

(Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27)

Matthew 26:69-75

- 69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.
- 70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.
- 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.
- 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.
- 73 And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.
- 74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.
- 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Mark 14:66-72

- 66 Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came.
- 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."
- 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.
- 69 And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is *one* of them."
- 70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are *one* of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows *it*."
- 71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"
- 72 A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

Luke 22:54b-60

- 54 ...But Peter followed at a distance.
- 55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.
- 56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him."
- 57 But he denied Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."
- 58 And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"
- 59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."
- 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

John 18:15-27

- 15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.
- 16 But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in.
- 17 Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."
- 18 Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.
- 25 Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?" He denied *it* and said, "I am not!"

- 26 One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of *him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"
- 27 Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

Peter was one of the closest persons along with John and James yet we see that Peter denies Jesus, that too even after he was warned before hand that he would do this, yet Peter did not heed to that warning.

Mark 14:29-31

- 29 Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I *will not be*."
- 30 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."
- 31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.

Among the all the Apostles we find in the Gospels the maximum interaction or grooming of any of the disciples was of Peter. Even the greatest faith by any disciple during the training period of the Apostles was shown by Peter. Still when the time came Peter denies Jesus not once, not twice but thrice.

Matthew 14:25-29

- 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.
- 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.
- 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."
- 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."
- 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

Like an evangelist put it 'the greatest comedian in the Bible was Peter. Many times he showed the symptoms of foot-in-the-mouth disease, saying the wrong thing at the wrong time.

Mark 9:2-6

- 2 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them.
- 3 His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.
- 4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.
- 5 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" --
- 6 because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

Yet after all that experiences of getting rebuked and denying Jesus thrice, yet he lands up being selected to lead the Church after Jesus' resurrection!

Peter was not selected to lead because of his name which incidentally in Greek means 'stone' not 'rock'. Peter was ordained to lead but yet he is not to be considered to be the greatest among the Apostles for Jesus puts a question to him after his resurrection.

John 21:21-23

- 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*?
- 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.
- 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

Now if you realize there were two people among the twelve who fell badly – Peter and Judas. Jesus rebuked Peter more than once, warned him before hand and also prayed for him. But nowhere in the scriptures did Jesus pray for Judas specifically. Now if I may ask a question, was Jesus unjust to Judas or had Jesus prayed for Judas and rebuked Judas before hand would Judas have repented and changed?

John 13:26-29

- 26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped *it*. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.
27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.
28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.
29 For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

Had Jesus not given the money bag to Judas (he was Jesus' finance manager) in the start he could have not fallen into so much greed. When it comes to finances

My answer to this question would be 'No'. Not that I doubt the power in Jesus' prayer. Jesus was man not God – He was God who became man – so He was man. It was God who wrote about Judas and no man (including Jesus when He was man) could and can change a word of what is written. So any efforts in that direction would have been vain.

This I learnt in a very hard way. There were visions which I received before hand of certain people who would spiritual fall and even after getting a confirmation I tried to help but in no vain, they only fell harder. But at times I received visions to warn someone that they will fall and I saw changes in them. To discern between the two situations needs a great deal of spiritual maturity and I have a long way to go, but I am walking in that direction.

The reason of Peter's fall to deny Jesus thrice and all the other situations wherein he said or did blunders was because he did not surrender his every thought and action unto the Lord. It was in the flesh he worked.

Mark 8:31-33

- 31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and *of* the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.
32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.
33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

If you recollect in John Chapter 18 when Judas comes with a band of men carrying weapons to arrest Jesus at that moment Peter does not fear them and draws out a sword and attacks one of the persons, cutting off his ear.

John 18:8-11

- 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:
9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.
10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.
11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

If a man could have the courage to attack armed men along with officials how come he lost it all and denied Jesus to a maid and other locals?

Like I told you Peter during that time was more in the flesh and when Jesus was with him, he did anything but when Jesus was out of site he was very afraid. Even during the walking over water till the time Peter

had his eyes on Jesus, he walked over the water. But the moment he removed his eyes from Jesus and saw his situation he started to sink.

Matthew 14:25-33

- 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.
- 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.
- 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.
- 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.
- 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.
- 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.
- 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?
- 32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.
- 33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

This same thing happen to most of us, when we are experiencing the Lord and his great wonders, we are full of faith and like Peter we are ready to do anything for the Lord. But when things are not happening to us or we are not experiencing God then we can come even to a stage like Peter denying the Lord in our lives.

Our weakest time of test is during our desert experience and at this time we have a very high chance of falling. To overcome this, what we need to do is keep those previous great testimonies always fresh in our minds. This will help us boost our faith at all times including the time of test. We also need to have ourselves rooted in the Word and discern everything in spirit, even if we have to pay a high cost.

Like the case between Barnabas and Paul. Even after Barnabas received the Holy Spirit he still had not fully changed, he still operated in the flesh. When there was a dispute between him and Paul, Paul separated ways with Him for a period and you find the Lord was with Paul and did great wonders with him.

Acts 15:36-40

- 36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do.
- 37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.
- 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.
- 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;
- 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Paul objected about Mark joining them, because Mark was not committed to the Lord. He was given the task write the Gospel. The first Gospel was written by Mark as narrated by Paul. As you see the Gospel was left incomplete and the last lines (Mark 16:9-20) which testify the resurrection of Jesus were left out. They were added by someone latter. If the resurrection of Jesus is not testified then what is the Good News? We completely fail to testify Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

Mark 16:9-20

- 9 Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.
- 10 *And* she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.
- 11 *And* they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.
- 12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

- 13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.
- 14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.
- 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
- 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
- 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
- 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
- 19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.
- 20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Even after we have received the Holy Spirit we should not consider ourselves as ‘work completed’. Being born-again is a process that starts in us and in that process the Holy Spirit while strengthening us opens different weak areas gradually and starts to work on them. Only when we surrender these areas will we become more like Jesus. If we close these areas then we land up falling or being pinned down (put under tight situations) and worked upon.

Every thought and action needs to be surrendered to the Lord (Holy Spirit) who will direct and refine it to be of utmost benefit. This may be difficult in the start but can be done with practice. In the start we can at the end of the day review all the events that happened and let the Lord reveal to us where we went wrong and where we could have done better. After some time this process will start to go on line and then we may even learn to know of them in advance and get instructions to handle them before hand.

Jesus loved Peter very much therefore after His resurrection had to make Peter cancel those three denials by confessing his love thrice.

John 21:15-17

- 15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.
- 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.
- 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Do not take this as a standard that if you have done any thing bad n number of times, you need to do good that many times. Jesus asking Peter three times was to give us a clue of the importance to cancel the wrong confession we make and also important was the instructions which Jesus gave along the questions to Peter and us on how to handle his flock.

In the three feeds, the second and third feeds are not the same Greek words. The Greek word used for the second feed is ‘**poimaino**’ which refers to ‘tending’ more than feeding while the third feed ‘**bosko**’ is the same Greek word used with the first ‘feed my lambs’ which means to ‘feed’.

So the three instructions go as, feed the lambs, tend the sheep and then feed the sheep. Which means give the Gospel to the babies in the Lord, then as the Word starts to work in them help or encourage them and then when they start to mature, give them the real Word.