

## THE SAVIOR'S PASSION: AN APOSTLE WHO DENIED THE LORD

**INTRO:** Peter was a disciple of John the Baptist, introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew. A prosperous fisherman, rugged, self-confident, he leaves all to follow Jesus. He said exactly what was in his mind and heart. Jesus selects Peter "Thou art .... Thou shalt be". The volcanic, explosive, and impulsive nature of Peter with a large hot heart will be schooled and nurtured by Jesus to fit him to suffer for Jesus and be crowned with Jesus.

### I. **A BOLD BOAST.**

- A. Peter has made a **three-fold beautiful confession**
1. Many of Jesus' disciples leave him. Peter says, "We believe and are sure that thou art the Son of God" (John 6:68,69).
  2. Reporting what others said about Jesus, now Peter says "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt.16:16).
  3. After a miraculous catch of fish, Peter says, "depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).
- B. Peter makes a **three-fold boast**.
1. Peter says, "Though all shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended (Matt. 26:33)."
  2. Peter says, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee (Matt. 26:35)."
  3. Peter says, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both to prison and to death (Luke 22:33)."
- C. Peter is given **three solemn warnings**.
1. "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith...(Luke 22:32)."
  2. "Get behind me Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God but those that be of men (Matt 16:23)."
  3. "Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice (Matt. 26:34)."
- D. What do we make of these statements?
1. They arise out of a large heart of love. He loved his Lord!
  2. They are spoken out of a confidence. He is a brave man. But these words are a confidence in self.
  3. Confidence in self made Peter a boaster. He elevates himself above all others. It blinds us to our own weakness.
  4. "I" is prominent. Peter made a generous use of the personal pronoun. Middle letter of SIN is "I".

### II. **A TERRIBLE FALL.**

- A. A crucial moment of testing.
1. Courageously he tried to defend his Lord with a sword.
  2. Courageously Peter followed Jesus into the den of lions, but he followed "afar off" (John 13:36-38).
  3. But when he follows "to see the end" (Matt.26:57), his courage fails with just a question by a servant girl.
- B. A **three-fold denial**.
1. When a young maiden announces him as one of Jesus' disciples, Peter says, "**I know not what thou sayst.**"
  2. When a man on the porch says, "Thou art also of them, Peter says, "**Man, I am not**" **adding an oath.**
  3. Approached by a relative of the man whose ear was cut off, Peter says, "**I know not this man of whom ye speak.**"
  4. Peter becomes a coward, denying his discipleship, his vows, his Master.
  5. Peter reverts to his old habit, the wild, profane Peter, the fisherman. "He began to curse and swear."
  6. What a wound to the heart of Christ such a profane denial is.
- C. Conscious of his guilt:
1. There is the crowing of the cock twice waking Peter from the stupor of his fall..
  2. There is the penetrating look of Jesus: Reproach? Wounded love?
  3. It was a look that brought to remembrance Christ's word, "But I have prayed that thy faith fail not."
  4. Crushed by the terrible thing he had done, Peter "went out, and wept bitterly." Tears of sorrow that work repentance!
  5. Peter is led by God to climb the rock of self-confidence only to fall deeply, never to climb it again.
  6. Has the Lord tried you or me in this way to fit us for our work in his kingdom?

### III. **MARVELOUS FORGIVENESS AND REINSTATEMENT.**

- A. Can the Lord forgive?
1. Peter once asked the Lord how many times a man must forgive his brother who has sinned against him.
  2. Peter thought that he was generous when he suggested the number of the covenant: seven.
  3. Jesus responded, "Seventy times seven." Without limit!
  4. How wonderful for Peter that the Lord forgives those who sin against him so horribly. TRUST IN PARDON.
  5. How wonderful for you and me. If we have fallen from heights, there is mercy and pardon!
  6. Did Jesus forgive Peter? Listen as the resurrected Lord says to the women, "Go tell my brethren **and Peter.**"
  7. One of Jesus' appearances that Easter morning was to Peter in the nature of a private absolution. Forgiven!
- B. The reinstatement of the fallen disciple.
1. Although privately forgiven, Peter's denial still stood, uncanceled before the other apostles and in his own consciousness.
  2. Public restoration of Peter was necessary for Peter, the other apostles, and those to whom he would preach.
  3. A **three-fold penetrating question**:
    - a. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?"
    - b. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"
    - c. "Simon, son of Jonas, likest thou me?"
  4. Peter's **three-fold answer**,
    - a. Peter no longer boasts of self. He says, "Yea Lord, thou knowest that I like thee."
    - b. Peter no longer makes comparisons, nor even dare to claim the higher form of love.
  5. A **three-fold commission**: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, pasture my dear little sheep. Only love can do such service!