



## **GROW. PRAY. STUDY.**

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

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### **September 10, 2017 “I Will Not Deny You”**

Scripture: Matthew 26:31-35

Then Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.” Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples.

Questions in this GPS marked with ➤ are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

### **“You will never wash my feet”**

#### **MONDAY 9.11.17 John 13:1-10**

Jesus told Peter, “You don’t understand what I’m doing now,” and Peter certainly didn’t. We may not understand, either—most of us wash our own feet in our shower or tub. Things were very different in first-century Palestine. “Washing others’ feet was normally a servile task. Dirt roads made feet dusty.... Disciples served teachers rather than the reverse, and the one act of service specifically not expected even of them was dealing with the master’s feet.” \*

- We saw last week that, even after saying Jesus was God’s anointed king, Peter tried to correct Jesus as soon as he began talking about suffering (cf. [Matthew 16:13-23](#)). Letting Jesus wash his feet didn’t at all fit Peter’s dream of his Lord as a glorious king. Many of us are high achievers, and serving a crucified king can be a challenge for us, too. How are you doing at worshiping Jesus as a counter-cultural Savior, who changed the world through self-giving love rather than self-serving clout?
- Pastor Hamilton honed in on the underlying spiritual question this story asks each of us. “Jesus wanted to make sure his disciples got it. The story in John 13 encourages us to ask this question: Are you—am I—worried about who appears to be the greatest, or are we focused on humbly serving others?” \*\* What’s your answer? Has it changed over time?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, this is a hard prayer to pray. But I mean it: teach me how to find my glory in serving God and others, as you did, not in having others serve me. Amen.

\* HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 240914-240925). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

\*\* Adam Hamilton, *John: The Gospel of Light and Life*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015, p. 96.

## **“Even if everyone else stumbles, I won’t”**

**TUESDAY 9.12.17 Mark 14:27-31**

Luke reported that the argument among the disciples about which of them should be the greatest invaded even their Passover Supper with Jesus (cf. [Luke 22:24-27](#)). That may have been one trigger for Jesus to tell them they would all falter in their faithfulness. Peter offered no ringing endorsement of his fellow disciples—if anything, he “threw them under the bus” as far more likely to fail than he was.

- John Wesley, Methodism’s founder, encouraged his followers to ask themselves a set of searching questions. One was, “Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?” How did Peter’s words (“Even if everyone else stumbles, I won’t”) illustrate the workings of that “I’m better than others” dynamic? When are you most tempted to compare yourself favorably with others?
- With a time of emotional crisis just ahead, would you expect Jesus to give his disciples a “pep talk,” boosting their spirits and telling them how much confidence he had in their ability to handle what lay ahead? Do you believe they would have handled things any better if he had given them a pep talk rather than this somber warning? Spiritually, which is more important for you—to believe you’ve got the strength to handle anything, or to be aware that you need to rely on God’s power, which is greater than yours?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you know me better than I know myself. Guide me today and every day, nudging and challenging me to become more fully the person you call me to be. Amen.

## **“I have prayed for you, Peter”**

**WEDNESDAY 9.13.17 Luke 22:31-34**

Where Mark recorded a generalized warning to all the disciples, Luke’s research (cf. [Luke 1:1-3](#)) led him to write that Jesus addressed a personal warning to Peter. In a touching moment, he told Peter that he had prayed for him. But the Lord responded to Peter’s “I’m ready to go with you” boast with the same somber pessimism that Mark recorded as part of Jesus’ talk with the disciples.

- Another of the self-examination questions John Wesley, Methodism’s founder, encouraged people to regularly ask (and answer) was, “Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am?” Do you believe Peter was, in some measure, trying to convince Jesus (and maybe himself) that he was better than he really was? When do you find the same tug at work in your own life?
- Jesus told Peter, “I have prayed for you that your faith won’t fail.” Now (spoiler alert), most of us already know that at the end of this story, Peter’s faith did buckle, moving him to deny even knowing Jesus. Did that mean that God did not answer Jesus’ prayer? What is the point of praying for someone else when we realize that God will not take away their moral freedom, and force them to do the (good) thing we’d like to see them do?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you value me enough that, through the Bible and sometimes through your Spirit’s presence in me, you warn me about dangers on my spiritual journey. Teach me how to be attentive to what you want to teach me. Amen.

## “He found them sleeping”

**THURSDAY 9.14.17 Mark 14:32-38**

Jesus had a profound and powerful sense of mission guiding his steps toward the cross. But that did not make the prospect of a humiliating, violent execution any easier to face. Mark wrote that “he began to feel despair and was anxious.” He took his three closest disciples with him, including Peter, and asked them to “stay alert and pray.” But, any prior boasting notwithstanding, they couldn’t do it.

