

Denying Jesus

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[0 : 00] or if you're at home, lay down. I don't know, whatever. So we've heard a lot this term social distancing.

Social distancing. It's a modern way of saying quarantine. But of course it has more nuance than that. It is wise to lessen the danger of infection to avoid crowds, to minimize contact.

This is prudent in a temporary crisis and we will do our part. Our governor has asked us to do this.

And this is not asking just churches, so it's not a tack on the church or what we're here for.

It is a call to all of our community and as part of the community, we want to be wise and prudent as well. But as I begin thinking about this and reading about this, there are consequences to social distancing.

There's a cost. See, here we miss the values of gathering as a church. We miss the human touch, the hugs, the words of encouragement, the seeing other families alongside of us, worshiping as we worship and praying as we pray.

[1 : 32] And most of all, we miss the powerful dynamic of God in our midst. Now, God is not limited to our physical gathering.

You all know that. But there is always something special when we gather because we are doing what God calls us to do. So there are consequences to this and we pray for God's mercy that this may not last long.

But as I thought about all of this, it struck me that this social distancing is the very thing that Peter did.

He was distancing himself from Jesus. Now, he didn't have a good reason. We have a good reason to do this right now. He didn't have a good reason.

He distances himself from Jesus. He denies Jesus rather than confess him. Now, as we have learned about Peter, we know that he's not perfect.

[2 : 35] But he is one of our favorites because we know that he loves Jesus. We know that he means to be consistent with Jesus. When he says, I will never deny you and I will die for you, we believe that he means that.

When the cohort of Roman soldiers came to arrest Jesus, who but Peter stood up with his sword ready to fight. Who but Peter walked on water?

So we must admire his love for Jesus. But what we must also recognize is that boastfulness and confidence and self-confidence was something that needed to be broken.

And so I just ask the question, just kind of as we look at this text, why did Peter fall? What happened to him from this confident and loyal and sincere follower to suddenly deny, deny, deny?

To go so fast, so far. How does that happen? Well, I remind you in Mark 14 that this is all happening in one day.

[4 : 00] Jesus has the last supper with his disciples where he talks about his body and his flesh, his body and his blood. We see him suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane as he prays three times that the cup may pass.

Then we see him arrested, betrayed into the hands of sinners. Last week we looked at his trial where he endures the injustice of sinful men who are set out to this kangaroo court to set him up. And then even in the midst of that, they had no evidence and so he gave them evidence to kill him. He admitted who he was.

Yes, I am the Messiah, the Son of God and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Father and coming on the clouds of heaven which they interpreted as claiming to be equal with God which they were right.

But they reconsidered it blasphemy. So that's our, so far that's what's happened all in one day. Now we come in the middle of the night and as Jesus is on trial, so now we see below in the courtyard Peter is on trial.

[5 : 22] The faithful one falls. The rock crumbles. How does such a thing happen? And we can ask, why do believers fall?

When we look at, here's Peter, self-professedly, the most devoted one to Jesus. Jesus who calls him the rock and we know he will be a major leader of the church later.

How does such a faithful, true, genuine believer in Jesus fall so far so fast? How does it happen? First we recognize that there were warnings that were ignored.

Jesus had warned them in the upper room as they had supper that they would all fall away, that this would fulfill scripture, strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

To that, Peter responded, no, not me. All these might fall away, but I will not. I have no intention.

And then Jesus told him, not only will you fall away, but you will actually deny me.

[6 : 28] Before a rooster crows two times, you will deny me three times. Peter claimed after that, if I must die with you, I will not deny you.

So Jesus gives the warning and what does Peter do? Dismisses the warning, ignores the warning, does not believe the warning. Jesus warning. Jesus warning. Peter doesn't believe it.

Then again, Jesus warns him in the garden of Gethsemane as Jesus is praying for the cup to pass. He returns to the three disciples and sees them, what? Sleeping.

Because they're tired. It's been a long day. They're exhausted. They're sleeping. And Jesus gives them a good warning. Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

And he gives a reason, an understanding, compassionate reason. For I know, the spirit is willing. I know you want to, but your flesh is weak. And so you must hang on to prayer. So here again is another warning for Peter.

