turned and looked at Peter,” and it was then that Peter remembered His words. What Peter remembered clearly included Jesus’ prophecy about his restoration after his failure (**Luke 22:31-32**).

- “And he began to weep”: He broke down in tears. This is a common experience for believers who have fallen into sin and are on the path to spiritual restoration.

【Insight】 What Peter must’ve felt painfully intense was the utter collapse of his self-confidence. He saw just how useless his boastful words really are. It is only through an **utter despair in one’s own strength** can he **place all his trust in God**. It is a **painful process to be rid of all self-confidence**, and that’s why Peter ran out and wept bitterly.

【Caution】 Not all who weep bitterly and feel a sense of self-despair are truly repentant according to God’s will. Judas was so overcome by despair that he hung himself. How do we know that Peter’s sorrow was out of true repentance? By its fruit:

- 2 Corinthians 7:10-11, “For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what **earnestness** this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what **vindication** of yourselves, what **indignation**, what **fear**, what **longing**, what **zeal**, what **avenging** of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.”

Conclusion

Jesus has always been in the business of restoring failed believers like Peter. The question is: **Have you, like Peter, grieved and repented deeply, acknowledging your total failure before God?**