

Lesson 3, March 15, 2026, Struggling Faith, Mark 14: 26-31; 66-77

Bible Basis: Mark 14:26-31; 66-77

BIBLE TRUTH: Peter's faith was weakened when he did not stand up publicly as a follower of Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: *³⁰And 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.*

Lesson Aim – Key Takeaways

1. Jesus knows our weaknesses
 2. Stay close to Jesus
 3. Failure Doesn't Cancel Calling
 4. Recognize your own weakness
 5. Repentance is a gift
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Background

- **Verses 1–2 – Plot to Kill Jesus**
- **Verses 3–9 – Anointing at Bethany**
- **Verses 10–11 – Judas's Agreement**
- **Verses 12–16 – Preparations for the Passover**
- **Verses 17–21 – Foretelling the Betrayer**
- **Verses 22–26 – Institution of the Lord's Supper**

Scripture Summary

After singing a hymn, Jesus and His disciples go to the Mount of Olives. Jesus tells them that they will all fall away, fulfilling Scripture. Peter boldly insists he will never deny Jesus—even if it costs him his life. Jesus responds with a sobering prophecy: *“Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.”* Peter insists even more strongly, and the other disciples say the same.

Names that matter:

- Author: Mark
 - Jesus: Son of God
 - Peter: One of the disciples
 - Place: Mount of Olives. The courtyard of the High Priest (Caiaphas) in Jerusalem
 - Maids of the high priest: The one's who calls Peter out
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The Lesson: Mark 14:26-31, 66-72

I Christ Predicts Peter's Denial (Mark 14:26-31)

²⁶And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

²⁷And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

²⁸But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

²⁹But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

³⁰And 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.

³¹But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

What's Happening Here: (vs. 26-31)

Jesus is giving His disciples a prophetic warning, a promise of restoration, and a diagnosis of their hearts all in one moment. This scene is the emotional and theological bridge between the Last Supper and Peter's denial.

What's Happening in Mark 14:26-31

1. Jesus announces that all the disciples will "be offended" (fall away) that night.

The word *offended* (Greek: *skandalizō*) means:

- to stumble
- to fall into fear
- to be shaken or trapped

Jesus is telling them that the pressure of His arrest will cause them to scatter.

2. Jesus quotes Scripture to show this is part of God’s plan.

He cites Zechariah 13:7:

“I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”

This means:

- Jesus is the Shepherd who will be struck (arrested, beaten, crucified).
- The disciples are the sheep who will scatter in fear.
- Their failure is not random—it fulfills prophecy.

3. Jesus immediately gives a promise of restoration.

Before they can even react to the warning, Jesus says:

“After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.”

This is huge. It means:

- He knows they will fail.
- He has already planned to meet them again.
- Their failure will not end their relationship with Him.
- Grace is waiting for them on the other side of their weakness.

4. Peter responds with bold self-confidence.

Peter says: *“Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.”*

This reveals:

- Peter sees himself as spiritually stronger than the others.
- He underestimates the pressure that is coming.
- His confidence is in *himself*, not in God’s strength.

This is the seed of his later denial.

5. Jesus gives a specific prophecy about Peter.

Jesus tells him: *“Before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.”*

This shows:

- Jesus knows Peter’s heart better than Peter does.
- Jesus is not surprised by human weakness.
- Peter’s fall will be real, specific, and soon.

6. Peter doubles down—and the others join him.

Peter insists: “If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee.”

And the text says: “Likewise also said they all.”

This means:

- All the disciples overestimated their strength.
 - They were sincere, but sincerity is not the same as spiritual readiness.
 - Their confidence was emotional, not rooted in prayer or dependence on God.
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Teaching Points:

A. Jesus is preparing them, not shaming them.

- He warns them so they won’t be destroyed by guilt later.

B. Human confidence collapses under spiritual pressure.

- Peter’s heart was right, but his strength was weak.

C. Jesus’ grace is already in motion.

Before the failure happens, Jesus promises:

- resurrection
 - reunion
 - restoration
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II Peter’s First Denials – The Servant Girl (vs. 66-69)

⁶⁶And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

⁶⁷And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

⁶⁸But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

⁶⁹And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them

What's Happening Here: (vs. 66-69)

This moment is the beginning of Peter's threefold denial, unfolding in the courtyard of the high priest. The scene is tense, layered, and spiritually revealing. Understanding what's happening requires looking at the setting, the pressure, and the progression of Peter's fear.

Setting: Peter in the Courtyard

Jesus is inside the high priest's house being interrogated. Peter is beneath in the palace (meaning the lower courtyard area), trying to stay close enough to see what happens but far enough to avoid danger. He is surrounded by servants, guards, and people loyal to the high priest.

This is a hostile environment, and Peter is outnumbered.

What's Happening Here?

1. Peter is trying to blend in (v. 66).

He is warming himself by the fire with the servants.

This shows:

- He wants to stay near Jesus
- But he is also trying to remain unnoticed
- He is physically close but spiritually vulnerable

This is the danger of following Jesus "at a distance."