[7 : 33] Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. I know your flesh is weak. And what happens? Twice more, Jesus returns from praying and finds them sleeping.

Their eyes are heavy. They're tired and sleepy. They're unable to keep watch. Their spirit's willing, but the flesh is weak. And now Peter is vulnerable to temptation.

He's dismissed Jesus' warnings. He's dismissed Jesus' encouragement to pray. And now he is vulnerable. So now we come to verse 66 in Mark 14 and Peter's denial.

We have a warning ignored. Now we have a witness intimidated. Mark again has set up this story for us as one of his outer and inner stories.

We call it the Mark sandwich. We've seen him do it several times. This is actually the third time he does it in this chapter of Mark 14. But it starts back at verse 54.

[8 : 36] That's why I read that. When Jesus is arrested, Mark makes the comment in verse 54 that Peter had followed as Jesus was arrested and brought to the high priest's house that Peter followed verse 54 to distance right into the courtyard of the high priest.

He's sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. So Mark mentions that and then he goes back to the other scene where Jesus is on trial. So why does Mark interrupt a story with another story?

Well, it's his sandwich. He's kind of saying meanwhile back at the ranch. You know, Jesus is arrested. Meanwhile, Peter's down below. And it's to tell us that these two things are going on simultaneously.

And both of these events, Jesus on trial and Peter down below in the courtyard are linked. So Jesus on trial and what Mark wants to see is that Peter's also on trial down below at the same time.

And so we come to verse 66 where he has finished describing Jesus' trial. Verse 66, now he says, now we see Peter down below as this was going on.

[9 : 46] Here's what's going on with Peter at the very same time. And so with that setup, I want to ask the practical question, what can we learn from Peter's failure?

This is a famous story. We know Peter, the boaster, the confident, and now the denier of Jesus. But what can we learn from this?

What went wrong? I believe we can discover two things, two issues for consideration. I want you to consider two things.

First of all, I want us to consider the progression of sin. that there's a starting and a progression and a growth and an increase and an intensity of sin.

We see that in Peter. And then secondly, we'll see the consequence of sin as we see in verse 72, what happens afterwards.

[10:45] There's an outcome. There's a result. So let's look at these. First, let's look at the progression. Consider this.

We recognize here a progression and the progression and stages of sin. Peter's denial. It goes from one, two, three.

It goes from private to public. It goes from kind of passive evasion to outright full denial. Notice there's a growth. Sin does not just happen.

There are steps and stages to sin. James tells us that sin is something that God does not tempt us but we're tempted when our lusts and our desires are enticed and once they're enticed they give, they conceive, they give birth to sin and sin progresses onto a death.

There's a process. So as we look at the three denials, I think we see three stages of growth here. So notice verse 66, the first step or the first stage, the first part where sin begins.

[11:56] Mark tells us in verse 66, as Peter was below in the courtyard, what happens? He's not alone. One of the servant girls of the high priest came and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, you also were with the Nazarene Jesus.

Jesus. Now, what I want you to notice is this sin begins, it starts by a very casual, a small comment, a simple remark from someone who's an unthreatening source.

It's a servant girl. Just a servant. So Peter's going to dismiss it. This is not a Roman soldier with swords. This is simply a servant girl.

It's simply down at a fireside. It happens not in boldness, not in drama, it just is a casual comment. It begins small. Oh, you. And it's in private. It's just you. You were with the Nazarene.

[13:15] Interesting that that's how they regarded Jesus as the Nazarene. He's distinguished from other Jesuses. There were lots of, that was a popular name in that day.

He was Joshua. He was Yehoshu. But he's the one from Nazareth, from the Gentile region. It's a derogatory statement.

The Nazarene. And literally the text says you're with the Nazarene, that Jesus person. Kind of dismiss it.

Just a remark. So what does Peter say? Verse 68. But he denied it. But notice how.

saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean. Now notice there's not a direct denial of Jesus himself. He says, I neither know or understand what you mean.

[14:17] I don't know what you're saying. It's a, see, the sin begins with an evasion. It's not an outright denial.

