

# Following God From a Distance

## Luke 22:54-62



# Observations

- **The Apostle Peter, as a name, sometimes feels like a “contradiction in terms,” when following his Bible story “The Apostle Peter”**
- **But when we read about him, his life’s story reminds me of mind and yours, *up and down***
- **In one instance we read about him “*walking on water,*” and a minute later he is sinking beneath the waves**
- **At one point, he boldly announces that he would go to prison, and even die for Jesus; but not long after that, we find him staying out of sight and denying that he knew Him**
- **Today we will discuss why Peter acted like he did, and how we can avoid that *dualistic* nature as we examine ourselves**

# Why Did Peter Keep His Distance?

## #1 He Had a Problem With Discernment

- Peter sat in the enemy's camp and didn't suspect that it would be a problem

*“And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.” Luke 22:55*

- Peter didn't realize that even in the enemy's camp, where he chose to keep company, he would still need to identify himself as a child of God
- Even in the camp, Peter wanted to maintain contact with Jesus, but not close enough to do any good
- Many who claim Christianity won't identify themselves in “certain camps,” where it is perceived not to be convenient (school, work, with friends, playgrounds, gymnasiums, etc.)

## #2 Peter Didn't Realize That "Talking the Talk," is Not The Same as "Walking the Walk"


- Earlier in Matthew 16:16, Peter had professed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the Living God
- After following Jesus at a distance and warming himself in the camp of his enemy, he is compelled by his own nature, to completely deny that he knows Jesus.
- Now we have made the same declaration when we come to faith in Christ and repent and are Baptized; BUT then deny Christ by our actions, our words—or when we are quiet, yet we have an opportunity to speak up for Christ . We defeat Jesus' purpose; John 12:32, *"If I be lifted up...."*
- When religion comes up, there is sometimes a "private tug" on our hearts to remain silent (*If don't bring him up, they will think better of me!*)

# Jesus Even Told Peter of His Upcoming Problem That Would Occur, and He Still Failed

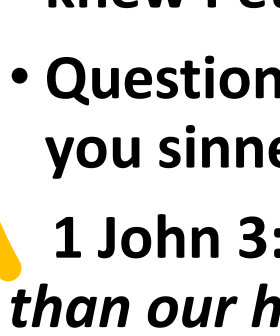
***Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me." Luke 22:34***

**And Then He Did! Luke 22:56-60:**

***"A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with Him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."***



***“Man I am not!” Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.” Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then, Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.”***

- Question: Does the Lord know us as meticulously as He knew Peter?; Hebrews 4:12
  - Question: Has God’s word ever revealed itself to you when you sinned? Did you feel like Peter felt afterwards?  
1 John 3:12, ***“For if our heart condemns us God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything.”***
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### #3 The Cost Of Discipleship Exceeded Peter's Expectations

- Peter had rebuked Jesus when He outlined His negative itinerary to him; Matthew 16:21-22
- He never expected Jesus to go to the cross
- He never expected to share in the sufferings that came from his beliefs
- He expected to share in Jesus' "Kingdom Rule"
- Now with Jesus captured and taken as a prisoner, his hopes and dreams are dashed, and so he follows at a distance

# Do We Follow at a Distance Because of Our Discipleship Expectations?

- Do the unrealistic expectations of life that we have, cause us to distance ourselves from Jesus and His mission? (“I thought there would be good health, financial security, no social woes, no marriage and family issues, no COVID 19”)
- Jesus’ mission for us challenges us to deny the personal expectations of this life, and take up a cross (like He did), and follow Him, Matthew 16:24

*“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself (his expectations), and take up his cross and follow me.”*




# What Jesus Did for Peter, He Will Do for Us!

- Jesus knew that Peter was about to distance himself

*“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted (repented), strengthen thy brethren.” Luke 22:31-32*

- Simon, “you are ready to drop me for the right price!”
- “But I have talked to My Heavenly Father about you, that you won’t distance yourself from me” (See Romans 8:26)
- “You will deny me and it will hurt you, but I need more than hurt. I need a change in your life; and when you come back to me, be a changed person, and be a positive influence on your brothers;” *“Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death;” 2 Cor. 7:10*



***The Distress and Pain of Sin,  
That Drives Us Back to God  
and Puts Us Back On the Road  
To Salvation Should Have No  
Regrets!***



***The Pain Of Living In Sin Has  
Consequences!***

# Instead of Following From Afar, Get Closer To Him!

- Jesus wanted Peter to use his future crisis as a mechanism to get closer to Him and His disciples
- While we go through this Pandemic, use this crisis in history as an opportunity to get closer to Jesus Christ and His Church
- Over 400,000 Americans have physically died during this Pandemic
- Don't suffer a spiritual death, which is much more severe
- Use this present crisis to reach out to brothers and sisters in Christ to inspire their faith during our difficulties (when being alone, depression and loneliness can set in, wondering if God really cares about me)

The Bottom  
Line Is This:

**Don't Wait Till The  
Rooster Crows!**

**Come to Your  
Senses, Ask For  
Forgiveness,  
Repent and Get  
Closer To God  
Today!**



# The Plan Of Salvation

**Hear the Gospel**                      **Acts 15:7**

**Believe the Gospel**                **Acts 15:7**

**Repent of Sins**                      **Acts 17:30**

**Confess Christ**                      **Acts 8:37**

**Be Baptized**                         **Acts 8:38**