

Peter's Predicament

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26

Scripture Background: "Then Jesus told them, 'This very night you will all fall away on account of me,...' Peter replied, 'Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.... Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.'

[Later]

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee,' she said. But he denied it before them all. 'I don't know what you're talking about,' he said. (Matthew 26:31-35 and 69-70)

Scripture Focus: "With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear." (Matthew 26:51)

At the point of our scripture focus we are right in the middle of Jesus' betrayal. Somewhere between the time Peter says he will never deny Christ, and his ultimate act of denial. What do we see happen in this interval? We see Peter pull his sword (see John 18:10) when the religious leaders grab Jesus. He then proceeds to cut off an ear of the chief priest's servant.

Why was Peter so bold here, and turn out to act so cowardly just a short time later? Have we ever made bold statements of our allegiance to God only to have it proven to be nothing more than a façade when the true testing comes? Sure we're bold when we are with Him and His crowd. But what about when we are out there in the world; seemingly by ourselves. Do our actions tend to deny Him?

We speak of our allegiance to God, we tell of our commitment to his work, we flow with words of encouragement and love, but what do we do when we get the opportunity to stand up for Jesus? Do we go out of our way to help someone in need? Or do we deny that we ever knew Him by convincing ourselves that we have other, more important, things to do?

Why was Peter so bold one moment and so cowardly the next? He loved Jesus, but when the difficult times came he thought Jesus left him. He knew he could not stand on his own, so he turned and ran from the one he loved. But there was hope for Peter! He realized that hope in the upper room when he received the infilling of the Holy Spirit. No longer must he fear that Jesus might leave him. He could now take Jesus at his word, "I will never leave you, or

forsake you.” Once Peter made a complete commitment to Jesus his boldness never again wavered.

We too can received an assurance that Jesus will always be with us. We too can live our lives consistently, whether with the church crowd, or with the work or school crowd. Simply by committing our every moment to him, by sanctifying our lives to him, we too can live boldly for Jesus.