It begins as kind of, I don't know what you're talking about. Kind of a dismissive. I just want to avoid this. I want to, I don't want to think about this. I don't know what you're talking about. So it's not an outright, it hasn't come right out and said, I deny that person.

He's going to do that. But he's evading. But it's still a denial. He denies knowledge of Jesus. Or knowledge of what she's talking about.

See, our own sins start with an evasion or avoidance. We try to ignore that there's a temptation here.

We try to ignore that there's a test here. We think we're okay, no big deal, let's not even think about it. See, that's where sin begins. It's not obvious yet.

[15:19] We just kind of want to dismiss it. We just kind of are casual and flippant. We think we're okay. This is where Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10, he says, therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

This is Peter. Peter thinks he stands. He thinks he's okay. He thinks he's strong enough. He thinks he's capable. Let anyone who thinks that he stands, I'm good and okay.

I'm not in danger. Things are going good. Take heed lest he fall because that's when you'll fall. Peter's dismissing. He's avoiding.

He's ignoring. He's already done that with Jesus' warnings. So sin begins small, subtle, simple. But then it grows. Notice then the next, the next denial, the next time the woman comes to him. Notice at the end of verse 68.

[16:25] So he denies it saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean. And then notice what Peter does. He went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. So denial one, evasion, and then he moves.

Okay. I'm in the firelight. People can see my face. And by the way, one of the other gospels says that she recognized him as having been in the garden with Jesus. Remember, in the arrest time, Peter did kind of call attention to himself with the whole sword thing.

So this is, and John tells us that this was one of the high priest's servant girls. And the particular person that Peter cut the ear off of was Malchus, the first assistant of the high priest, a known person.

Peter's calling attention to him. So here's a servant girl that apparently was there also, and she recognized. So we don't have it here, but in one of the other gospels, in John, it says, I recognize you.

You were in the garden. So now, what does he do after that first denial? He gets out of the firelight. He goes over to the gateway.

[17:42] He moves, tries to escape the light. Again, still trying to avoid. But what happens? Verse 69, the servant girl, and it is the servant girl, which Mark is letting us know it's the same girl, that same girl follows him.

The same girl, the servant girl, verse 69, saw him and began to say to the bystanders, this man is one of them. Now she's like a bulldog. She's like, no, I know, you can't deny it.

I know you. What started as a casual comment now becomes an accusation. Oh, you were one of them. No, no, no, no.

Now she comes after him. And it escalates. See, it starts small, now it escalates. Now it's an accusation.

And it's not private. Now it's public because she says it to bystanders. Look, look, look. This is one of them. This man is one of them.

[18:51] By which she means he belongs to the Nazarene's cult. He's an associate. He's one of them. He's a companion.

And what does Peter do? Beginning of verse 70, again, he denied it. So first he denies any knowledge.

He evades. He avoids. He's trying to pass it off. Now he directly denies relationship to Jesus. You're one of them.

Now he just denies that. So evasion grows into a lie. Now he was lying before, but it was kind of more of an evasive lie. Now it's an outright, no. I'm not part of him.

So it grows. Then we see the third time he's tested. There's still more. Sin will intensify. We see it now in verse, where are we?

[19:57] Verse 70. Again, he denied it. After a little while, one of the other gospels tells us about an hour passes by. After a little while, I can't find my place.

After a little while, while the bystanders again said to Peter, one of the bystanders, no, the bystanders again said to Peter, so a group of them now are ganging up on Peter, said to Peter, certainly you are one of them for you are a Galilean.

So the challenge is intensified. Goes from a small comment to an accusation and now it's a challenge.

Now he's pushed. Now they're saying, no, no, no, we know because you're a Galilean. Well, how does he know he's a Galilean? Galileans had a distinct accent when they spoke.

They could not pronounce certain gutturals of the Hebrew dialect or of the Aramaic dialect. You know how Hebrew gets a little bit, you have to spit sometimes.

[21:02] Gets a little rough in the language. Galileans, apparently, their dialect was a little softer. They couldn't pronounce, so they were distinguished. You could tell, we could tell by the way you speak.

And what does Peter do? As the challenge intensifies, so does his reaction. Verse 71, but he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak.

