

## Peter Denies the King – Mark 14:66-72

As part of the Mark's Gospel series we continue to read the account of the night of Jesus' betrayal. Following the passage discussing the Trial of the King, we read this passage about Peter. This is an opportunity for Peter to step up. The Gospel of Mark has been building Peter to this point.

Peter was called by Jesus (Ch 2); appointed as the first apostle (Ch 3); joined Jesus walking on water (Ch 6); declares Jesus is the Christ (Ch 8); witnesses the transfiguration (Ch 9). Peter has been a key guy, and someone you would expect to make a stand. He even promises to do this earlier in the chapter. Yet here, at the night of Jesus' trial, moments from His execution, we see a different Peter.

### 1) Peter's Fall

#### **Read Mark 14:66-72**

Peter denies Christ, not once, but three times. Hours after telling Jesus he would die before denying the Christ. Here we read Peter denying Jesus. Not because a crowd of Roman soldiers were after him. Not because His life, or the lives of his friends and family were threatened by an army. He denied Jesus because a servant girl asked him a simple question.

Mature Christians are not exempt from attack. In places of responsibility, mature in their faith, we can still be brought down. Often by things seemingly insignificant. Often when feeling closest to God, temptations arise to pull you away. Peter was close to Jesus, but fear and temptation arose to turn from Jesus at this moment.

**Q. When have you felt most under attack? How has this affected your walk with God?**

**Q. Have you known someone you considered to be a mature Christian stumble with a temptation? How did their stumble affect your view of them?**

### 2) Peter's Weakness

Peter appeared mature, but his weaknesses brought him down. Accused by a girl, his fear of what could happen; fear of being arrested; fear of family being persecuted; made him choose the easy option. Rather than standing firm, like Jesus, Peter was gripped by fear and he denied Jesus. We need to be aware of our weaknesses. We need to know the temptations that pose the greatest risk so that we are prepared when trials come.

Paul, in later letters written in the New Testament, goes as far as to boast in his weaknesses. This is not celebrating our weaknesses, but recognising that they have no power over us. We need to recognise that our weaknesses do not make us weak. Our weaknesses give opportunity for God to make us strong. By bringing our weaknesses into the open, God is able to work in the situations and make us strong.

**Q. Why do weaknesses that are hidden away have greater strength over us? What stops us from sharing our weaknesses?**

**Q. How can we support one another to prevent us from falling into temptation?**

### 3) Peter's Future

One event changes Peter. This passage shows a Peter that could talk the talk, but stumbled at the hurdle of a servant girl. Peter had been at the feeding of the 5,000; Peter had been sent out to perform miracles; Peter had seen the transfigured Jesus, but this was not enough when trial came. However, reading on, through to the book of Acts, we see a Peter who could stand up in front of the crowds on the day of Pentecost; we see a Peter who, when arrested and on trial, could proclaim Christ; Church history recalls a Peter who was prepared to go to the cross rather than deny his Saviour. Once Peter encountered the Holy Spirit, knowing God in a new way, he was able to stand firm for what he believed.

**Q. How do past experiences, good and bad, affect you when confronted with trials?**

**Q. How do you allow the Holy Spirit to lead you during difficult times?**

### 4) Never Denied by God

Peter turned his back on his friend, God later turned His back on Jesus as Jesus bore the weight of sin. Jesus was tried so that we would never be put under trial. This trial allowed us to come to God. The punishment of our sin has been put on Jesus and the price has been paid. Now we will never be denied by God.

There will never be a trial that we go through where Jesus will turn His back on us. There will never be a time when Jesus will deny knowing us. It is through this act that we know God and can stand firm in what we believe.

**Q. What trials are you facing where you need God to stand beside you?**

**Q. Read Matthew 28:19-20. How does this encourage us when faced with trial and temptation?**

**Pray for each other for going through trials and temptations. Pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen and encourage.**