



Peter On Trial

Key idea:

While Jesus stands resolute and fearless in His trial, Peter crumbles under fear, denying Jesus just as Jesus had prophesied would happen. Yet, he was later restored by Jesus to a life of faithfulness.

Key text:

Mark 14:53-72

They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. 54 Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire. 55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. 56 Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.’” 59 Yet even then their testimony did not agree. 60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” 61 But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

62 “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” 63 The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. 64 “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned him as worthy of death. 65 Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said. 68 But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway. [And a rooster crowed]. 69 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.”

70 Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” 71 He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.” 72 Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Key points:

1. Jesus stood firm in His trial, while Peter failed in his.
2. Our failures in bearing witness to Christ often stem from a lack of prayer and spiritual preparation.
3. God's grace is greater than our failures, and He offers restoration and renewal.
4. Christ's faithfulness, not our failures, ultimately defines us as believers.

Discussion Questions:

1. What similarities and differences do you notice between Jesus' trial and Peter's experience in the courtyard?
2. The teaching mentions that Peter's denial was connected to his failure to pray in the garden. How does this highlight the importance of prayer in our spiritual lives?
3. Can you share a time when you felt pressured to compromise your faith or values? How did you respond?
4. How does the story of Peter's restoration offer hope for those who have failed or denied Christ in some way?
5. The teaching mentions Thomas Cranmer's story. How does his eventual stand for faith, despite initial failure, encourage you?
6. In what ways do you find it challenging to bear witness to Christ in our current cultural climate? Are there any specific issues that you find difficult to know what following Jesus faithfully would look like?
7. How does the message of God's restoring grace impact your view of your own failures and shortcomings?

Practical Applications:

1. **Prayer Challenge:** Commit to spending more time in prayer this week, perhaps using the example of Jesus in the garden as a model.
2. **Witness Preparation:** Identify one area where you might be challenged to stand for your faith. Prepare a respectful, loving response in advance.
3. **Restoration Reflection:** If you're struggling with past failures, spend time meditating on scriptures about God's forgiveness and restoration (e.g., 1 John 1:9, Psalm 103:12).
4. **Group Support:** Share prayer requests related to areas where you need strength to stand firm in your faith. Commit to praying for each other throughout the week.
5. **Community Engagement:** Discuss ways your group can participate in the upcoming countywide prayer night or similar events to strengthen the broader Christian community.