

Bible Stories for Adults

Peter Denies Jesus

Matthew 26:69-75

Opening

Gathering: How readily do Christians acknowledge or deny their relationship with Jesus to others?

Today's Focus: Before he was empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter boldly stepped out in faith only to find that his self-made faith was too weak.

Key Verses: *Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You."* Matthew 26:35

*Then he began to call out curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"
Immediately a rooster crowed. ... He went outside and wept bitterly.* Matthew 26:74-75

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Peter the Rock (*Matthew 16:13-20*) = Add facts on Peter to board

How did Peter first enter the story of Jesus' ministry? = Called Rock (Peter - Greek, Cephas - Aramaic)

John 1:35-37, 40-42 = Brother Andrew took him to Jesus, Son of John

Why did Jesus give him this name? Because his faith was rock solid?

Matthew 16:18-19 = No, but He knew what Peter would become with the Spirit

What was Jesus responding to when He made this statement to Peter?

Matthew 16:13-16 = Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, God's Son

Was this a sign of Peter's rock solid faith? = John was short for Jonah

Matthew 16:17 = No, God the Father had made Peter say that – Like our faith is from God

How else do we see that Peter and the others didn't really understand what he had said?

Matthew 16:20 = Jesus told them not to tell others that He was the Christ

How did Peter later show a greater understanding of the meaning of being a rock of Jesus?

1 Peter 2:4-6 = We are living stones built on the living Stone into a spiritual house

How does Paul describe this concept? = Jesus is chief cornerstone, home of God's Spirit

Ephesians 2:19-22 = Holy temple built on foundations of apostles and prophets

Simon the Man (*Mark 1:29-31*)

Where was Simon (Peter) from?

John 1:44 = Bethsaida (*house of fishing*), fishing town on Sea of Galilee north shore

Where did Peter live when he met Jesus?

Mark 1:21, 29 = Capernaum, a town near Bethsaida, became Jesus' home base

What do we learn about Peter from the following story in Mark?

Mark 1:30-31 = He was married, Jesus healed his mother-in-law

Was Peter married throughout Jesus' ministry?

1 Corinthians 9:5 = Yes, he was married when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians (~55 AD)

Simon the Fisherman (*Luke 5:1-11*)

What story tells us what Peter did in Capernaum? = Fish in deep during day, Only catch at night

Luke 5:1-7 = He was a fisherman; Huge catch after fruitless night

How did this event change Simon's life? = Simon and Andrew were partners with James and John

Luke 5:8-11 = Repented; left all to follow Jesus as fisher of men; became full-time disciple

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Jesus' Small Group (*Luke 6:12-17*)

How many disciples did Jesus have? = Large crowds

Luke 6:17 = *Disciple* (Funk & Wagnalls) - *Accepts or follows a doctrine or teacher*

Did Jesus have a need to form a Small Group of a few select disciples?

Luke 6:12-16 = Chose 12 apostles (*one sent forth*), Simon was one

What was Jesus' key purpose for this Small Group?

John 17:6-8, 20 = To reveal God's plan and kingdom so they would reveal it to others

Jesus' Inner Circle (*Matthew 26:36-38*)

Did Jesus feel especially close to any of His Small Group members?

Matthew 26:36-38 = Shared His sorrow with Peter, James and John

Where else do we see this inner circle?

Luke 8:51 = Only they went in with Jesus to raise Jairus' daughter

Luke 9:28-31 = Only they were present at Jesus' Transfiguration

Luke 22:8 = Peter and John prepared the Passover for Jesus' Last Supper

Did Jesus choose His inner circle because they best understood His purpose?

Mark 10:35-38 = James and John asked for places of honor in Jesus' kingdom

Jesus called Simon *Rock*. Did He give nicknames to James and John?

Mark 3:16-17 = He called them *Sons of Thunder* (*Boanerges*)

What story helps us understand why Jesus called them *Boanerges*?

Luke 9:52-56 = Wanted to call down fire from heaven - Possibly quick to anger

Did Peter understand Jesus' purpose any better than James and John?

Matthew 16:21-23 = No, he scolded Jesus for saying He would suffer and die

Peter's Faith (*Matthew 14:22-31*)

Was Peter's faith hesitant or bold?

Matthew 14:22, 25, 28-29 = Bold - Peter faithfully walked on water to Jesus

How rock solid was Peter after he stepped out in faith?

Matthew 14:30-31 = It was weak - Peter lost faith and sank into water

Which seed in Jesus' parable of the sower best describes Peter's faith at this time?

Matthew 13:3-8 = The seed on the rock - Sprang up quick, withered without root

Why would Peter's faith be so bold at first but die so quickly?

Mark 10:28 = It was planted in himself, He looked to himself for his faith

Where should Peter have looked for his faith?

Ephesians 2:8 = Saving faith is the gift of God

Peter's Faith From God (*Acts 2*)

Was Peter sincere in his faith?

John 13:36-37 = Yes, said he would die for Jesus

Did Peter sincerely want a stronger faith?

John 13:6-9 = Yes, asked Jesus not only to wash his feet, but all of him

Would Peter ever receive this strong faith he longed for?

John 14:26 = Jesus promised to send the Counselor to explain all things to them

When did this happen?

