You Will Disown Me — Delivery Transcript

Mark 14:22–31 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, April 2, 2017 · *Amen*

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This week's sermon is taking another step forward in what we started last week in a series where we're looking at some of the amen sayings of Jesus during the last week of his life. You've probably said the word amen, man, I don't know how many times. You've probably said it more times than you can count. You say it at the end of your prayers if you pray. It's at the end of doxologies in the scripture, so if there's like a song worshiping God, a lot of times it will close with the amen.

That's the word amen, if you didn't know that. But Jesus is unique. He's the only person in the New Testament that uses the word amen at the beginning of a sentence. Everybody else puts the word amen at the end of a sentence, and it's their way of affirming what's been said. The word amen literally means true or faithful or that is right, that comports with reality as I see it. Amen. That's why you say it when a preacher says something you're passionate about. A lot of times you'll say amen. Jesus is not putting it at the end of the sentence, he's putting it at the beginning of a sentence, basically saying, I don't need your affirmation, because what I'm telling you as God is important.

I don't need anybody else to say it's important. The fact that I'm saying it's important means it should be listened to. So he would always put the word amen at the beginning of a very significant phrase. And we're looking, he did it, I think, 75 times in the Gospels, but we're looking at just a handful of those sayings during the last week of his life. Last week, the amen saying that we looked at was in John chapter 12, verse 24. And in that passage, he says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

So there's two ways you can live your life. Your life is like a seed. You can have a self-contained life that doesn't benefit anybody and doesn't bear any fruit. Or you can live a life where you die to yourself, you give yourself over to a power greater than yourself, and you let

God use your life to bear fruit, to not have a life that takes, takes, takes, but to instead have a life that gives and makes an impact. And it's your choice what kind of life you want to live. If you want to live a life that bears fruit, then it requires you dying to yourself.

And Jesus was obviously specifically talking about himself, that in order for him to bear fruit of salvation, for the world to be saved, he had to go to the cross. He had to literally die. But he's saying to anybody who would follow him, if you want a life that's going to be used by the Lord, then you too have to die to yourself, your own preferences. When you get a raise or when you get a nice blessing or you get an increase in your leadership capacity. You have to decide, am I going to use that for my own little universe and be the Lord of my own life?

Or am I going to die to myself and leverage those blessings for the kingdom of God? And Jesus promises that when we die to ourselves and leverage those things for the kingdom of God, that we will be blessed, that he'll use our life, that our life will bear much fruit. That was last week. This week we're looking at a statement. It's a little bit further in the week. It's after they've eaten the Passover meal. And it's a saying that I think is relevant to each and every one of us because we've all found ourselves in a situation like the disciples find themselves in this text.

The preaching text is Mark chapter 14, but before we go there, I just want to read it in John's Gospel. Some of you are maybe already there because we just read John chapter 12. Turn over to John chapter 13, verses 36 to 38. John 13, verse 36 to 38. This little story that we're going to read, it's actually mentioned in all four gospels. It's in John 13, it's in Matthew 26, it's in Luke 22, and then it's in Mark 14. And each telling of the story sheds different light, but here's how John puts it.

"Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus answered him, 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.' Peter said to him, 'Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' Jesus answered"— here's our statement— "'Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly'"— amen, amen— "'I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.'" How many of you have maybe heard this story growing up in church? It's the knowledge— it's a very popular story mentioned in all four Gospels.

If you turn over to Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 14, you get a little bit more insight. John was pretty succinct with it. Mark chapter 14, let's pick it up in verse 26. Mark 14, verse 26 again, remember the context. Jesus has left where he was. He's going to Jerusalem to take the Passover, ultimately to die on the cross. In John chapter 11, he has just raised Lazarus from the dead, and anytime you raise somebody from the dead, it kind of increases your popularity. And so he's incredibly popular. The religious leaders hate that.

And they're trying to stop his popularity from growing. And so they're trying to figure out a way to kill Jesus. So all that's going on in the background. Jesus has eaten the Passover meal with his disciples. And they're going out to the Mount of Olives. So it says in verse 26, "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them"— to all of his disciples— "'You will all fall away, for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter said to him, 'Even though they all fall away, I will not.' And Jesus said to him, 'Truly, I tell you'"— that's that word. Amen. I'm telling you, this is important— "'this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.' But he said emphatically, 'If I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And they all said the same." Now you could look this up in Matthew, you could look it up in Luke.

