

PETER - “Failing Someone You Love”



1. **(Q1: Mk 8)** The verb for “said” here is in the Imperfect tense (*ongoing* past action). This is a clear reference to the fact that Jesus *had been speaking* “plainly,” he *didn’t* simply make a clear statement. Also, the word translated “plainly” (Gk, *parrēsia*) has the force of “*boldness, clarity, and conspicuousness.*”

The context of this passage is *very* important. Just prior to this, Peter had responded to Jesus’ question about His own identity with the affirmation, “*You are the Christ.*” Therefore, what follows that confession is really *more* than an unfortunate display of Peter’s confidence in his own plans for Jesus. It is also a tragic revelation of his error of understanding the nature and function of “the Christ.”

The verse immediately following Jesus’ rebuke is also very important, given the context. After Jesus said what was going to happen to *Him*, He makes *death* or a willingness to die for Him, a condition of true discipleship (there is no other way the hearers would have interpreted his statement about “taking up their cross” than death by crucifixion). Also, we must remind ourselves that these hearers would have understood Jesus’ statement as referring to Roman crucifixion *for them* even though they had no idea that would be Jesus’ mode of death. At least not yet.

The verb, “rebuke” is the same word used by the one thief on the cross to the other (Lk 23:40), and Jesus to the sea during the storm (Matt 8:26). Both contain the idea of verbally seeking to stop or restrain something.

2. **(Q1-Jn 13)** Peter again challenges Jesus. Only this time it’s not His words, but His actions. Peter doesn’t approve of what Jesus is about to do. Jesus assures him that he *will* someday fully understand (we see this in Peter’s two letters; cf. 1 Pet 5:5-12). Peter also doesn’t understand another aspect of true discipleship—serving.
3. **(Q1-Mk 14)** Context is again significant here. The sum of all that Jesus has said is much bigger than his conversation with Peter:
 - a. one of them will *betray* Him (vv 18-20)
 - b. all of them will *desert* Him (vs. 27)
 - c. one of them (Peter) will *deny* Him...not once, but three times! (vs. 30)

Peter obviously didn’t even consider the possibility that he was the one to *deny* Jesus. He said all the others *except him* were capable of desertion, and he refused to believe that *he* would both desert *and* deny. Peter believed there were certain behaviors *others* were susceptible to that he wasn’t.

4. **(Q4)** The Greek verb tense here is Imperfect (ongoing past action). We need to picture this as profound and perhaps prolonged. Peter’s didn’t just do what Jesus said he was going to do. He had denied ever even *knowing* someone he deeply loved.



“Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Q1)** We need to be very, very, careful in how this section is concluded. We need to see *ourselves* in Peter’s shoes here, not in Jesus’ shoes. Peter’s weakness was in an unhealthy trust in himself. Paul repeatedly warns us against this tendency (1 Cor 9:27; 10:12-13; Gal 6:1).
2. **(Q1-Mk 14)** We mustn’t relegate all of Peter’s error to arrogance, or an inflated view of his strengths. Part of Peter’s impending downfall (perhaps the major part?) came from at least two other reasons: (1) He didn’t take Jesus at His word. Jesus had *prophesied* that the “all” (Gk, *pantes* means “every” “the whole”) would desert Him. Jesus had *never* been wrong in anything He’d said. (2) Peter’s confidence came from preconceived ideas of what he might face in his dedication to Jesus. He *was* ready to die for Jesus (cf. Mk 14:31,47; Jn 18:10). What he *wasn’t* ready for was a young girl in a very intimidating environment, the luxurious surroundings of the high priestly families.
3. **(Q4)** We need to be careful not to lose focus here. First of all, this incident had *no* effect on Jesus. It didn’t work against him in any way with the religious authorities. It didn’t affect Jesus’ feelings towards Peter (He predicted it!). This incident was start to finish between Peter and himself.
4. **(Q5)** As beautiful as this story is, it is *not* the point of reconciliation between Peter and Jesus. That had already happened on Easter Sunday. Jesus and Peter had privately met the day Jesus arose (Lk 24:13,33,34; Mk 16:7).



“Going Deeper”

1. **(Q2)** “What effect does fatigue have on your struggle with temptation?”
2. “The movie title, “The Devil Wears Prada” is a lie. How does Peter’s first denial prove this?”
3. **(Q3b)** “Do you think Peter’s first denial was the result of fear or nervousness? Was it the fruit of true cowardice of being caught off guard?”
4. **(Q6)** “Someone has said, ‘Mercy is granting people permission to be human.’ Respond to that statement.”
5. **(Q6)** “What does Romans 12:18 imply about the *certainty* of restoration between offended believers?”