Now it is a direct denial of Jesus himself. Goes from a denial of knowing what you're talking about to a denial of, no, I'm not an associate to now a denial, I do not know this man.

So notice the escalation. It's pushed. And notice his response is intensified because he begins to invoke a curse on himself.

It goes from avoidance to now, may, you know, cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye kind of thing. May I be cursed by God himself if this is true.

[22 : 11] He invokes a curse on himself. He swears with an oath. And Jesus said to swear with an oath, let your yes be yes, your no be no, but to swear with an oath is evil because you're covering something up.

Just say yes or no. Peter invokes an oath which makes him at suspicion. Why do you need an oath?

I have not known this man. So we recognize a progression and stages of sin and I think that's symbolic of, not symbolic, but exemplary of how we all respond.

Starts with an evasion and avoidance. We ignore the warnings. We just kind of try to pass it off. We try not to deal with it. We think it's no big deal. Then it becomes at some point an act.

First it's passive trying to avoid it. Then it's an act where he then now lies lies directly. And then it gets intensified, becomes more of a full denial and he becomes more emotional, becomes more full vent into sin.

[23 : 21] I think that's what we all do. And we ask the question, how does this happen? Well, it doesn't happen out of the blue. Sin doesn't just happen.

There are steps and stages. There's a time of ignoring the warnings. There's a time of where it starts subtle and small and we don't think it's a threat.

We just kind of try to dismiss, oh, I can handle this. Until suddenly we easily take the next step and do the act of anger or lust or sloth or whatever it is.

and then we get full vent into it at some point. There are stages. Let us learn from this. Peter denied Jesus. What does that mean to deny?

To deny. Because we see there's a denial in three ways here. The denying of knowledge about it and then a denying of relationship and then a denial of Jesus himself.

[24 : 29] So what does deny mean? Well, the word deny in the Greek means to disregard something, to disassociate from someone, to disown someone, or to distance from someone.

So Peter, how far does he go? he certainly is disregarding Jesus. He is disassociating. No, I'm not part of that group.

Then he's disowning Jesus. Ultimately, he takes it that far. No, I don't know that man. I'm not with him. In all of it, he's distancing.

So how do we do that? Do we deny Jesus? Are there ways we distance ourselves from Jesus?

Well, 2 Timothy 3 talks about people who have the appearance of godliness but deny its power.

Well, we could deny Jesus in the sense where we look like Christians. Christians. It's a good show but we deny the real power of Jesus. We don't really trust in him. We don't really seek his help.

[25 : 38] We think we're okay. Titus 1 talks about a kind of denial. Those who profess to know God but they deny him by their works. So they say they're a Christian.

They say they know God but then they don't live like that. So that's another way of denying. We can deny the power of God.

We can deny God by living like we do believe in God. Well, how can true believers of Christ fall into sin? How does this happen? What goes wrong with us?

Because we are at one moment sincere and faithful and intending to be faithful and true to Christ and then so quickly we can fall.

Why? Why do we get into that? What goes wrong? Well, Jeremiah 17 9 says the heart is good, right? Our hearts are good.

[26 : 38] No, no, that's not what Jeremiah says. He says the heart is deceitful. Tricky. It is and then he says it's not just deceitful, it's deceitful above all things and desperately sick who can understand it.

So Jeremiah himself, a godly prophet of God says, I can't even trust my own heart. My heart will deceive me. My heart will fool me. My heart will justify myself.

And when we're honest with ourselves, we see that about ourselves. Yeah, we justify ourselves.

We think we're not in trouble, so we think we're okay. We fool ourselves into thinking I'm okay, this isn't a problem.

I'm not under temptation here. I can be okay here. I think I'm strong enough. We fool ourselves into thinking I can handle this. No big deal.

We dismiss and evade. we ignore the warning and as we see with Peter, just doing that is a denial of Jesus.

[27 : 44] It's a denying his word. And then the evasion grows into the next stage of sin where we step a little deeper and act upon it. Not just passive, but now active.

And then at some point we give full vent. Our heart's deceitful. we can start in one good sense of sincerity and intention and all of a sudden slip.