Both of them will say about the same thing. And if you'll continue reading on, Peter does exactly what Jesus said he's going to do. Look, it's maybe on the same page. Mark chapter 14, verse 66. Jesus gets arrested in the garden. They take him into the council. And then we see in verse 66 Peter kind of watching at a distance. "And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, 'You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.'" But, verse 68, "he denied it, saying, 'I neither know nor understand what you mean.' And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed.

And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, 'This man is one of them.' But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, 'Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.' But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, 'I do not know this man of whom you speak.'" Now some people think Peter started cussing like a sailor, because he was one. But he wasn't actually cussing like a sailor. He was basically swearing to God.

He's saying, swearing on myself, a curse on myself, if I'm lying may I be cursed, I don't know this guy, which is pretty low that you would swear to God to say that you don't know God. It's exactly what he does. And then verse 72: "And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he broke down and wept." That's the denial of Peter. And the reason I pick this passage is because it's not just Peter's denial that is littered through this story.

It's all of them, all of the disciples. They all said, I won't deny you, and every single one of them did. You see Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver right before the Passover meal. Right after the Passover meal, when they get to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus tells all the disciples, hey guys, watch and pray. It's serious. Things are about to go down. I need

you to be prayerful. I need you to be committed. And instead of watching and praying, what do they do? They fall asleep. Three different times he comes to them.

Wake up. Watch and pray. Three different times they fall asleep. So they abandon him then. Judas comes. He gives Jesus the kiss of betrayal. They arrest Jesus, and all the disciples except Peter run and hide. Every one of them. You got to give Peter credit. At least he followed. It says that he followed at a distance, but at least he followed. All of them were deserting Jesus. And all of us have been in situations where we've done the same thing, where our loyalty and our allegiance to our Christian calling kind of went by the wayside because in the moment we'd rather be seen well in the eyes of someone else, or I'd rather make that extra dollar, or I'd rather, you know, do this with my body sexually, and so I'm going to disassociate myself from my Christian calling because my Christian calling won't let me use my sexuality the way that I want to.

We've all been in situations like that and we all know the feeling that comes from denying the Lord from betraying him. You know the guilt that comes, you know the shame that hits, and wrestling through that, it's a terrible thing. And so what I want to do this morning is to look at Peter's denial and then try and uncover why it is that he did what he did. But more importantly than that, there are two things on either side of his denial that I think are greater than the denial itself that we need to receive as God's people since we're all prone to do the same exact thing that Peter did.

So first let's look at his denial. Why did Peter deny Jesus? Have you ever asked yourself that question? What caused him to go there? If you read the text again, some things I think will just kind of pop out. One is this elevated view of self that Peter seemed to always have. There's self-confidence, and then there's, you know, the other, not so great, what do they call it? Cocky. Peter was a cocky guy. And you see that because he doesn't just say, I won't fall away. He says, even if all these other jokers fall away, I won't do it.

He was comparing himself to other people and he basically told Jesus, you don't know what you're talking about. That's kind of crazy to do. But that wasn't the first time Peter did it. The first time that Peter told Jesus that he didn't know what he was talking about was in Matthew chapter 16. And in Matthew 16, Jesus asked the disciples, who do men say that I am? And they all give different answers. But Peter says, you're the Christ, you're the Messiah, you're the one that is to come. And Jesus says, Peter, you got it, man.

That's amazing. Flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven. You nailed it. And then Jesus said, as Messiah, I'm going to have to go to the cross, and I'm going to lay down my life, and three days later I'm going to rise from the dead. And in that moment, Peter tells Jesus, you're crazy. You don't need to do that. You don't know what you're talking about. Just let me take care of this and I'll get our movement started. To which Jesus said, get behind me, Satan.

You don't have in mind the things of God, but the things of man. And Peter put his foot in his mouth. Peter was always putting his proverbial foot in his proverbial mouth all the time. Why? Because he had this elevated view of self. He had this idea that even if everybody else fails, I won't fail because I'm better than them. I've arrived. This is a church person sin. This is how church people can sometimes think: I've been in church my whole life. You know, I've done all the Sunday school things.

I know all the answers. I read the Bible. I give my tithe. I would never cheat like that. Or I would never steal like that. Or I would never do this. Or I would never do that. And that kind of mentality, that kind of elevated view of self is dangerous. Especially when you have passages like don't think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, or you have words from Jesus, just like he said to Peter, Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat. In other words, there's an attack coming.

