

39. 'I will' and 'my will'

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We are going to study about the man whom we all can relate very well because of his boisterous and 'foot-in-mouth' problem. Peter would have never thought that he would betray Jesus. If he did, he wouldn't make such a promise like he did as we will see in this study.

To him, it might be a surprise, but to God He already knew it before the creation of the universe. If I were God, I wouldn't use loud-mouth Peter, nor myself who has never been a Bible college or seminary and speaks lousy broken English as the pastor of a church. It seems like God uses a bunch of losers of the world to do His work. But God makes those losers to be winners in His master plan.

The main reason why Peter failed was that he was rely on his own willpower and strength. In comparison with that, we will see Jesus completely rely on His Father's will and strength.

Here is the man whom God made into a winner, Apostle Peter.

A. PREPARING FOR FAILURE

Matt 26:31-35 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble 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 have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." Step 1) Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

Jesus referred to Zechariah 13:7 in warning His disciples, but He also added a word of promise: He would rise again and meet them in Galilee. Unfortunately, the men paid little attention to the promise of His resurrection.

1) Thinking too highly of himself

When Peter disagreed with the Lord, this was the beginning of his sin of denying the Lord. Peter was unwilling to apply the word "all" to himself. Instead of reassuring Peter, the Lord gave him a personal warning: He would deny Christ three times! Had Peter listened to the word and obeyed it, he would not have denied his Lord three times.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

Peter was depending on his own strength and willpower to stay with Jesus contrary to what it says in Zech 4:6.

Please note that Peter was self-assured in his own power and it showed in his words "I will." That is a very dangerous place to be and a great place to start a backslide.

B. WHEN JESUS NEEDED A FRIEND

Matt 26:36-38 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

1) A graphic reminder at the Kidron Brook

The Passover feast was a yearly event in Jerusalem commemorating the delivery of God's people from Egypt. Jewish historian Josephus tells us that in Jesus' day, 250,000 lambs would be slaughtered in the temple in preparation for Passover. Blood would have flowed freely from the temple into the Kidron Valley below the temple mount, causing the Kidron Brook to actually turn bloody red. As Jesus was crossing over this brook, its color must have been a graphic reminder to Him of what was to come as He, the Lamb of God, would shed His own blood for our sin.

2) Gethsemane - Oil Press

The word "gethsemane" means "oil press." In an oil press, olives were crushed, broken, and ground up so that oil might be produced. Scripturally, oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

It is not coincidental that it was in the Garden of Gethsemane where He felt the crushing, the heaviness, and the burden of what was about to happen.

3) The reasons for His sorrowful soul

Jesus said that His soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Why?

Reason 1) Jesus knew what He was facing at the cross. He would face the utter isolation from His own loving Father in heaven. It is no wonder why he cried out on the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" The reason why His Father forsook Him was that all the sins of the mankind from the past, present and future fell upon Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Reason 2) As a human, He knew what kind of torture and humiliating execution He had to face.

4) Two different gardens and two different results

There are four things that I find interesting:

- In the Garden of Eden, man's relationship with the Father was broken because of disobedience of Adam.
In the Garden of Gethsemane, man's relationship with the Father was restored through obedience of Jesus.
- In the Garden of Eden, the first Adam tried to hide from God.
In the Garden of Gethsemane, the last Adam bared His soul to God.
- In the Garden of Eden, a sword of an angel was pulled out and man was driven out.
In the Garden of Gethsemane, a sword was put away and a man was healed.
- In the Garden of Eden, a decision was made that resulted in damnation.
In the Garden of Gethsemane, a decision was made that resulted in salvation.

C. THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF TOTAL SURRENDER

*Matt 26:39-42 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Then He came to the disciples and **Step 2)** found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one*

hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

1) Yielding His will to the Father

Contrary to what Peter claimed boastfully, Jesus completely yields His will to the Father. If Jesus is willing to yield His will to the Father in heaven, shouldn't we all the more yield our will to the Father also?

The key to prayer is not so much "name it and claim it." Rather, the key to prayer is "request and rest." There are many so-called faith teachers who teach "Word of Faith." They are Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Jerry Savelle, Benny Hinn, Jesse Duplantis, Joyce Meyer and more. What they say is that there is power in the words we speak, we speak to God what we want and God is obligated to do what we ask in Jesus' name. It sounds awful nice and fitting to our fleshly desires. They teach that for whatever we want, we have to have faith in faith to obtain it. If you don't have what you want, it is because you don't have enough faith. This kind of false theology destroys many people's hearts and some even walked away from Christianity. There is a Greek word for that false doctrine - hogwash.

2) They teach not to seek God's will

They even have audacity to teach the people that we shouldn't ask for God's will, but just demand Him that He should do what we want. What does God look like to them? An errant boy with a hat in His hand and anxiously waiting for us to give him an order, so that He can fulfill it for my pleasure? That is not my God whom I serve. I exist to serve and please Him, He doesn't exist for my pleasure. That is a heresy and it is a damnable theology from the pit of hell.

I don't care if they call themselves as God's anointed. First of all, they are not God's anointed, since they are false teachers. Second, their prosperity gospel is not Gospel at all. The bottom line is that they use it to get more money out of people's pockets for their own benefits. If you don't believe me, you watch them on Christian TV. Do they look alike they are living from paycheck to paycheck like you and me?

3) Need a proof?

Some of you might think, "How can you say that about our fellow brothers and sisters?" As your pastor and teacher, it is my obligation to teach you the truth. If you believe that I am falsely accusing these people, you can order a book, 'Christianity in Crisis' by Hank Hanegraaff from our Bookstore. That book has a tape that contains recordings of the Faith Movement teachers' false teachings. If you cannot afford book, we will have it in the library as soon as we get it.

