

### Peter denies that Jesus will die

1. Have you ever had people in your life who make it harder on you to do the right thing, or to do difficult things that need doing? Maybe they try to talk you out of doing the right thing, like when you don't want to drink and they say, "Oh, come on, just one." Or when you are trying to get yourself healthier and eating better, and they bring you junk food or tell you that one piece of pie won't hurt you.
  - a. Of course, these are generally tame examples, but there are those who actually try to push us into bad things. The strange thing is, they don't even realize it. According to their own view, they are doing just fine, and you shouldn't be holding yourself to such stringent rules in the name of religion.
2. I have had former friends try to get me into sexual sin- while in seminary. I have seen people try to get someone whom they know is sober to have a drink and "enjoy themselves." There are just some people who, even if they mean well- and not all do- they just don't get it. They are looking at things a little differently than we are.
3. Jesus had similar issues, only I would imagine they were much worse. As the Son of God, Satan was working overtime on him to try to tempt him away from obedience to his Father, and fulfillment of his plan. Luckily for us, Jesus never contemplated any of the temptations. But when Satan worked through his own friends, it had to be difficult.
4. In our gospel passage, Jesus predicts his death to the twelve. We are told that Peter pulls Jesus aside and rebukes him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."
  - a. Peter is like that innocent friend who tries to get you to do bad things, but not in a malicious way. They try to because they just don't get it. It isn't just the person, though, trying to tempt. It is Satan working through even our closest friends and family.
  - b. In the previous passage of this same chapter, Peter had just confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus commended him for his observation, and told him that this knowledge came from the Father.
  - c. We always have to be on guard. Maybe we have just scored a major victory, as Peter had. Then we can become vulnerable to other sins. It is amazing, for Peter, he goes from speaking knowledge from the Father, to speaking words directly from Satan. What a turn of events for Peter.

### Peter had his mind set on earthly things

1. Jesus says, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."
  - a. This is a powerful statement because he is condemning both Satan and Peter. He condemns Satan, knowing the source of the temptation. But he says, "You are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man," showing that it was Satan speaking directly through Peter as though he were possessed. Instead, he is using Peter's own love for Jesus and desire to protect his friend as a means to make Peter the stumbling block to Jesus.
  - b. Satan is crafty and we must beware of his wiles.

2. Peter did, indeed, have his mind set on the things of God. He loved Jesus more than anything, and he truly believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. He believed that Jesus was God in the flesh. He would follow Jesus anywhere, sacrifice anything, to be with and protect his friend.
  - a. And that is where *he* was vulnerable to Satan's attack. Satan knew he could use Peter's loyalty to Jesus as a means to try to make Jesus stumble.
3. While Peter clearly, throughout his time with Jesus, had his mind on the things of God to the best of his ability; he was blinded by his own passions and couldn't see the bigger picture. Throughout his time with Jesus, he listened, learned, and adopted what was taught. But on this point, he was aghast. On this point- the death of his friend- he had his eyes set on the things of man. And I can guarantee you that he thought saving Jesus' life was the godly thing to do. All of this is because he did not have the fullness of God's revelation to know that without the death and resurrection of Jesus, mankind has no hope of ever being reconciled to God.

### Take up your cross and follow Jesus

1. I was tempted to end this by challenging us each to keep our minds set on the things of Christ. I think that is actually pretty obvious, so I want to make sure we don't miss the last part of the passage.
  - a. Jesus' response to Peter's claim that he wouldn't let Jesus die was to tell each of them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
2. Instead of even explaining at this point why he must die, showing Peter why his passions were leading him astray, he turns and says that *any* who would follow him must be prepared to give their lives for him as well. This isn't a message just to the twelve. It is to *any* who would come after him- even today, 2000 years later- we must deny ourselves and take up our crosses and follow him. The only meaning the cross had at this time was death. The message was quite clear, whoever worries about saving his own life will lose it; while those who give their lives wholly over to Christ will have their lives saved.
3. Satan will whisper in your ear, just as he did to Peter. Remember, later, Jesus says that Satan would sift Peter like wheat. Satan is no joke. We will hear whispers like, "How can it be bad if it makes me happy? Doesn't God want me to be happy?" "How can it be wrong, this is who I am? Why should I have to change? This is how he made me." "Don't be divisive by taking the bible literally or getting involved in theology. Just love people."
  - a. "Did God really say? Did God really say? Did God really say?"
4. We must deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow him. We trust. We believe. We obey. And we pray that God will strengthen us to walk with Christ, to make ourselves last and put him first, and that he will protect us from all assaults of the enemy.