You need to humble yourself. You need to be, excuse me, on guard because nobody's immune to failure. Nobody's immune to falling spiritually. Even the people who think they're the most committed. Sometimes those are the people who are most susceptible to falling spiritually. And so humble yourself. But Peter didn't humble himself. He had a proud heart and that proud heart positioned him to deny Jesus. To sin against the Lord. I believe that's why Jesus in the Beatitudes, he says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for those are the ones who are going to be comforted. In the Christian life, humility, not pride. Humility is the great virtue that keeps you from a heart of unbelief and a heart that sins against the Lord. And so that was the first thing, an elevated view of self. The other thing I see is a prayerlessness. We don't see this in our text, but if you were to read right after our text, they go into Gethsemane or the Mount of Olives, and Jesus tells them watch and pray, and what do they do?

They fall asleep. He does it three different times. And this may be reaching a little bit, but I believe that Peter's self-confidence, his elevated view of self, led him to have a prayerless heart. His proud heart led him to have a prayerless heart. And that happens all the time with us as well. When you're operating in the flesh, this is kind of a churchy way of saying it, but when you're operating in your life like I've got everything under control, I can do this, I won't fail, I won't fall. That almost always leads you to a place of prayerlessness because if you've got everything under control, then why would you need to pray?

If you can do it all by yourself, then why would you need to abide in the vine? Why would you believe that apart from him you can do nothing when I can do everything I need to do apart from him? You would never say that out loud, but we can sometimes live our lives in that way, and that leads to a prayerless heart, and a prayerless heart will almost always lead

you to a place of sin. That kind of rejection of spending time with the Lord daily, unhurried, undistracted time with the Lord.

You keep that up, that kind of lifestyle. You'll find yourself growing very dry spiritually. And as you grow dry spiritually, you'll be putting yourself in situations where you're dangerously close to denying the Lord, sinning against God, doing things you thought you would never do, all because not overnight, but all because over a couple of months, maybe years, you just quit spending time with the Lord, and then it happens. So it was an elevated view of self. It was a prayerless heart. And then the last thing I see is he put himself in precarious situations or situations that promoted sin.

So when he follows Jesus, he follows him and he goes into the courtyard. Remember, verse 66, Mark 14:66, says he was warming himself next to the fire, and it was the servant of the high priest who came out. And so he was obviously in the enemy's camp. He was in a place that wasn't going to promote allegiance to Christ. It was a place that was going to promote denying Christ. And in the same way we can do some of the same things. It would be like if you're an alcoholic and you know for you drinking is not an option.

That for you it would just be sinning against the Lord to go and drink. It would be like you as an alcoholic going into a bar. And the temptation and the precarious nature of that environment will most likely lead you to sin. Or being around people who, yeah, maybe they need the gospel, but if you spend all of your time around people who hate Jesus and you somehow think that's not going to rub off on you, you're mistaken. Those kinds of environments will position you, eventually lead you to a place where you deny the Lord and you sin against God.

Almost always. Just think about— I mean, if I think about my life, the things that I cannot explain, those sins in my life where I'm like man, how did that happen? Anybody ever been there? I don't even know how to explain myself. Always those events, those sins have been accompanied by an elevated view of self, can never happen to me, prayerlessness, not spending time with the Lord, not having any intimacy with God, and putting myself in precarious situations. Yeah, maybe the situation wasn't sinful in and of itself, but for me, with my history and my future hopes and dreams, the nature of that thing, I just shouldn't have been there.

But I was there and I did it over a long period of time and all of a sudden I found myself— boom— denying Christ. Betrayal. And as a pastor, I can't tell you the number of times I have sat with people, usually men, and they look me in the eye and they say, I don't know. I don't understand how I got here. I don't know how this could happen. And I said, I don't either. I mean, how could this happen? It's just the irrationality of sin. But almost always in every case you can track it down.

There was an elevated view of self. I'm untouchable, I'll be fine. There was a waning intimacy with the Lord, and putting themselves in situations that promoted sin instead of righteousness, isolating themselves from Christian community that would help them repent and stay straight, and almost always it leads to sin. Almost always it leads to denying the Lord. And so if you want to keep yourself from that, just do the reverse. Instead of having an elevated view of self, humble yourself. Think of yourself with sober judgment. Ephesians 5, Galatians 5:[1] if you want to help someone who's fallen, help them, but take heed lest you fall.

Always be aware that I'm no different than them. Me being who I am doesn't somehow make me superior. Just because I'm the preacher doesn't somehow make me susceptible. You're just as susceptible as anybody else because you have just the same kind of sin nature in your heart that they do. And so always be humble. And knowing your limitations, knowing the deceptive power of sin and how it's sneaky and can reel you in when you don't even know what's happening. Humble yourself, spend time with the Lord. Instead of prayerlessness, have prayerfulness.