What is it that keeps us from heeding the warning? Why? We hear the warning of Jesus. We say, yeah, yeah, that's true. What keeps us from heeding that warning? Why do we ignore the warning? Because that's certainly what we're doing when we fall. How is it that Peter, James, and John all ignore the warning? You will fall away. You will deny me.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Watch and pray. Why do we all ignore that? Proverbs 29 says, one's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.

[28 : 55] Proverbs 29 also says, the fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe. What a contrast. He contrasts pride and lowliness, okay.

Then he contrasts the fear of men with trusting in God. That's interesting. That's interesting. Why do we sin? According to Proverbs, because we're proud.

We think we're okay. We think we're strong enough. We don't want help. We don't think we need any help. I just need a little bit of God. Now, we won't say that openly, but when we're alone, we might think that.

I'm okay right now. I'm not broken. And we sin also, Proverbs tells us, we sin also because we don't trust God's word. Instead of trusting God's word and actually really believing God's word, we doubt it and we fear man instead.

Because men, we can see and men we can hear. And God's word seems to be further away in those moments. We think we need to fit in.

[30 : 03] We fear men. What they will think and say about us. I mean, what is Peter thinking while he's in that situation at the fireside, at the gate side, and people are saying things and it leads him to say, no, no.

I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. Fear of man. Pride. Avoiding and ignoring the warnings. So we see that consideration. I think Peter's experience causes us to consider that progression and stages of sin that happens so that we can then learn from that.

Remember that Jesus had, when Jesus had warned Peter before, in Luke, he warned Peter saying, Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat.

But I, Jesus, as I have prayed for you, Peter, not that you will overcome this temptation, not that there won't be any sifting. I have prayed for you, Peter, that your faith will not fail.

[31 : 12] So you need to go through the sifting. Your pride needs to be broken. He didn't say all that, but that's certainly implied there. You need this breaking. This will be good for you.

Because then Jesus said, I prayed for you that your faith will not fail, and afterwards, after your failure, you will then what? Strengthen your brothers. How is Peter going to strengthen his brothers when he's such a big failure?

Because now he's going to be broken. Now he's going to be humbled. Now he's going to be able to say to them, don't trust your own strength. Listen to the, I should have listened to the warning that Jesus, why didn't I trust what he said to me?

See, so we can learn from this. Peter learned from this. Now here's the second consideration I want you to see, to consider in verse 72.

Here's the result, here's the impact. So Peter says, he curses and swears, I do not know this man of whom you speak, verse 72, and immediately the rooster crowed a second, time.

[32 : 21] And Peter remembered. He remembered how Jesus had said to him, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

And he broke down and wept. So notice the outcome, the impact, the result here.

Part of this outcome is misery. He breaks down and he weeps. Part of the outcome of this is that this is not the end, there is hope.

I want you to see that as well. We see, oh, Peter falls, he fails, he remembers, oh, what a failure, what a disappointment, he breaks down and weeps.

So it ends in tragedy. This isn't the end of the story. Peter's name will be mentioned one more time in this gospel of Mark and it will be almost the last verse of the gospel in chapter 16, 7.

[33 : 26] But for right now, what I want you to see is three things happen here in verse 72. A rooster crows, Peter remembers, and then Peter weeps. So let's look at these.

I think these are signs of the means of grace. In other words, not only are they what happened, but I see behind it God working. This is something I think we need to think about.

When we fail, it's not the end. When we fall, when we fall far and fast, listen to this. God is working in the aftermath of our sin.

God is still working. God hasn't said, okay, you're done. Yeah, we need to feel the tragedy of that.

Yeah, we need to mourn that and weep that and feel the sadness and the remorse.

But I want you to notice God is working because watch what happens. First thing that happens, verse 72, immediately what happens? A rooster crows. A rooster crows.

[34 : 30] God uses a rooster to revive Peter. He rooster crows. And now we're told in Mark, and Mark's the only one that mentions this.

This is the second crowing. Mark is the only one that distinguishes two crowings. All the other gospels talk about you will deny me before a rooster crows. In Mark, which is Peter's remember gospel, Peter remembers another detail.