2. A servant girl recognizes him (v. 67).

She looks closely at him and says:

"You were with Jesus of Nazareth."

This is not a harmless comment.

In that courtyard, being associated with Jesus could lead to:

- Arrest
- Beatings
- Being dragged into the same trial

Her recognition triggers Peter's fear.

3. Peter denies knowing Jesus (v. 68).

He responds:

“I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest.”

This is a complete denial—not just of following Jesus, but of even understanding what she's talking about.

This shows:

- *Fear is overriding his earlier boldness*
- *His confidence from verse 31 is collapsing*
- *He is trying to distance himself from danger*

He then moves to the porch, trying to escape attention.

The rooster crows—the first warning Jesus predicted.

4. The pressure increases (v. 69).

Another servant girl sees him and says to the bystanders:

“This is one of them.”

Now the accusation is:

- Public
- Directed to the crowd
- More dangerous

The circle of pressure is tightening.
Peter is losing control of the situation.

What This Moment Reveals Spiritually

A. Fear is overpowering Peter's intentions.

- He meant it when he said he would never deny Jesus.
But fear is stronger than emotion.

B. Sin often begins subtly.

- The first denial is almost casual—"I don't know what you're talking about."
But it will escalate.

C. Peter is unraveling because he is alone.

- He is surrounded by enemies, not fellow disciples.
Isolation makes temptation stronger.

D. Jesus' prophecy is unfolding exactly.

The rooster crowing is a divine reminder:

- Jesus knew
 - Jesus warned
 - Jesus was right
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Teaching Point:

This passage shows how quickly a believer can fall when:

- They follow Jesus at a distance
- They rely on their own strength
- They are surrounded by pressure
- They ignore Jesus' warnings

III Peter's Final Denial (vv. 70-72)

⁷⁰And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilaeen, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

⁷¹But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

⁷²And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

What's Happening Here? (vv. 70–72)

This moment—Mark 14:70–72—is the *climax* of Peter's denial. Everything Jesus warned in verses 26–31 now comes to pass, and the emotional weight of it hits Peter all at once. The scene is tense, escalating, and deeply human.

1. Peter denies Jesus a second time (v. 70).

The pressure is building.

- People around the fire are watching him.
- He is afraid, exposed, and trying to protect himself.

This second denial shows:

- His fear is growing
- His resolve is weakening
- He is slipping deeper into self-preservation

2. The crowd confronts him with stronger evidence (v. 70).

They say:

“Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean, and your speech gives you away.”

This is important because:

- Galileans had a distinct accent
- Peter's voice betrays him
- He cannot hide who he is

- The pressure is now public, not just from one servant girl

The crowd is essentially saying: “You sound like Jesus’ people. You can’t deny it.”

3. Peter escalates to cursing and swearing (v. 71).

This is the most intense moment of the denial.

He begins:

- Cursing — calling down curses on himself if he’s lying
- Swearing — taking an oath to prove he doesn’t know Jesus

He says: “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”

Notice:

- He won’t even say Jesus’ name
- His fear has pushed him into extreme denial
- He is trying to distance himself as far as possible

This is the *peak* of his collapse.

4. The rooster crows a second time (v. 72).

This is the exact moment Jesus predicted.

The sound of the rooster:

- Cuts through the night
- Cuts through Peter’s fear
- Cuts through his denial

It is a divine reminder: Jesus’ words were true.

5. Peter remembers Jesus’ prophecy (v. 72).

The memory hits him like a wave:

- “Before the rooster crows twice...”

- “You will deny me three times.”

He realizes:

- Jesus knew
- Jesus warned him
- He ignored the warning
- He has done exactly what he swore he would never do

This is the moment of conviction.

6. Peter breaks down and weeps (v. 72).

This is not just sadness—it is deep, gut-level repentance.

His tears show:

- A broken heart
- Genuine sorrow
- Awareness of his weakness
- The beginning of restoration

This is the turning point that prepares him for Jesus’ forgiveness in John 21.

Teaching Point: What This Scene Reveals Spiritually

- Fear can make even strong believers fall.
 - Sin escalates when we try to handle pressure alone.
 - Jesus’ warnings are acts of love, not condemnation.
 - Failure is not final—Peter’s tears show a soft heart.
 - Jesus already planned Peter’s restoration before this moment happened.
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Peter's denial is not the end of his story—it is the moment that breaks him open so Jesus can rebuild him. His tears are the doorway to grace.

Discussion Questions

- What does Peter's confidence teach us about relying on ourselves?
 - Why do you think Jesus told them ahead of time that they would fall away?
 - How does verse 28 ("after I am raised...") show Jesus' heart toward His disciples?
 - What does this passage teach us about grace and accountability?
 - How can we prepare our hearts so we don't fall into the same trap of overconfidence?
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Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Peter followed Jesus "at a distance"?
- What does this passage teach us about fear and faith?
- How does Peter's reaction (weeping) show the beginning of repentance?
- What does this story reveal about Jesus' patience and mercy?
- How can we stay spiritually close to Jesus so we don't fall into denial or compromise?