Even if you don't feel like God's present, have a disciplined time in your life where it's unhurried, undistracted time with the Lord. Spending time in the Word, praying, maybe journaling, writing down your thoughts. Do something so that you're spending time with the Lord. Not just in church, not just praying over your meals, but just you and him, a prayerful heart, developing intimacy with God. And then lastly, stay away from environments that you know are going to promote sin in your life. So if you're an alcoholic, stay away from the bar.

Stay away from your drinking buddies. If you're trying to honor God with your sexuality and you've got a boyfriend or a girlfriend who's making that difficult for you, then maybe you need to remove yourself from that relationship. Or you may need to put a filter on your internet. Or maybe you need to bring people into your life who can keep you from those kinds of situations because your allegiance to Christ matters more to you than that momentary moment of pleasure. But if you put yourself in those environments over and over again, eventually you're going to fall.

And so be humble, be prayerful, and avoid precarious situations. But even if you do that, let's say you ignore my advice, you ignore Peter, and you just blow it. And maybe that's where you're at right now today. You're like, man, you have read my mail, and here I am, a loser. I've denied Christ. I feel terrible about it. I'm about to lose my family. The best thing about this story is what's on either side of Peter's betrayal. On the front side you have the Lord's Supper and on the back side you have his restoration.

And both of those events communicate the unconditional love of God and his unlimited grace. I think that's how I put it in your notes. You have unexplainable sin. I don't know how I got there. I don't know why I did that. I'm devastated. But on either side of your unexplainable sins, you have the unconditional love of God and his unlimited grace. His

unconditional love, if you just go back, Mark chapter 14, look right above our key text, you see the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper— they didn't call it the Lord's Supper that day.

They called it the Passover. And if you're Jewish you know all about the Passover, but none of us probably are. If you look at their Passover meal, it's different. It's not like the Passover was supposed to be. A typical Passover, you were supposed to have the bread, the wine, and the lamb, because no meal is complete without the meat, right? Unless you're vegetarian, which is fine. Nothing wrong with that. But they had the bread, the wine, and the lamb. But at the Lord's Supper they didn't have that. They didn't have any lamb at the Lord's Supper.

At the Passover, typically what they were going to do is they would break the bread, and as they broke the bread, they would say, this is symbolic of the suffering of our fathers in the wilderness. Because it was about the Exodus, Israelites leaving Egypt, slavery to Egypt. And the bread was always unleavened. Why? To remind them that they had to rush out, that they couldn't dilly-dally, they had to rush out of Egypt. But Jesus, when he breaks the bread, he doesn't say this is the suffering of our fathers in the wilderness.

What does he say? He breaks the bread and he says, this is my body broken for you. This is my suffering. This is my affliction. When they passed the cup during the Passover, they passed it around four times. You know, they got really toasted. I'm just kidding. It went around four times, and it was symbolic of the four promises of God. Okay? You want to know what they are? Number one, I'll bring you out. Promise one. I'll rid you of your bondage. I'm going to free you from slavery. I'm going to pay your redemption price.

So there's a price to be paid for your freedom. I'm going to pay it. And then the fourth promise is I'll take you away to be my people. I'm taking you to the promised land. Those are the four promises. And every time they had the Passover, they would pass the cup four times, symbolic of those four promises, but Jesus doesn't do that. Jesus, when he passes the cup, what does he say? This is my blood, which is shed for you. So he wasn't talking about an old promise in the Old Testament.

He's talking about a new promise. Not an old covenant. He's talking about a new covenant. In fact, he actually says this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood in Luke's gospel. What's he saying? He's basically telling them, I'm unconditionally committed to you. Just as God was unconditionally committed to the people of Israel in getting them out of slavery to Egypt, I'm telling you I'm unconditionally committed to you, getting you out of slavery, bondage to sin in your life. That it's not going to be the suffering of our fathers in the wilderness that's going to save you, but it's going to be my suffering on the cross.

And then instead of having lamb, he never served the meat, instead of having lamb on the table, Jesus is saying the lamb is at the table. I'm the lamb. I'm the sacrifice. I'm the thing that has to die in order for you to live because during the Old Testament Passover, when the

angel of death came, the only people who were saved were the people who had the blood of the lamb painted over the doorposts. It didn't matter if you were Israelite or not. It's not as if God is a respecter of persons.

You could be an Israelite, you could be an Egyptian, you would die if you weren't covered by the blood of the lamb. And Jesus is saying, I'm that lamb. And I'll cover you. I'll save you. I'll take you to be my people. I'll pay your redemption price, but you've got to be covered by my blood. It's my suffering. I'm the lamb. In other words, I'm unconditionally committed to you. They had that supper, and then Jesus goes, he dies on the cross. Basically living out that symbolic expression at the Passover meal, showing to the whole world that I'm unconditionally committed to you, that even if you're a sinner, even if you've made a wreck of your life, even though you don't have anything worthy in and of yourself.