There were two crowings. That you will deny me three times before the second crowing. So I got a question. So the first time the rooster crowed, if this is the second one, if the first time the rooster crowed, did Peter not hear it?

Did he hear it and dismiss it? Was he too distracted? This is the second crowing. But now he hears it.

And here is God's grace. The crowing, the sound that Peter hears causes him to remember. It stirs him.

[35 : 43] It awakens him. It rouses him. It brings him to his senses. Oh, what have I done? What have I done? What does God use with us when we fall?

He uses things. Maybe it's something we hear. Maybe it's something we see. Maybe it's something we touch. Maybe we've been backsliding and we see a Christian in the store and they shake our hand and hug us and that touch reminds us of something significant that we've been avoiding.

I don't know. God uses things. He has means by which he draws us back to himself. It might be something we hear. Maybe it's a rooster. Maybe it's a sunrise.

Oh, facing the wrong way. Sunrise or a sunset. sunset. There are ways God uses in his nature through his creation to bring us to our senses.

So that's the first means there's the rooster and then there's the remembering. In verse 72b, immediately a rooster crowed a second time and Peter remembered.

[37 : 03] He remembers the word of Jesus and here's the second means of grace. The word of God comes back to us. It's recalled to us.

We're reminded of it. We're told that's the specific ministry of the Holy Spirit. He reminds us of what Jesus has said. The words we've heard before don't just fade away.

They don't go void. They come back to the believer. Now he recalls the word which poses the question, had he forgotten the word?

Had he ignored the word? Yeah. Had he dismissed the word? Yeah. Had he not thought it was important for himself? Obviously.

Now he remembers it. Jesus' words were exactly true. It happened just as he said.

[38 : 04] not a surprise, but a confirmation again that the word of Jesus is trustworthy. Why would I ignore his word?

Our regret and our remorse, we look back at ourselves and we beat ourselves up. We think, why did I miss it? Why didn't I listen? Why do I ignore?

Well, because we're weak and because there's still pride in us and because there's still lack of trust in God.

We're not all the way there. We haven't arrived. The word returns Peter. It rescues him.

It convicts him. It draws him back. Look at how God is gracious in this. We must not look at this and think, oh, this is such tragedy.

[39 : 04] Yes, it's tragic, but it's not the end. It's only the end of chapter 14. It's not the end.

God is still working. The word is still coming back. And now the word has its effect on him as he, the last word we see is he broke down and wept.

Luke adds one other statement that right after the rooster crowed, Luke says, now Jesus remembers on trial up in the upper room of the high priest's house and he looks down on the courtyard.

And so when the rooster crows, Luke says Jesus turned and looked at Peter, looked at him. I believe their eyes met.

And so you not only have the rooster crowing, not only have the word returning, you have the look of Jesus, which would I'm sure have broken any believer.

[40 : 09] And then he weeps. The other gospels add that he wept bitterly. Not just a normal weeping, but a tragic weeping, a bitter, sour, agonizing weeping.

The full impact of what he had done overwhelms him. He weeps. He sobs. He is broken. Now he sees his true condition.

He didn't believe it before. Now he sees it. My sincerity doesn't keep me faithful. My good intentions won't keep me faithful.

I am not able. I am weak. My spirit is willing, yes, but my flesh is weaker than I ever imagined.

And it can go from strong to weak in just a short distance. Peter's taking the ear off of the man and just a short time later he's outright denying Jesus.

[41 : 26] Sin always leads, always ends in misery for the believer. There's nobody as miserable as a believer who is backsliding or sinning.

We're just miserable. people. Psalm 32 describes how David felt after his sin. He describes how God's hand was heavy upon him.

He had no joy, he had no energy, he had nothing. The regret and the remorse was heavy upon him. Peter, James says that sin goes from enticement and desire to conception and once sin is conceived it leads to death.

There's naturally a dying as a result of our sin. There's a separation, death means separation, there's a separation between God and us. All of a sudden when we sin we put a barrier between us and God.

[42 : 35] And it kills life, it kills our joy. When we are unrepentant in our sin, when we have backslid, when we have sinned, when we have fallen, our joy is gone.

