

GROWTHguide

"The Denial"

March 11, 2018



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Zechariah 13:7; Mark 14:27-31,
Luke 22:54-62, John 18:15-16, John 18:17-27

DAY 1

Read [Zechariah 13:7](#); [Mark 14:27-31](#)

- **As you read the prophecy of Zechariah, what distinguishing remarks can you note about the good and the bad shepherd?**
- **What is the meaning behind the shepherd being struck down and the sheep being scattered?**
- **Jesus quotes the prophet in the Mark passage. What is Peter's reaction to Jesus' words? Why is Peter so sure he won't deny Jesus and "fall away?"**
- **Ego is a big deterrent in our being close to the heart of God. How is your ego edging God out in your life? What can you repent of this season of lent?**

DAY 2

Read [Luke 22:54-62](#)

- **The number three has significant biblical meaning. What is significant about Peter denying Jesus three times?**

The other Gospels do not mention Jesus turning to look at Peter after the final denial as Luke does.

- **Why is this important to mention? Why do you think the others did not include this important act?**
- **Thinking it through, how much more more of an impact do the denials have, knowing Jesus was listening and aware of what Peter had done?**

DAY 3

Read [John 18:15-16](#)

In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, we find as Jesus was led away, the disciples fled - except for Peter.

- **What did Peter do and what made him do it?**
- **Who do you believe is the other disciple mentioned in this passage?**

Some suggest the unnamed disciple is Judas as he would clearly be known by the guards at the home of the High Priest.

- **If it were in fact Judas, why do you think Judas returned with Peter? Is it possible he was coming to ask Jesus for forgiveness of his betrayal? Why or why not?**
- **How would the story of Judas have changed if he had returned for the purpose of seeking a new life in Jesus as the Christ?**

It is also possible the disciple remains unnamed as John's way of inserting the reader into the story. Try to imagine yourself as the second disciple.

- **Does this change your perspective or reveal anything new to you?**

DAY 4

Read [John 18:17-27](#)

John's Gospel brings about a deeper perspective on the three denials. Read the accounts in [Matthew](#), [Mark](#) and [Luke](#) and compare them to John.

- **How are they similar? How are they different?**

The first encounter comes from the slave girl. This is a personal encounter and one she directs solely at Peter, not to the others around him. She charges he was "also" with Jesus of Galilee. Peter does not deny her charge, but he evades it by denying to all within hearing range that he does not know what the girl is talking about.

- **How are you the same way when it comes time to stand up for Jesus?**

The second denial is from another girl. Peter recognizes this as a threat to his safety and leaves the warmth of the fire in the openness of the courtyard for the cold and shadows of the entryway. In the Bible, darkness and light have significant meanings which steer us to light being the goodness of God and darkness being representative of evil.

- **What point do you believe John is making as he describes Peter's actions during this second encounter?**

The second encounter escalates and so does Peter's response. With an oath he denies his affiliation with Jesus: "I don't know the man." An oath in this context is not vulgar swearing, but the invocation of something sacred (such as the name of God) to affirm truthfulness to one's statement.

- **Why is this a dangerous thing for Peter to do? Why do you think he is using the oath with his response?**

Jesus declares his divine identity openly to the high priest, which ultimately lands him a death sentence. At the same time, Peter's interrogation intensifies and he tries to save his own life. Some bystanders approach him and say that Peter's accent gives him away as being Galilean. This third confrontation is where Peter calls upon God to bring curses upon the group accusing him, as well as for God's wrath to come upon Peter if he is lying. He finishes by declaring the third denial, "I don't know the man!"

- **What tests have you had about your faith? In what ways have you stepped away and denied knowing Jesus due to the pressures of the situations around you?**

DAY 5

As you think through the story of Peter's denial, what feelings/emotions are coming to surface with you?

- **How have you been like Peter? What happened? How did you refocus and get back into the grace of God?**

Although Peter cracked under pressure and failed Jesus in this moment, it's important to remember the Peter who protested his loyalty in the Upper Room, and the Peter who drew his sword in the garden. It was Peter who followed Jesus into the courtyard after his arrest, and Peter was the one who never left Jesus' side. Jesus knew and loved all of Peter and saw beyond just his failure. The forgiving love of Jesus is so great that he sees our real personality, not in our defeat by sin, but in our reaching after goodness, even when we are defeated.

- **What does this mean to you? Why do you agree? Why do you disagree?**