

## Warned of Denial and Desertion

Mark 14: 27-31

Our text reveals a critical moment in the lives of the disciples. They had just enjoyed the Last Supper with Jesus in the Upper Room. Having departed, they are making their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. While they are completely unaware, Jesus will soon be arrested and tried for crimes He had not committed.

As we consider where these men would have been in their walk with the Lord, all appeared well with them. They had faithfully followed Jesus and were convinced He was the Christ. They are committed to the Lord, and yet Jesus knows these men are vulnerable. The events that will transpire on this night will challenge their understanding and shake the very foundation of their faith. Knowing what lay ahead, Jesus sought to prepare them for the events to come.

This passage reveals truth that is much needed in our day as well. Whether we want to admit it or not, especially after walking with the Lord for an extended period of time, we assume that we are above failure. We see others who have failed, and yet we honestly believe it could never happen to us. When we reach that mindset, we too are vulnerable and apt to fall.

As we examine the [admonitions](#) within the text, I want to consider the thought: [Warned of Denial and Desertion](#).

**I. The Prediction of Jesus** (27-28) – Bear in mind the context of this passage. Jesus and the eleven have departed from the Upper Room and are headed toward the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is aware that His betrayal and arrest are close at hand. As they are walking toward the garden, Jesus makes a startling prediction. Notice:

**A. The Proclamation** (27a) – [And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night.](#) I can imagine the mood being heavy, with the disciples trying to rationalize what Jesus had just told them within the Upper Room. He had spoken of His body and blood being shed for them. Likely they were walking in silence when Jesus broke the silence with this startling statement – all of you will be offended because of me this night! He revealed they would literally “*stumble and fall away*” from Him before the night had ended. The modern English word “*scandal*” is derived from this Greek word. While they had yet to understand all that would transpire, they knew exactly what Jesus meant by this statement. He warned that each of them would stumble in doubt and fear, deserting and abandoning Him before the night was over.

**B. The Prophecy (27b) – for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.**

We must also remember that Jesus is the living Word come to earth in the form of a Man. He knew all the Scriptures and the many prophecies regarding His first advent. Jesus reminded them of what Zechariah had prophesied concerning this very night. [Zech.13:7 – Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man \*that is my fellow\*, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.](#) This prophecy would be fulfilled before the night was over. It was actually two-fold. Zechariah spoke of:

➤ **The Smitten Shepherd** – The disciples were completely unaware of the events that would transpire that very night. Jesus would be betrayed by Judas, arrested and taken to stand trial before the Sanhedrin. They would falsely accuse Him and treat Him with utter contempt, abusing and mocking the Sovereign King. He would be taken before Pilate and Herod, who would also smite and abuse the Lord. By early morning the next day, Jesus will have been beaten and scourged mercilessly by the Roman soldiers. He will be condemned to death and crucified on a Roman cross.

➤ **The Scattered Sheep** – Jesus was not the only one described in Zechariah's prophecy. He also spoke of those who followed the Shepherd being scattered as He was smitten. These men did not want to hear these words, refusing to believe they would abandon the Lord, but we know this portion of the prophecy was fulfilled as well. [Mark 14:50 – And they all forsook him, and fled.](#)

**C. The Promise (28) – But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.** Likely they failed to grasp the enormity of this promise, but Jesus wanted to assure them that everything would work out according to the sovereign plan of God. That night and the next few days would be very difficult, but hope was not lost. In this statement, Jesus revealed:

➤ **His Resurrection** – The Shepherd would be smitten and die, but death would be unable to hold Him. Jesus knew death was coming, but it would not be final. Prior to His crucifixion and death, Jesus promised the disciples that He would rise again from the dead unto life!

➤ **Their Restoration** – After His glorious resurrection, Jesus would meet the disciples again in Galilee. They would all be offended because of Jesus this night; they would abandon Him and flee in fear for their lives. They would question their faith during the next couple of days. In the face of all this, Jesus revealed that He would meet with them again. Their failures would not be final. He would restore their faith and they would enjoy renewed fellowship!

**II. The Protest of Peter (29-31)** – Following this shocking statement by Jesus, Peter immediately speaks. True to his character, Peter felt as if he had to respond. He did not like what Jesus had said and protested. Consider:

**A. Peter's Assumption (29)** – *But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.*

Through his own words we discover the arrogance and self-confidence of Peter. He declared unto Jesus – everyone else may be offended and abandon you Lord, but I would never do such a thing! I will abide faithful come what may! Peter thought the other ten may be capable of such an act of betrayal, but he assumed he was too strong spiritually to even consider such behavior.

