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Who Will Follow Jesus?

JOHN 13:36-38

Introduction

1. What was the difference between Judas and Peter?
 - a. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
 - b. Following Judas' betrayal of Jesus, while He was being tried before the Sanhedrin, in the courtyard outside the house of the high priest, Peter denied Jesus with oaths and curses.
2. Today, I can't say that I have ever known of a young man being named Judas — his name is associated with betrayal and shame.
3. However, I know of several who are called by the name Peter — it is a name they wear proudly.
4. So, what is the difference between the two men?
 - a. Judas' betrayal of Jesus was deliberate.
 - 1) It was carried out in cold blood.
 - 2) It was the result of planning and forethought.
 - b. Peter's betrayal was far from deliberate.
 - 1) He never meant to do it.
 - 2) It happened in a moment of weakness.
5. Just as there was a difference between Judas and Peter, so there is a difference in the sins we commit:
 - a. Some sins are deliberately calculated.
 - 1) They originate in a heart that has grown cold.
 - 2) In such cases a person knows exactly what he or she is doing.
 - b. Other sins are involuntary.

- 1) They occur in a moment of weakness or passion.
 - 2) Only after the sin has taken place, and perhaps been pointed out, does the person realize what he or she has done.
6. As you think about these things, I want you to look closely at the exchange which takes place between Peter and Jesus in verses 36-38 of chapter 13:

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I. Where Was Peter's Focus?

A. NOT ON THE NEW COMMANDMENT

1. Remember, Jesus has just given His disciples a new commandment.
“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another” (John 13:34).
2. Their fulfillment of this commandment would demonstrate to everyone that they were Jesus' disciples.
“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).
3. This seems to have gone in one ear and out the other.

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B. INSTEAD, PETER WAS FIXATED ON SOMETHING WHICH JESUS HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID

1. It had to do with two things:
 - a. First, the fact that He would only be with them a short while longer.
“Little children, I am with you a little while longer.” (John 13:33a).
 - b. Second, even though they might search for Him, they could not come to the place where He was.
“You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’” (John 13:33, NASB95).

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2. Peter returned to this in verses 36-38 :
 - a. First exchange.
 - 1) (Peter) “Lord, where are You going? (v. 36a).
 - 2) (Jesus) “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.” (v. 36b).
 - b. Second exchange.
 - 1) (Peter) “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.” (v. 37)
 - 2) (Jesus) “Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.” (v. 38).

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3. Jesus’ encouraging words to Peter (Luke 22:31-32)

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31-32).
4. What was it that Jesus knew about Peter which prompted Him to speak with such an encouraging tone?

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II. What Did Jesus Know About Peter?

A. JESUS KNEW ALL OF PETER’S WEAKNESSES

1. He knew that Peter was an impulsive individual.
2. He knew that Peter would often speak with his heart before he thought with his head:
 - a. When Jesus came walking toward His disciples on the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:28).

“Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water”

(Matthew 14:28).

b. **On the Mount of Transfiguration** (Matthew 17:4; Mark 9:5; Luke 9:33)

“Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah”
(Matthew 17:4).

c. Luke even adds in his account that Peter did not realize what he was saying.

3. Jesus knew not only the strength of Jesus’ loyalty, but also the weakness of His resolve.

a. He knew that Peter would draw his sword that very night in an effort to defend His Master (Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; John 18:10).

b. He also knew that Peter would later deny knowing Jesus, not once but three times.

4. What are your weaknesses?

5. Do you realize that Jesus knows them all too well?

6a

B. JESUS KNEW THAT PETER LOVED HIM

1. Jesus knew that regardless of what Peter did, he still loved His Lord.

2. Even though Peter would deny Jesus, it wasn’t with the intent to hurt Him.

3. Oftentimes it is those closest to us who hurt us, fail us, wound us or disappoint us.

4. On such occasions, we would save ourselves much heartache if we would learn to forgive.

5. Does Jesus know that you love Him, even when you fail and disappoint Him?

6b

C. JESUS KNEW WHAT PETER COULD BECOME

1. Jesus didn’t just know what Peter was, He knew what Peter could become.

2. He knew that though Peter would deny Him that night, in less than two

months he would stand before thousands and declare Jesus to be both “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

3. Jesus also knew that Peter would stand before the same Jewish leaders who would demand His crucifixion and declare, “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).
4. And He knew that when Peter and John were commanded not “to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus,” they would respond “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19).
5. This man, who, in just a few hours, would deny ever knowing Jesus would go on to become a great leader in the church.
6. What does Jesus see you becoming?
 - a. Do you see that in yourself?
 - b. Can you?

Conclusion

1. Are you a Peter?
2. Do you have good intentions, but often find yourself falling short?
3. Do you love Jesus, even though you know at times you hurt Him and disappoint Him?
4. Do you long to walk the path of righteousness and eventually arrive at your destination — eternal life with our Lord.
5. Are you willing to come to Jesus tonight so that He might save you?