

## Jesus, Peter and the Power of Darkness

Luke 22: 31-34; 47-62.

We are approaching Jesus' trial. Before Luke gets us there, he gives a ring-side seat on Peter's darkest moment. This event is like a beacon in the dark night of our own personal failure: even failures can have a future. That should give all of us hope.

### Why does Peter fall?

For three reasons:

#### 1. He has an enemy.

Satan wants to sift Peter – and all the disciples. We have an adversary who is like a lion. But he is a lion on a leash – he has to ask first. That means nothing can happen to us without our Heavenly Father's permission.

#### 2. He is confident in himself.

Peter thinks this couldn't happen to him, that he is better than others. So he doesn't pray when Jesus tells him to. When they arrest Jesus, Peter draws a sword. But Jesus is not going to fight: He has entrusted His life to His father's will. Peter's confidence is in himself – and that is a trap we can all fall into. We are never more at risk than when we think we aren't.

#### 3. He gave way to fear, not faith.

He denied Jesus three times because he feared the outcome if he admitted to being Jesus' disciples. Jesus could face his trial with peace because He trusted His father. When we think our lives are in others' hand, we too may fear. But they aren't.

None of this took Jesus by surprise. He knew Peter would fail – just as He knows we will fail. But he chose Peter (and us) anyway. There is hope for failures.

### Why does Peter turn back?

#### 1. He has a Saviour who prays for him.

And so do we. We will cross the finishing line, because Jesus is praying for us.

#### 2. Jesus looks at him.

It is the moment when Jesus looks at Peter that Peter realises what he has done. It must have been a look that conveyed love and mercy and pity, and it broke Peter's heart. Jesus loved Peter even in his failure. God does not wait for us to clean up our act – Jesus died for us while we were still sinners. Knowing that gives us the strength to stand back up when we have fallen.

3. **Because he *does* turn back.** He repents. He is sorry for his sin, and turns back to Jesus for mercy and grace.

### Why does Jesus allow it to happen?

Jesus allows Peter to fail, so that when he turns back he can strengthen the church. Not with Peter's old self-confidence, but the humbled, broken Peter who knows he is a sinner saved by grace, and who knows the transforming power of grace.

The powers of darkness might want to crush Peter, but Jesus had better plans for him, as He does for us, and he will use our failures to get us there.