- One element of this story is simple irony. Peter, the disciple who confidently said, “Even if everyone else stumbles, I won’t,” couldn’t even stay awake for Jesus! Jesus’ response about the eager spirit and weak flesh recalled the psalm that said God shows compassion “because God knows how we’re made, God remembers we’re just dust” (Psalm 103:149). When have you meant well, but just not been up to living out what God wanted you to do?
- The story also shows us an important truth. If any human ever had a direct connection to God, it was Jesus. Yet he asked his three closest friends to be with him, stay alert and pray. Do you try to hide your hurts and your needs from your friends, to handle them on your own? Or are you, like Jesus, open to asking people you trust for the friendship and support you need?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I’m so tempted to say, “Well, I’d have stayed awake with you.” Then I realize I sound like Peter. Keep me humble, putting my confidence in you more than in my own spiritual strength. Amen.

## Peter drew his sword

**FRIDAY 9.15.17 Luke 22:49-51, John 18:3-12**

Led by Judas, what seems an absurdly large force arrived to arrest Jesus. Peter, who said, “I’ll give up my life for you” (John 13:37), bravely drew his sword to defend Jesus. Had he kept fighting, he’d likely have died. (Living for Jesus proved the harder task.) Luke, probably showing his physician’s heart (cf. [Colossians 4:14](#)), recorded that even amid all that turmoil, Jesus paused to heal the ear that Peter’s slightly misaimed blow had cut off.

- Later Jesus told the Roman procurator Pilate, “My kingdom doesn’t originate from this world. If it did, my guards would fight.... My kingdom isn’t from here.” Peter tried to fight, and Jesus stopped him. We still live in a world where violence often feels like the only viable response to evil. Is it? To what extent do you believe Jesus was right, and to what extent was his situation different from “real life”?
- Think about the man Malchus. “A personal servant of the high priest could wield much authority, including over the temple police.” \* The text didn’t follow him further. Do you imagine that, with his ear restored by Jesus’ healing touch, he stayed busy the next day arranging Jesus’ execution? Might that experience have so altered his outlook that, if not immediately, perhaps by the day of Pentecost he was part of the group who responded to Peter’s preaching by joining the Jesus movement (cf. [Acts 2:36-41](#))?

**Prayer:** King Jesus, when I see things that seem wrong, I so readily use words like “destroy,” “smash” or even “nuke.” But even as you faced the cross, you tried to stop the cycle of violence, not feed it. Teach me more about your ways, your kingdom. Amen.

\* HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 241308-241309). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

### **“Peter went out and cried uncontrollably”**

**SATURDAY 9.16.17 John 18:15-18, 25-27, Luke 22:59-62**

Let’s review: of all the disciples, only Peter walked on water ([Matthew 14:28-29](#)). He was the first to say flat out that Jesus was the Messiah ([Mark 8:27-29](#)). On this fateful evening, Luke wrote, “Lord,” Peter said, “I’m ready to go with you, both to prison and to death!” (Luke 22:33) Yet, when the crunch came, he wasn’t, in fact, “ready.” He discovered that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. He was no coward—but he was a human being facing kinds of pressure he’d never faced, and didn’t anticipate.

- Pastor Adam Hamilton wrote, “The incident [Peter’s denial] is one of the few that is mentioned in all Four Gospels.... It was not included to embarrass Peter.... The gospel writers knew the story because Peter must have regularly told the awful truth of that episode himself.” \* Has pressure ever led you to be ashamed of and to hide your allegiance to Jesus? What do you think Peter saw in Jesus’ eyes when Jesus looked straight at him that broke his heart (and may have preserved his eternal life)? When have you grown through a failure that God’s grace enabled you to embrace and learn from?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, like Peter, I need to keep learning things about myself, finding room to grow even in areas I thought I had mastered. Thank you for your ongoing grace, for nudging me to grow even in places where I may think I’m done growing. Amen.

\* Adam Hamilton, *24 Hours that Changed the World*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009, p. 58.

**Family Activity:** Jesus often shows us the power of forgiveness. Blow up one balloon for each family member. Place them in the center of the room. Invite each family member to choose one balloon and a marker. Ask each person to draw a picture or write words representing something they have done wrong. Read I John 1:9 aloud. Explain that this means that no matter what we do, we can tell God we are sorry and God forgives us. Pray together, asking God to forgive what is written on your balloons. After you pray, have each person pop his or her balloon, representing God forgiving and forgetting your sin. Continue until each person has popped their balloon. Thank God for forgiving our sins.

### **Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer**

*Prayers for Peace & Comfort for: :*

- Christy Bradley and family on the death of her mother Carolyn McDonald, 9/6
- Julie Allison and family on the death of her mother Barbara Jean Allison, 9/5
- Clay Patterson and family on the death of his step-mother Jeanne Lillig-Patterson, 9/4
- Karl Neybert and Anne Marie Wells and families on the death of their father Gregory Neybert, 9/2
- Cathy AuBuchon and family on the death of her husband Jim AuBuchon, 9/1
- Nancy Kilpatrick and family on the death of her father Jim Merritt, 8/30
- Marcy Henderson and family on the death of her mother Margery “Midge” White, 8/30
- Bonnie Gleason and family on the death of her brother Bobby Ray Thomason, 8/11