

The Peter Problem - Matthew 26:31–35, 69–75

Main Idea: We often overestimate ourselves and selectively follow Jesus, but the resurrection reveals that Jesus is Lord and His way leads to life, even when it feels like death.

1. Spiritual Pride

Peter was confident in himself but unaware of his weakness. He believed he would never fall, yet within hours he denied Jesus.

Explanation: Spiritual pride is an overconfidence in yourself and an underestimation of your need for grace. Peter did not fall because he lacked passion. He fell because he trusted himself more than he should have.

Truth: You never outgrow your need for grace. You are a saved sinner on your best day.

2. Selective Obedience

Peter knew Jesus' teaching but did not follow it when it became costly. When pressure came, he acted on instinct instead of obedience.

Explanation: Selective obedience is following Jesus when it is easy or beneficial, but ignoring Him when it is difficult. Peter knew Jesus taught non-violence, yet he still reached for the sword.

Truth: We do not get to choose which teachings of Jesus we follow. Partial obedience is still disobedience.

3. The Resurrection Changes Everything

Peter's story does not end in failure. The resurrection reshaped his understanding of Jesus, himself, and what it means to follow.

Explanation: The resurrection proves Jesus is Lord. His words are not suggestions but truth. It also shows that what feels like death in obedience is not the end of the story.

Truth: In the kingdom of God, the path to life often looks like death. But because Jesus defeated death, obedience always leads to life.

Final Reflection:

Before the resurrection, Peter believed power meant winning, loyalty meant fighting, and faithfulness meant never failing. After the resurrection, he learned that power is surrender, loyalty is obedience, and faithfulness includes repentance and restoration.

The goal is not to be better than Peter. The goal is to see what Peter finally saw. Jesus is Lord, and His way leads to life, even when it feels like death.

Devotion 1: The Danger of Spiritual Pride

Scripture: Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Reflection: Peter was certain of himself. He believed his loyalty to Jesus was stronger than everyone else’s. Yet within hours, that confidence collapsed. His failure was not because he lacked love for Jesus. It was because he trusted himself too much. Spiritual pride is subtle. It often sounds like confidence or maturity. It shows up when we begin to believe we are beyond certain sins or no longer need the same level of dependence on God. But Scripture reminds us that pride always comes before a fall. The moment we believe we are strong enough on our own is often the moment we are most vulnerable. The truth is simple and humbling. We are saved sinners who never outgrow our need for grace. Every day we stand in need of God’s help, God’s strength, and God’s mercy.

Challenge: Identify one area where you have been relying on yourself instead of God. Take time today to pray with humility, asking God to strengthen you and guard your heart.

Devotion 2: The Struggle of Selective Obedience

Scripture: Luke 6:46 “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

Reflection: Peter knew what Jesus taught. He had heard it firsthand. Yet when pressure came, he did not follow it. Instead of turning the other cheek, he reached for the sword. Selective obedience is something we all wrestle with. We follow Jesus in the areas that feel comfortable, beneficial, or easy. But when obedience becomes costly, we hesitate. We justify. We delay. Jesus does not present His teachings as optional. If He is Lord, then His words carry authority in every area of our lives. True discipleship means trusting Him not just when it is easy, but especially when it is difficult. Often, the areas we resist most are the areas where God wants to do the deepest work in us.

Challenge: Ask yourself honestly, where am I resisting what Jesus has clearly said? Choose one step of obedience today, even if it feels uncomfortable or costly.

Devotion 3: Life Through the Resurrection

Scripture: John 11:25 “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.”

Reflection: Peter’s story did not end in failure. The resurrection changed everything for him. It proved that Jesus was not just a teacher, but Lord. It also redefined what it means to follow Him. Before the resurrection, Peter saw loss as defeat. After the resurrection, he understood that what looks like death can actually lead to life. This is the pattern of the gospel. Jesus died and rose again. Because of that, obedience to Him, even when it feels like loss, is never wasted. Forgiveness may feel like death. Humility may feel like death. Letting go of control may feel like death. But in Christ, these moments become the pathway to real life. We follow a Savior who conquered death. That means we can trust Him, even when His commands lead us through hard and uncomfortable places.

Challenge: What is one area of obedience that feels like loss right now? Trust Jesus with it today and take a step forward, believing that He brings life on the other side.