- Have you ever been cautioned – never say never! Unfortunately, most of us are more like Peter than we care to admit. We possess many of the same attributes and attitudes Peter had. Had we been there that night, we may have looked around in disbelief. We might have assumed that Thomas or Matthew may deny Christ, but we likely would have assumed that we would never be guilty of such an act of betrayal. We tend to see the faults and failures of others, and yet never realize that we too are capable of the same!

**B. Jesus' Affirmation (30)** – *And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.* As you study the gospels, it becomes evident that Peter had no problem arguing with the Lord. Rather than humbly listening to the Lord and seeking to mature in his faith, Peter often questioned Jesus and the admonitions He offered. Jesus understood Peter's tendencies, and patiently continued to reason with him. Having heard the protest of Peter, assuming he would never deny the Lord, Jesus affirmed that Peter would deny Him that very night. In fact, Peter would not deny that he knew Jesus just once; he would adamantly deny that he knew Jesus three times. Peter would have done well to have been more attentive, seeking to learn from Jesus instead of adamantly denying what Jesus revealed.

- Mark reveals an interesting aspect of Peter's denial. He cautioned Peter that before the rooster crowed twice, Peter would deny Jesus three times. Had Peter been listening, instead of being argumentative, he would have picked up on a clear warning of his denial. Jesus said the cock would crow twice before Peter denied Him three times. The first time the cock crowed should have provided Peter a warning that he was in the act of betrayal. However, Peter was so adamant in his own defense, that he likely didn't even pick up on what Jesus actually said.
- The Lord doesn't provide a rooster to follow believers around, sounding an alarm when we are perilously close to falling, but we have one greater than a rooster. We have the Holy Spirit to guide and warn us. The Spirit is faithful to convict and caution us when we are in danger of slipping, but often we are like Peter and ignore the clear warnings!

**C. Peter's Adamancy (31)** – [But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.](#) Again, refusing to hear and heed the warning of Jesus, Peter became more adamant in his protest. He argued that although all men might reject Jesus, denying they knew him, he would never deny Jesus. In fact, he would be willing to die before he would do such a thing. Hearing and seeing the boldness of Peter, the other ten affirmed they too would be rather die than deny Jesus. (This was easy to say in the quietness of the moment, apart from the crowd that would come to accuse and arrest Jesus.)

- As you read further in the gospels, you discover that Peter's failure was not final, but he did fail nonetheless. Before the night was over, Peter adamantly denied that he knew Jesus. In fact, he would even resort to cursing in an effort to convince his accusers that he had no dealings with this condemned man. [Mark 14:71 – But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.](#) Jesus had warned of the denial to come, but Peter and the others refused to believe they would ever stoop so low as to do such a thing. The warning of Jesus was fulfilled just as He had proclaimed.

- I am thankful our failures are not final when we belong to Christ. We may not have verbally denied Jesus, but I am convinced we all have been guilty of denying our Lord at some point in our lives. When we refuse to speak up as a follower of Christ, we have denied Him. When we willfully engage in sin, we have denied Him. When we refuse to follow His guidance for our lives, we have denied Him. Each of these denials will always follow a warning from the Spirit. Those in Christ do not walk alone. The Spirit will guide and guard our lives. However, like Peter, we must be listening for the "rooster" to crow, and heed the warning. We all have felt at times that such a thing would never happen to us. At that moment, we are at our weakest point and prone for failure. When you feel as if you could never fall, seek the Lord to guard your life and enable you to stand.

**Conclusion:** I think you would agree that we have considered a very convicting passage. We live in a body of flesh that is prone to sin and failure. None of us are above stumbling in the faith. In fact, I am certain we all have failed and missed the mark, ignoring the warning of the Spirit. In those times of weakness and failure, we must seek the Lord to forgive our failure and restore our fellowship. He is faithful to restore those who seek Him. [1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.](#) Have you heard the rooster crow? If so, come to Christ and confess your failure. If you are yet unsaved, Jesus stands ready to cleanse your sin and save you by His grace. Come to Him in repentance and faith unto salvation!