



WEEKLY STUDY

The Last Days of Jesus - Week Four

Jesus' disciple Peter was a lot of things, but *perfect* he was not. Even heroes of the faith have complicated stories. Although he said he was willing to die with and for Jesus, he denied him instead. He was a human who was wired for self-preservation. Most of us can hold empathy for Peter—can we extend empathy to ourselves? What ultimately matters is that Jesus did what we could not. Forgiveness and grace is offered to all of us who falter in our faith. As you explore Peter's story may you also see how God is redeeming your own story.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 22.54-62 (ESV)

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance.⁵⁵ And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them.⁵⁶ Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him."⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him."⁵⁸ And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not."⁵⁹ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean."⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times."⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly.

- *Peter followed at a distance.* He wanted to see what was happening to Jesus because he fully believed he was the Son of God. He didn't take out that day with a plan to deny Jesus. He just

wanted to blend in and stay as close as possible to Jesus. What may have surprised him was his discomfort at being too close in such a heightened environment. What is it about the story that made closeness with Jesus so dangerous? How is that the same or different from your experience with Jesus today? Do you find safety in close proximity to Jesus?

- **Prayer Prompt: Come near to God and he will come near to you. (James 4.8)**
- *God, you have come near to me, give me strength to boldly follow you more closely today. Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 22.54-62 (ESV)

- *The light revealed his identity.* Why did Peter stop by the fire? Was he hiding in the crowd? Was he simply cold? It seems that Peter was trying to lay low, and just got close enough to the fire that he was recognizable to the young servant girl. Normally, we wouldn't mind being identified as one of Christ's disciples. Have you experienced a time when your faith put you in a risky position? What did you do? How did you respond?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.¹⁴ This is why it is said: “Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 5.13-14)**
- *Jesus, shine your light on me. Reveal anything that seems to be hidden. Let my true identity as your follower shine through this day. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 22.54-62 (ESV)

- *The time frame of the questions* is interesting. It wasn't rapid fire questioning from the crowd as if he was the one on trial. Instead, the denials seemed to keep the questions at bay for a time. As suspicion grew, Peter had to sit with each of the first two denials for what could have been a couple of hours. The third denial was interrupted by the rooster's crow and he was soon in tears. In order to have stayed near the fire without causing a scene, it seems that Peter was in denial...of his denial. What a complex set of feelings he must have been trying to hold. He wanted to survive the night, and surely he also, deep down, was aware of what he had just done in denying his identity. We sometimes have to sit in that awkward place with feelings of guilt, and a desire to fully

live. Can you relate to Peter's predicament? Have you dealt with a season where you hid from your own guilt?

- **Prayer Prompt: The wise man looks ahead. The fool attempts to fool himself and won't face facts. (Proverbs 14.8 TLB)**
- *God, I can be guilty of ignoring the truth of my own failure. Lead me to repentance and restore me in such moments. Amen.*

THURSDAY: LUKE 22.54-62 (ESV)

- *The rooster crowed like Jesus had predicted several verses earlier.* The sound of a rooster crowing wouldn't have sounded like an alarm bell to anyone else other than Peter and Jesus (and the other disciples if their hiding spots were close enough to hear). To the crowds of the city, the rooster crow would sound like background noise, like traffic in the city for many of us. For Peter, it must have gone off like a gong. Jesus had told him about this moment hours before. He knew what the future had in store and yet he turned to look at Peter as it came to pass. Jesus knows your future as well, can you trust that he will be with you through the good and bad?

- **Prayer Prompt: "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve." (Jeremiah 17.10)**
- *God, You know what the future holds, and you know my every thought. Yet you love me. Thank you God for your steadfast love. Amen.*

FRIDAY: LUKE 22.54-62 (ESV)

- *Jesus looked at Peter.* That was the moment of remembering...I think the words of Jesus were probably in the back of his mind the whole time, but now they came to an undeniable focus. Have you ever felt like you were receiving a look from Jesus? Like Jesus was right there in front of you, knowing exactly who you are and what your heart desires? Write about such experiences in the space below. Is there an area of confusion where you are seeking Jesus to bring undeniable focus?

- **Prayer Prompt: Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. (Deuteronomy 8.2)**
- *God, call to mind your words of correction and command, and let me see your salvation. Amen.*

SATURDAY: LUKE 22.54-62 (ESV)

- *Peter wept bitterly.* Judas had just betrayed Jesus and would soon be dead at his own hands. He couldn't come to terms with his own actions. But Peter's tears were different. His tears were a part of his repentance. He was made aware of his own ability to deny Jesus, and chose to move in closer. Our weeping can bring healing as well. What is it in you or in the world around you that you are grieving today? Write them down and give them over to God. He can be trusted.

- **Prayer Prompt: Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. (Psalm 126.5)**
- *God, whether or not the tears are flowing today, you know my heart. Make me more like Peter and less like Judas. I want to live, and live for you. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

We noted this pattern (or cycle) that informed Peter's life and ministry.

In Luke 22.61-62, Peter (1) Remembered, (2) Went out, and (3) Cried.

And the crying informed his remembering. So that in Acts 2 and beyond, it would be the need for the rescue of the world that would drive his preaching and his going out.

Crying and Weeping: What are the conditions in your own life and the world around you that can lead to lament and weeping?

Remembering the Gospel: In what ways are you remembering (bringing to light) the Good News of a Savior who would lay down his own life so that we can live? Have you had encounters where it seems that Jesus is looking into your eyes to remind you?

Going out: Where and to whom are you called to share the Good News?