1 Tim 1:18-20 This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

We need to remember that God's will is good. It may not seem like it at times, but it is. His plan for us is good. However, He usually doesn't give us a detailed blueprint. Usually, God reveals His will to us in bits and pieces. He sees the big picture, while we just see a little at a time.

So when we look at the will of God in progress, it may not always make sense. But we must believe that God knows what He is doing. His will is good. Just wait until He finishes what He has begun.

1Pet. 3:17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

4) No other way, but Jesus

If there was any other way to get to heaven, Jesus would have not gone through this painful and agonizing process to the cross. This shows that there was no other way for salvation other than Jesus Christ.

Matt 26:43-46 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

5) Snoozing and losing

I can relate to the snoozing disciples. If I work on some graphic design stuff on the computer or watch TV, I am fine. But when I open the Bible or start to pray, my eyes get heavy. Why? Because satan knows there is power in prayer and profit in Bible study. He doesn't care if I am reading the newspaper. But read the Word or pray, and I can count on my eyes getting heavy, the telephone ringing, the door bell ringing, and my stomach rumbling.

6) Intercessory prayer

Jesus tells us to pray for ourselves and others. Intercessory prayer is a spiritual fight on our knees for others. The enemy and our sinful nature don't want us to pray.

7) Jesus prayer for the same thing for three times

This shows us that it is not unspiritual to make the same request to God several times. Some hyper-spiritual people believe that if we ask for something more than once, it shows we don't have faith. But Jesus shows us that repeated prayer is completely consistent with steadfast faith.

D. FALLEN, BUT FORGIVEN

Matt 26:69-75 Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!" And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

1) Wrong place, wrong people to hang around

Galileans had their unique dialect and accent like our Southern people in America would have. So when these servants of Caiaphas pointed out Peter as a follower of Jesus from Galilee, Peter said, "No, I ain't."

Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

Luke tells us that at this moment, as Jesus was led out of the house of Caiaphas, He "turned and looked on Peter." The way Jesus looked at Peter was not "I told you so," but "I still love you even though you deny me. But, Peter, I'm not through with you."

2) Forgiven by the grace of God

We find Jesus restoring Peter in John 21:15-19 with His grace and mercy.

E. THE PATHWAY TO FAILURE

I asked you write Step 1 and Step 2 in some of the Scriptures we just studied. I want to show how Peter was heading to the pathway to failure.

Step 1) Overconfidence in flesh - v33

Peter was boasting his loyalty to Jesus. Instead of depending on the power of the Spirit, he was overconfident in himself.

Step 2) Sleeping instead of praying - v40

Once I am full of pride and feel like I can make things happen, I see no reason to pray. Thus, pride and prayerlessness go hand in hand. We must never forget that prayer is not only for petition, but for protection.

Step 3) Replacing devotion with action - v51

Matt 26:51 And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Actually Peter followed through with his promises at the Garden of Gethsemane when he pulled out his sword against the soldiers which meant a certain death. If Jesus hadn't intervened and healed Malchus, there would have been four crosses on Calvary the next day instead of three as Peter would have been crucified for attempted murder.

As Jesus healed Malchus' ear, so that Peter wouldn't be killed with Him, Jesus heals us from our sins with His blood that we may not be found guilty.

Step 4) Following Jesus afar off - v58

Matt 26:58 But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

I have known so many people who have slowly but surely drifted away because they began to follow Jesus from afar. When we fail to read the compass of God's Word everyday, we will slowly drift away.

How far away are you following in Jesus? You might say, "I am doing just fine as is. I don't read the Bible every day. I don't pray to God every day. I watch R-rated movies and listen to secular music, but I am fine." Or "I am sinning against God. But I can handle it. I don't think my sin is that bad." Are you compromising your faith for the pleasure of sin?

In the midst of temptation and trial, we don't remember what we have learned from the Word as Peter couldn't remember what Jesus said.

Step 5) Getting warm by the enemy's fire

Luke 22:55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

That means that Peter was getting too comfortable with his Master's enemy.

How about you? Are you getting comfortable with your sins? You may know that you are sinning against God, but you don't think it is a big deal. And your non-believing friends think that you are one of them. It translates that you are getting too comfortable with your Lord Jesus' enemy and you don't care about it.

How often do we deny Jesus because He is inconvenient at that situation? Or how often we don't want to be identified with Him because we think that it is not cool to be called a Jesus freak?

On a different note, some of you have been denying Jesus for a long time, because you didn't want to be identify with Him as a follower of Jesus Christ. The people you wanted to accepted by, the ones you wanted to hang around don't love you or care for you like Jesus. They will ignore you or discard you to be associated with someone more cooler than you at a drop of a hat. But Jesus said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." He loves you so much that He died for your sins. Would you like to have Him as your Friend, your Savior and your God?

F. APPLICATIONS

1) We must rely on the power of the Spirit who lives in us for every important decision.

If we rely on our own strength, we also will fall like Peter did.

2) Whenever we are tempted to deny our relationship with Jesus in front of other people for whatever reason, let's remember the crucifixion that Jesus had to go through for our sins.

3) Let's not hesitate to ask for God's will in our lives and decisions we have to make.

After all, God knows better than anyone of us. He will not give anything bad for us or that would destroy us.

4) We must remember that God's forgiveness is complete and thorough and done when we come to Him with a humble heart of repentance.

We must not think that God would not forgive us, nor He cannot forgive us for our sins because they are too big. That kind of thought does not come from God, but satan.