Acts 2:1, 4 = Disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost

Did Peter receive a strong faith at this time as Jesus had promised?

Acts 2:14, 36-38, 41 = From Pentecost, Peter accepted his faith from the Spirit

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Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial (*Matthew 26:31-35*)

How did Jesus' apostles respond when Jesus said that one of them would betray Him?

Matthew 26:21-22 = Each one wondered if they were the one, all were capable

After realizing it wasn't them, were the eleven allowed to rest proudly on their faithfulness?

Matthew 26:31-32 = No, Jesus said all would fall away, but He'd gather again

How did Peter show his pride in the faith he had built for himself?

Matthew 26:33 = He said *Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will*

Did Jesus know more about Peter's situation than Peter himself?

Luke 22:31-33 = He said that Satan had asked for permission to test Simon

Did Jesus agree that Peter would be able to withstand Satan's temptations?

Matthew 26:34 = You'll disown Me 3 times before the rooster crows 2 times (Mark 14:30)

Did Peter accept Jesus' warning?

Matthew 26:35 = No, he said he would die before disowning Jesus

How did Peter later show the misguided sincerity of his faith?

John 18:3, 10-11 = Cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant

All Fall Away (*Mark 14:50-54*)

How was Jesus' prediction fulfilled that all would fall away that night?

Mark 14:50 = *Then everyone deserted Him and fled*

Did His disciples sneak away or "run for their lives"?

Mark 14:51-52 = They ran away, even if it meant leaving their clothes behind

Did proud Peter also run away or did he stay close with Jesus?

Luke 22:54 = He was lukewarm and followed at a distance

Peter's First Denial (*John 18:15-18*)

Was Peter the only disciple who followed Jesus? = Maybe John (?) - John never named himself

John 18:15 = No, another disciple did also, and went into the high priest's courtyard

How was Peter able to get into the high priest's courtyard?

John 18:16 = The other disciple came back and vouched for Peter

How sincerely did Peter want to get in to be available to support his Jesus?

John 18:17 = Enough to deny his relation to Jesus

Did Peter realize what he had done and try to stay away from others to keep from repeating it?

John 18:18 = No, he went and stood with everyone else around a fire

Peter's Second Denial (*Matthew 26:71-72*)

What inevitably happened while Peter stood around the group in the courtyard?

Mark 14:69 = The girl told the others that Peter was one of Jesus' disciples

How did Peter respond?

Matthew 26:72 = He swore an oath that he didn't know Jesus

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Peter's Third Denial (*Matthew 26:73-74*)

Did Peter's oath convince the people standing around?

Matthew 26:73 = No, his Galilean accent gave him away

Who did John identify as one of the people who spoke to Peter?

John 18:26 = A relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off

Did Peter finally admit who he was? = Cross my heart and hope to die...

Matthew 26:74a = No, called curses on himself proving he truly didn't know Jesus

Peter's Wakeup Call (*Luke 22:60-62*)

What happened just as Peter denied Jesus the third time?

Luke 22:60 = The rooster crowed (second time - Mark 14:72)

Did Peter realize what this meant?

Matthew 26:75 = Yes, right then he remembered what Jesus had said

What especially helped Peter realize the severity of what he had done?

Luke 22:60-61 = Jesus looked straight at him (Jesus knew without hearing)

How did Peter feel when reality sank in? = Wouldn't get to make amends before Jesus died

Luke 22:62 = Deeply ashamed at his lack of faithfulness, wept bitterly

Peter is Reinstated (*John 21:15-17*)

How did Peter show his distraught condition when he heard that Jesus had risen?

Luke 24:11-12 = He ran to the tomb to see for himself

Did Jesus give Peter a chance to reconfirm his faith after denying Him three times?

John 21:15-17 = He asked and received Peter's confession 3 times

Godly Sorrow or Worldly Sorrow (*2 Corinthians 7:10*)

How did Judas react in worldly sorrow to his guilt of denial?

Matthew 27:3-5 = He hung himself

How was Peter's sorrow considered godly in comparison to Judas' worldly sorrow?

2 Corinthians 7:9 = Sorrow as God intends leads to repentance

Could Judas have been forgiven if he had godly sorrow instead of worldly sorrow?

2 Corinthians 7:10 = Yes, Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How bold and sincere is my faith? What am I willing to do for Jesus?
(*Matthew 26:35; Mark 1:16-20; 10:28-31; Luke 9:57-62; 17:5-6; Acts 6:8, 12; 7:1-2, 51-60*)
2. Do I tend to look to myself or to God as my source of faith?
(*Matthew 16:21-23; Jeremiah 17:5, 7; Acts 8:9-24; 2 Corinthians 1:9; Ephesians 2:8*)
3. When have I realized or recognized the power and work of the Holy Spirit on my faith?
(*John 14:15-17, 25-27; 16:7-15; 1 Samuel 10:9-11; Acts 2; 10:44-48; 1 Corinthians 12*)
4. When have I denied my relationship with Jesus to others?
(*Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; Luke 9:26; 12:8-12; Galatians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 2:11-13*)
5. When have I experienced godly sorrow that has led me to repentance?
(*Matthew 26:75; 27:3-5; 2 Samuel 12:9, 13, 15-17; 24:10; Acts 2:36-41; 2 Corinthians 7:6-11*)