

PUT AWAY YOUR **SWORD**
and
GRAB YOUR NET



— PART FIVE —
HOW CLOSE
ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?

Put Away Your Sword & Grab Your Net Part 5

How Closely Are You Following Me?

Scripture Readings

Matthew 26:57-58 (NKJV)

57 And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

Matthew 26:69-74 (NKJV)

69 Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."
70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you."

74 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed.

Introduction

We're entering the season of fishing! The weather is getting nice, the fish are circling the shallow, people are out of their homes, accessible, and the opportunities to connect will open up with our efforts to share the message of the love of Jesus! We must remember that the Impertune time is always and the Opportune time is now.

I want to lead you back to the shores where our nets have been freshly washed and waiting for us to pick them up and carry them into our boats. Your boat is your thing that brings you a return on your time spent. Whether that is your job, your business, your lane, your ministry, your focus. Whatever that is, Jesus wants to use it to reach people and call them into the Kingdom of Heaven. As Jesus met Peter by the shore with his net in his hands, can Jesus use you with your net and boat ready to be used by Him?

Peter Meets the Fisher of Men & He's Never the Same 1 2

Matthew 4:18-20 (NKJV)

18 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

- It was an encounter like no other. Peter, Andrew and James and John found themselves caught in the net of Jesus' powerful Words "Come follow me." It was as if His words had their number and immediately, they were hooked.
- From this day, Peter stuck close by Jesus 3
 - from land to sea
 - from shores to towns and cities
 - from walking on land to walking on water
 - from messes to miracles
 - from a few disciples to thousands of followers
 - from insufficiency to over-abundance
- You could not tell Peter that he was not Jesus' main disciple!

Peter The Flawed Follower

4 Peter was known for his blusters and blunders, yet Jesus kept Peter close. He was passionate, bravely, clumsy in thought and expression yet Jesus kept him close

Matthew 16:21-23 (NKJV)

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

- Blustered but still followed Jesus
- Got embarrassed but still followed Jesus
- Got it wrong so many times but still followed Jesus
- Rough on receiving revelation but Jesus still allowed him to follow closely.

And in all of this, Peter would not let anything come between him and the Master!

He was loyal, followed close and kept an eye on Jesus back even to defend Him vigorously.

Matthew 26:31-35 (NKJV)

31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

I will strike the Shepherd,

And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

33 Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

34 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

And so said all the disciples.

The Fisherman Leaves his Net and Grabs his Sword

- Angered by the betrayal of Judas against Jesus
- Enraged by the deceit of the pharisees
- Frustrated by the size of the following dwindling away
- Threatened by the sudden arrest of Jesus
- **5** Peter tries to prove his loyalty and bravery and grabs his sword to lash out against those trying to arrest Jesus.

- Judas may have betrayed Jesus to the Pharisees, but in Peter's anger, Peter betrayed the teachings of Jesus and abandoned his calling!
- The pharisees aggressive arrest of Jesus was met with the same energy and a mortal wound was dealt
- Peter witnessing many leaving Jesus and distancing themselves from Him, didn't realize that the same fate was about to befall him.

Fear, anger, frustration, led Peter down a path of a range of emotions, but even more importantly, a susceptibility to be tempted and sifted by Satan.

Luke 22:31-34 (NKJV)

31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

- **6** until Jesus' arrest—then Peter is following at a distance and all that bravery and passion quickly turns to denials

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- The Savior who called him to walk closely seemed out of his reach and in the hands of those who would do Him harm.
- The Deliverer was now in shackles
- The Conqueror was now constrained
- Christ willingly submitted Himself and the Word refused to speak
- This picture didn't sit well with Peter and shook his faith

What has shaken your faith of late?

- "I still believe but _____ has changed how closely I'm following."
- You used to be following a lot more closely but now you're lurking and watching from the shadows
- Life has a way of taking a turn, circumstances don't pan out in the direction you thought they'd go
- Your faith and your expectations walked so closely, you couldn't tell the difference between them
- But when God allows suffering, we start questioning what we believe and our proximity to God starts to get more and more distant

The Disciple Becomes the Denyer 6

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We're living in the last days where the teachings of the Risen Savior are being abrasively challenged. Millions question:

- Is Jesus actually real?
- Is He really the Son of God?
- Is Hell as an eternal reality if even real?
- Do I need God at all?
- And when faced with the reality that many will choose damnation before they choose life—we are confronted with the question—"do you believe in that nonsense?" "Do you believe that God would do that to millions?" "Are you associated with this?"

The true nature of our hearts and place with the Lord is proven in these kinds of high pressure moments where we're forced to grapple with the accusations that come from others. The rooster isn't the villain, just the signal of truth that there is fear in your heart. Many of us are unwilling to admit that we have some fear.

- 8 After Jesus' death Peter feels like he failed the Master and the other disciples and secludes Himself
- Shame leads to hiding
- A decrease or shift in our faith leads us to follow at a distance—just in case God does something we don't expect
- When we start questioning, we start drifting
- Peter separated himself because his actions and his testimony was now tainted
- Out of fear, the disciple disowns his Master.

After Jesus' prophecy about Peter's denials came true, Peter internalized the shame of the moment and left the disciples.

9 But The Fisher of Men would reveal Himself to Peter again:

- The Risen Christ meets Mary and sends word to His disciples AND Peter that He is risen. Jesus restores Peter to the group of disciples and once again 'the flawed disciple's' faith is renewed.
- Peter and his fellow disciples go back to fishing—finds his net again
- Jesus (in disguise) meets them on the shore and once again gives them a miracle catch of fish—this time their net didn't break!
- **7** While on the shore after Jesus resurrection, Jesus asked Peter a point blank question in front of his brothers 3 times: "Peter do you love Me." "Feed my Sheep."
 - everyone saw your great faith before—but do you love Me?
 - we all saw you walk on water but walk away from Me—do you love Me?
 - we all heard you confess that I am the Christ the Son of God (like you knew who I really was)—yet you cursed and insisted you were never with me—do you love Me?
- **10** Notice Jesus doesn't condemn him, He redeems him and commission's him—Feed My lambs

Close

- What's affecting you from being a closer follower?
- You show up with big moments of faith and zeal but then you retreat into barely being seen
- You're here today, gone tomorrow and probably questioning yourself if the Master still wants to use you
- it's not about your courage today—it's about your genuine love for Jesus
- if you love Him—then love the things that are important to Him—feed His sheep.