

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Mark: Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God

Part III: The Perfect Sacrifice Of Jesus, The Perfect Servant Of God, Mark 11:1-15:47

U. Lessons From Peter's Denial Of Jesus Under Duress

(Mark 14:66-72)

I. Introduction

- A. Mark's Gospel was written by a man who was rebounding from having abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13) due to some unspecified difficulty.
- B. Peter's denial of Jesus under the duress of fear of execution in being identified with Jesus mirrors to a degree Mark's own later failure to stick to the ministry assignment he had, and viewing the dynamics of that denial equips us with insight to learn what to avoid to remain faithful to the Lord in the callings He has for us:

II. Lessons From Peter's Denial Of Jesus Under Duress, Mark 14:66-72.

- A. We must "watch and pray" relative to the angelic conflict to avoid spiritual failure under duress:
 - 1. After predicting that Peter would deny Him in Mark 14:30, Jesus led His disciples to Gethsemane and there directed His inner three disciples, Peter, James and John, to watch and to pray with Him that they might not enter not into temptation, Mark 14:32-38.
 - 2. Jesus noted that the spirit was truly ready to heed God, but that the flesh was weak (Mark 14:38), that though Peter earnestly desired to remain faithful to the Lord (Mark 14:31), under Satan's pressure (cf. Luke 22:31-32), he was weak, unable to withstand the temptation to deny the Lord.
 - 3. This theme is picked up by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6:10-18 relative to the angelic conflict.
- B. We must follow Christ and His Word without reservation, Mark 14:54a: Peter followed Christ from a self-protective distance, following with reservations out of fear for his own safety, and that fear eventually led to his three-fold denial of the Lord, cf. Mark 14:66-68.
- C. We must adhere to holiness in our associations, Mark 14:54b:
 - 1. Peter attempted to blend in with the servants, warming himself by the fire in the courtyard, Mark 14:54b.
 - 2. However, that effort only backfired as it brought him into close proximity with a servant girl who identified him as having been with Jesus (Mark 14:66-67), leading to Peter's first denial, Mark 14:68a.
- D. We must willingly be prepared to face contempt for righteousness' sake, Mark 14:67:
 - 1. Peter's first denial arose from a statement of contempt when a servant girl looked at him and said, "You (emphatic pronoun, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 184) were also with the Nazarene, Jesus!" (Mark 14:67)
 - 2. Unwilling to bear such contempt lest it might lead to his own harm, Peter denied the Lord, Mark 14:68a.
- E. We must willingly be prepared to counter peer pressure to heed the Lord, Mark 14:69:
 - 1. After Peter's first denial, the maid who had first identified Peter as being a follower of Jesus began to say to the others that stood by that, "This is one of them," one of Jesus' disciples, Mark 14:69 KJV.
 - 2. The servant's girl's sharing of this information with bystanders put great peer pressure on Peter, so he denied he was a follower of Jesus for the second time, Mark 14:70.
- F. We must willingly be prepared to accept our human limitations without defending them fully to follow God:
 - 1. After a little while, some of the bystanders the servant girl had informed about Peter spoke up, claiming Peter was surely one of the followers of the Jesus of Nazareth, for his speech indicated it, Mark 14:70.
 - 2. Jews from Galilee "spoke a dialect of Aramaic, with noticeable pronunciation differences" from Jews in Judaea (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Mark 14:70), so Peter had no defense for the fact that he was from Nazareth as the way he spoke revealed he was from that region in Israel.
 - 3. Feeling very threatened by this fact, Peter called a curse upon himself were he not to be telling the truth, and then he swore under a divine oath that He did not know the man of whom they spoke, Mark 14:71. Peter avoided mentioning Jesus' name to imply he did not know Jesus! (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.)
- G. When the cock crowed for the second time, Peter remembered Jesus' prediction that he would deny the Lord three times before the cock crowed twice (Mark 14:30), and he "broke down and wept," Mark 14:72 NIV.

Lesson: In (1) failing to watch and pray relative to the angelic conflict, in (2) following Christ with reservations, in (3) being unholy in associations, in (4) being unwilling to face contempt for righteousness, in (5) being unwilling to stand up to peer pressure and in (6) trying to defend his human limitations, Peter failed the Lord, denying Him.

Application: May we learn from Peter's failure to do the opposite of what he did to stay true to God under duress!