And so we might ask ourselves honestly, are you unhappy? It could be, not always, but it could be you haven't turned back to the Lord.

you haven't been broken and returned to him. And here's the other thing I want you to notice, that this is not the end.

The end of the chapter says, yeah, he broke down and he wept. That sounds tragic, but it's not the end. There's still hope. God's word has had an effect on him. It's good that he weeps.

It's good that he sees his condition. It's good that his pride is broken. And there's still a word of hope for Peter because there's still one more word for Peter in the Gospel of Mark.

[43 : 45] And I'll look at it in just a moment. One thing I want you to consider, I was thinking about the difference between Peter's failure and Judas' failure. Remember, Jesus had warned both men, Judas, you will betray me, Peter, you will deny me.

Both fell and did this. But there's a difference between Judas and Peter. When Judas fell and betrayed Christ, there was regret. He regretted what he did.

He felt guilty for the bloody money. Remember, he even took the silver that he'd been given and threw it back in the temple.

But then what did he do? He went out and hung himself. So his was a regret that did not have hope. Peter, on the other hand, had regret, had remorse, but it led him to repent.

It led him back to Christ. It didn't lead him away with hopelessness. It led him back to Jesus. So I want you to understand there's a difference and there's a value of weeping.

[44 : 58] there's a value of regret and grief for sin. And in 2 Corinthians 7, Paul gives a contrast between what godly grief does and what worldly grief does.

They look similar, but they're very distinct in their outcomes. So Paul talks about this. He had confronted this church about a sin that they needed to deal with, and now in 2 Corinthians he's writing to them and saying, you did good, you did great.

They had followed his words. So now he's writing about their experience of grief in that process. So he says to them, for even if I made you grieve by my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it, for I see that the letter grieved you, though only for a while.

As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved unto repenting, for you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. Without, godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret.

[46 : 22] whereas worldly grief produces death. That's it. And then he says, but I look at you, for I see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you.

I see what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what justice. At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. So he says, the fruit's there, I can see that this was godly grief because I see that you did repent and there's fruit that comes from that.

This earnestness and this eagerness, et cetera. So there's an impact. There's a difference between godly grief that has its good result in drawing us back to God and worldly grief that just has regret.

I feel bad about it and that's it. There's no hope. So let me ask you, how does sin impact you?

Does your grief end in misery, hopelessness, emptiness? That's worldly grief. If that's the end, is misery, hopelessness, despair, or does your grief for your sin produce a repentance that brings you back to the Lord without regret?

[47 : 51] Your hope has been restored. I told you that Peter's name is mentioned one more time in the gospel of Mark and it's at the very end in Mark 16, verse 7, after Jesus has risen, an angel appears to the witnesses and he says, do not be alarmed.

You see Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him, but go tell his disciples and Peter.

Peter's highlighted. No other name. Tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee.

There you will see him just as he told you. So in other words, Jesus wants to see Peter again.

There is hope. There is restoration. And we know that that's how the story ends.

He's restored. Peter will deny Jesus three times, but on the shore of Galilee, he will be asked three questions by Jesus. Peter, do you love me?

[49 : 02] Yes, I do, Lord. Peter, do you love me? Yes, I do, Lord. Peter, do you love me? You know I do. And so with the three denials, there comes the balance of three affirmations.

Restoration. You're okay, Peter. The only thing that matters is do you love me? Yes, Lord. Okay. I know you're okay. Okay. So in this time while we are social distancing, let us strive to avoid any spiritual distancing.

Let us listen to the warnings of Christ's words. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. Let us recognize our true condition that we're not okay.

Even when we feel strong and confident, we're not okay. Because even the most faithful and loyal of Christ's disciples fall hard.

And if you have fallen, remember, maybe I'm just the rooster today. Remember the word of Jesus.

[50 : 16] Come to me. Come to me. All who are weary and heavy laden, come to me. I have come for sinner, not for the righteous. I have come for the sick, not for the well.

Come to me. Return to me. There's hope. I guess, you know, a little different.

So we're going to close. There's not a song coming. James volunteered to sing, but I think we'll hold off on that. Just teasing. Although you should have seen the look on James' face.

No, I'm just teasing. So let me close. Let's close with a good word. Let's close with a good word.