

Lessons from a Fall

Mt 26:69-75

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Many good-intentioned individuals serve the Lord faithfully & then leave him. Thankfully, many of them return to the Lord.

B. What a blessing it is to serve a God who forgives us when we sin!

1. Acts 8:22. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

2. 1 Jn 2:1. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

C. Although God stands ready to forgive us when we fall, we need to strive to keep from falling.

1. Rm 6:15. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!

2. 1 Cor 15:34. Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

D. Today, we want to study the case of Peter's fall and restoration and see what we can learn (Mt 26:69-75).

II. WE LEARN THE DANGER OF TOO MUCH SELF-CONFIDENCE.

A. Peter told Jesus that he would never be made to stumble, although the other disciples would stumble (Mt 26:31-35).

1. Peter really thought that he was safe from that sin; he

really believed that he would never deny the Lord.

2. Certainly that's one reason he did deny Jesus—he was over-confident.

B. We need to be careful about being over-confident.

1. Scripture warns us about being overly confident.

a. Prov 16:18. Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

b. 1 Cor 10:12. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

2. If we think that we will never commit a certain sin, we will run into serious trouble. We will run into serious trouble, because we'll let down our guard and then Satan can easily tempt us.

3. Illustration about Icarus from Greek mythology.

III. WE LEARN THAT SIN IS PROGRESSIVE.

A. Notice how Peter got deeper & deeper into sin—he was over-confident, he followed from a distance, he sat by the fire of enemies, he denied the Lord, he cursed & swore!

B. We need to realize that sin is indeed progressive.

1. This is an important lesson in Scripture.

a. Js 1:15. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

b. 2 Tm 3:13. while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

2. This truth is often seen in drug abuse—one begins experimenting with drugs such as marijuana, but when

that quits fulfilling his desires, he turns to heroin, cocaine, and similar drugs.

3. Once one begins on a path of sin, it's difficult for his sins not to grow worse & worse.

IV. WE LEARN THAT BAD COMPANY BRINGS MANY TEMPTATIONS.

A. Had Peter gone on to the trial or stayed with the other apostles, he might not have denied the Lord.

1. He surrounded himself with bad company; he was warming himself at a fire when many unbelieving Jews were warming themselves.

2. They corrupted Peter & he denied that he knew the Lord.

B. We need to be careful about the company we keep.

1. Deut 7:4. for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

2. 1 Cor 15:33. Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character.

3. We see this truth in many ways:

a. Young people who get in with the wrong crowd often get into trouble at school, at home, & and in the community.

b. Christians who marry an unbeliever often fall away because of the influence of an unbelieving spouse.

V. WE LEARN THAT LETTING PEOPLE KNOW WHERE WE STAND LESSENS THE TEMPTATIONS.

A. Had Peter told those with whom he was standing what he believed, where he stood, he would not have run into trouble.

1. But, Peter was not willing to stand on conviction.
2. Peter ran into trouble another time for not standing on conviction: Gal 2:11-13. When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

B. We need to stand on our convictions.

1. Scripture exhorts us to stand fast.
 - a. 1 Cor 15:58. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.
 - b. Phil 4:1. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

2. Are you standing fast for your convictions?

VI. WE LEARN THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF PRAYERLESSNESS ARE HORRIBLE.

A. Mt 26:41.

1. But, the disciples slept while Jesus prayed (Mt 26:36-46).

2. Had Peter stayed awake & prayed as Jesus had asked him, he likely would not have fallen into this temptation.

B. When we do not pray, we see disastrous results as well.

1. We are warned against not praying.

a. Ps 53:4. Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on God.

b. Js 4:2. You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.

2. Prayerlessness is so very dangerous—if we do not pray: we are not able to tap into God's infinite power, we are not able to depend upon God, & we will not receive help from God.

VII. WE LEARN THAT THE INFLUENCES OF FEAR ARE DISASTROUS.

A. Had Peter not been so fearful, surely he would have admitted to knowing Jesus—he seems to be afraid that he might be thrown into prison & executed; he was trying to save himself.

B. Fear is disastrous.

1. The Bible makes it clear that fear & Christianity do not go together.

a. Prov 29:25. Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

b. 1 Pt 3:14. But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened

c. Rv 21:8. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

2. Fear will keep us from doing what we know is right—we’re afraid of what other would think, so we’re not baptized; we’re afraid of hurting someone’s feelings, so we don’t share the gospel, we’re afraid our accountant will think we’re crazy, so we don’t give as generously as we should.

VIII. CONCLUSION.

A. Even though Peter denied the Lord, he was able to do great things: he preached the first gospel sermon, preached the first sermon to the Gentiles, & he wrote two NT books.

B. If you have fallen away, you can do great things if you come back to Jesus. Do you need to come to him today?