

## The Word Made Flesh:

The Illusion of Strength, The Reality of Hope | John 13:36-14:4

### Introduction

We are in the Upper Room Discourse, the final night before the cross.

Over the last two weeks, we have looked at:

- Loving your enemies
- Loving the brethren

Jesus modeled both by loving:

- Judas, the wolf who hated Him
- Peter, the weak disciple who loved Him

The takeaway:

We must not confuse the weak with the wolf, nor treat the wolf like the weak. The way we love each is different.

Today, we return to Peter and continue the conversation he is having with Jesus.

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### A Bible Study Tip

One of the most helpful ways to study Scripture is to trace a person's story arc.

Watch:

- Their patterns
- Their growth
- Their failures
- Their transformation

Then read their letters through the lens of their life.

Peter is a perfect example. His story explains his theology.

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## The Text (John 13:36–14:4)

Jesus tells Peter:

“You cannot follow me now... but you will follow afterward.”

Peter responds:

“I will lay down my life for you.”

Jesus replies:

“You will deny me three times.”

Then Jesus comforts them:

“Let not your hearts be troubled... I go to prepare a place for you.”

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### I. Peter's Pain

Peter is not responding to rebellion, but to heartbreak.

Jesus is:

- His best friend
- His teacher
- His mentor
- His Lord

And now He is leaving.

Peter cannot process it.

While Jesus gives a new commandment, Peter is stuck on the loss.

“Where are you going?”

He is so overwhelmed by the bad news that he cannot hear the instruction.

This is deeply human.

Peter had:

- Left everything
- Built his life around Jesus
- Anchored his future in Him

And now that future feels like it is collapsing.

Before we judge Peter's denial, we must feel his pain.

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## II. Peter's Overconfidence

In the middle of emotional instability, Peter makes a bold claim:

“I will lay down my life for you.”

This is not courage, it is pride.

Peter:

- Overestimates his strength
- Overestimates his devotion
- Underestimates his weakness

He had:

- Seen miracles
- Cast out demons
- Walked closely with Jesus

And it created an illusion.

He believed the hype about himself.

Scripture warns us clearly:

Romans 12:3

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought

Galatians 6:3

If anyone thinks he is something... he deceives himself

1 Corinthians 10:12

Let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction

James 4:6

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble

Peter's problem was not love for Jesus.

It was confidence in himself.

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## III. Pride Revealed

Jesus confronts Peter directly:



“You will deny me three times.”

Why?

Because Jesus loves him too much to let him live in illusion.

Pride distorts reality.

It makes you believe:

- You are stronger than you are
- You are more faithful than you are
- You are more capable than you are

Spurgeon said:

“The moment we say we will never fall is the moment we are closest to falling.”

Matthew Henry called pride:

“The forerunner of ruin”

Peter and the Pharisees had the same root issue:

They believed they were something they were not.

Different expressions... same disease.

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## **IV. The Result of Pride**

Later that same night, Peter gets his chance to prove himself.

He draws a sword and swings.

This is not faithfulness.

This is pride trying to validate itself.

Pride makes you do foolish things in an attempt to uphold an illusion.

When you feel the need to prove yourself, you are already off track.

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## **V. A Better Posture**

We are not strong.

We are weak.

We are not capable.



We are dependent.

Every good thing in us is from God.

C.S. Lewis said:

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.”

We do not walk with a strut.

We walk with a limp.

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## VI. The Comfort of Jesus

Right after exposing Peter’s failure, Jesus comforts him.

“Let not your hearts be troubled...”

Jesus does not leave Peter in his weakness.

He gives him hope.

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## VII. The Coming Place (Temple and Marriage Imagery)

Jesus says:

“In my Father’s house are many rooms...”

This points to two realities:

### A. Marriage Imagery

- A price was paid → Christ paid it at the cross
- A covenant established → We are betrothed to Him
- A place prepared → He is preparing a home
- A return promised → He will come again
- A feast coming → The marriage supper of the Lamb

### B. Temple Imagery

“My Father’s house”

The ultimate goal of the gospel is:

To dwell with God forever.

Not just salvation.

Not just forgiveness.



But communion.

God desires a people who will be with Him.

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## VIII. The Present Invitation

This is not just future reality.

It is present invitation.

You do not have to wait to be with God.

He desires:

- Fellowship
- Communion
- Relationship

Now.

In the ordinary moments of life.

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## Key Takeaways

- Do not confuse weakness with wickedness
  - Do not overestimate yourself
  - Pride leads to collapse
  - Jesus exposes pride because He loves you
  - Your hope is not your strength, but His grace
  - The goal of the gospel is communion with God
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