Even though all that's true, I'll still pursue you, I'll still love you, I'll still save you. Doesn't matter what you've done, where you've been, how bad it's been, I'll save you if you'll just repent and call on the name of the Lord. It doesn't matter if you're an Egyptian or an Israelite, religious person, irreligious person, I can cover anyone if they'll just be covered by the blood of the lamb. I'm unconditionally committed to you. That's the first thing. The other thing you see on the other side of the crucifixion is Peter's restoration.

And you get a little glimpse in Mark's gospel. I mean tiny, but turn over to Mark chapter 16 verse 7. So in Mark chapter 16, Jesus has risen from the dead. But nobody knows that yet, and the women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and some other lady. I can't remember her name. Samoa? Salona? Something like that.[2] You, the pastor, should know that. I'm sorry I didn't. You can read it. So they're going over there to treat the body with spices and stuff like that, and they find the tomb empty.

And next to the tomb, they see an angel. And the angel basically tells them, Jesus isn't here. He's risen just like he said he would, so go tell people. And look at what he says specifically, verse 7. "Go, tell his disciples" and who? "And Peter that he is going before you to Galilee." Which that tells me that Peter, because of his denial, Peter had told himself and he told everybody else, I'm out, I'm not worthy, I'm a loser, I can never be associated with this movement again, I'm a failure. Just like many of you have probably felt like I'm a loser, I'm a failure, I can never be saved, I can never do church.

I can never be accepted after the things that I've done. And Jesus tells Peter, even after the worst case of denial, I'm still with you. I'm unconditionally committed to you. And as bad as your sin was, my grace is always greater. Where sin is great, grace is greater, always. And so for you, if you feel totally devastated, like I can't be saved, I can't be recovered, all you have to do is look to the cross. And be reminded that he's unconditionally committed to you and look at his grace. His grace is always greater than your sin.

Always. And faith is believing that and calling on the name of the Lord and being saved. In John's gospel, Peter and Jesus have a discussion over fish. After Jesus is risen from the dead, he asks Peter three times, Peter, do you love me? And Peter says, yeah, I love you, Lord. I love you, I love you. And then Jesus says, feed my sheep and follow me. You can always be recommissioned. He's a God of second, third, fourth, fifth, hundred-billionth different chances. So if you find yourself there this morning, the only way you're going to live the greater life, that's what we're preparing ourselves for, celebrating the resurrection.

You've got to first go through the cross, and the cross reminds us that we are far more sinful than we could have ever imagined, but that we're far more loved than we ever dared to hope. And if we'll repent of our sins and call on the name of the Lord, appealing to his love, we can be saved. And so here's how I want us to conclude this morning. The band's going to come and play, and I just want to invite you. You could be here this morning and you've been doing church your whole life.

But you'd say, you know what, I've never gone all in. I've never called on the name of the Lord. I've never been saved. And if you've never done that, I just want to invite you to do that. You can do it right there where you're seated. And you just say, Lord, forgive me of my sin. Save me, save me. And anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And if you make that decision, I'd love for you to come tell me. Now, or afterwards as Daniel comes, or maybe after the service or just put it on your decision card.

I made a decision to trust in Christ for the first time. What's next? And we'll help you find out what's next. Others of you are Christians, you've been Christians, but you've maybe been walking with a Peter type attitude. And I just want to encourage all of us this morning, take heed lest we fall. To be humble, to be prayerful. If you haven't been spending time with the Lord, your relationship with him has been dry, weak, let this be a defining moment this morning where you return back to a place where you're spending time with him, loving him, confessing your sins, getting an honest assessment of yourself and removing yourself from those environments that you know are going to lead you to sin.

And let the Lord work in your life in this moment. As the Holy Spirit's moving and the Lord is convicting, let it be a defining moment in your life so that you start winning and experiencing the greater life spiritually. So let's stand and go to him in prayer as we respond.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Ephesians 5, Galatians 5"; the call to restore someone who has fallen while watching yourself is Galatians 6:1 ("take heed lest he fall" is 1 Corinthians 10:12, and thinking "with sober judgment" is Romans 12:3). Source: Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Romans 12:3 (ESV). ↩
2. Transcript note: the third woman named in Mark 16:1 is Salome ("Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome"). Source: Mark 16:1 (ESV). ↩