

John 18:12-27
To Deny Jesus
WRCoB 3.27.22

1



Two men died and went to Heaven.

St. Peter greeted them, and said "I'm sorry, gentlemen
But your mansions aren't ready yet.

Until they are, I can send you back to Earth
As whatever you want to be."

"Great!" said the first guy,
"I want to be an eagle soaring above the Swiss Alps!"

"No problem," said St. Peter, and POOF he was gone.

"And what do you want to be," St. Peter asked the other guy.

"I want to be one cool stud!"

"Easy enough," replied St. Peter, and POOF he was gone.

After a few months, their mansions were finished
And St. Peter sent an angel to fetch them back.

"You'll find them easily," St Peter says,
"One will be soaring above Switzerland

And the other guy, is in Detroit on a snow tire!"

~~

Have you ever wondered
Why it's Peter who stands at the Pearly Gates
Guarding the entrance to heaven?

It is found in the Gospel of Matthew.

After hearing Peter's proclamation
That Jesus was the Christ
The Son of the Living God

Jesus responds by saying.

2

Matthew 16:18-19 NLT ¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom

of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.”

~~

Jesus had high hopes for Peter.

But like us, Peter was a “diamond in the rough”
“a work in progress”.

But Jesus saw potential.

And throughout his earthly ministry
Jesus sought to groom and mentor Peter.

At times, Peter showed great courage.

Like when he just lobbed off the ear
Of the servant of the high priest
During Jesus’ arrest in Gethsemane.

However, in our passage today he showed another side.

We get on Peter’s case for denying Jesus.

But consider this, it was Peter and another disciple
Who followed Jesus after his arrest.

Where were the others?

According to our lesson
The “other disciple” enters the courtyard first.
While Peter remained outside the gate.

This disciple speaks to a woman guarding the gate
Who then allows Peter to enter the courtyard.

This “other-disciple” had some connection to the priest.

3

15b Since that disciple was known to the high priest

Who among the disciples

Would have known the high priest

And be allowed to enter the courtyard?

Who was this disciple?

When the gospel writer John referred to himself

He wrote, “the disciple Jesus loved.”

Could this be John?

John, the poor fisherman from Galilee?

Seems unlikely.

It must have been a disciple with some social prominence.

Not one of the twelve.

Maybe Nicodemus, the Jewish leader.

Or Joseph of Arimathea.

Both had some clout and both played an important role

Later on, in the burial of Jesus.

Whoever it was, it was Peter who stood out as the outsider.

The woman at the gate asks a simple question

Perhaps meaning no harm.

4

17 You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?

It would have been easier if she just asked
“You one of them?”

All eyes are on Peter.

In the way the question was asked
It was all too easy for Peter to reply, “No, I’m not!”

And once said, there was no going back.

As near as I can figure they leave Annas’ residence
And move to Caiaphas’ palace.

There, we find Peter warming himself before a fire.

Again, he is asked a simple question.

5

25b You are not also one of his disciples, are you?

Again, all too easy for Peter to just say, “No, I’m not!”

But now, after the two rather innocent enquiries
The next question becomes more threatening.

One of those standing at the fire
Is a servant of the high priest.

Who also happens to be a relative
To the man whose ear Peter had just cut off.

6

26 Did I not see you in the garden with him?

Today’s text states simply that Peter denies it.

Matthew and Mark record that Peter curses his denial.

Luke records

7

Luke 22:60-62 NRSV

⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about!” At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed.

8

⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly.

~~

A rooster’s crow!

It may not be the voice of God

But it had the same chilling effect on Peter

An unpleasant realization of a prediction come true.

~~

But let’s not get on Peter’s case too hard

And scoff that we would never deny Jesus

Think again.

Perhaps we deny Jesus more than we realize.

Just as Peter denied Jesus three times

I see three ways we, too, can deny him.

We can deny Jesus by our words!

And by our works! And by our worship!

Seriously, we deny him every time we open our mouths
And say something hurtful or demeaning.

What we say reveals our character.

We can use our tongue to either build up or tear down.

9

James 3:9-10 NIV

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.

A pastor of a Pentecostal church was asked
If he was praying that his congregation
Would receive the gift of tongues.

He replied that, no, he wasn't.

He was praying they would control the tongues they've got!

~~

Words are cheap, or so the saying goes.
But you can pay dearly for them.

There is an old proverb that claims there are three things
That once released cannot ever return again.

10

- An opportunity neglected
- An arrow released from its bow
- A word spoken in haste.

I would suggest three more

11

- An email

- A text message
- And toothpaste from a tube!

~~

We need to pray like the Psalmist

12

Psalm 19:14 NRSV ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

As followers of Jesus, our words reflect our loyalties.

What we say reveals who and whose we are!

~~

How, you say, could we ever deny Jesus?

We deny him by our words!

We also deny him by our works!

Jesus says that a tree is known by its fruit.

James says, we are doers of the Word,

And not hearers only!

It was told that a rather pompous Sunday school teacher

Asked a question from his Sunday school class.

“Why do people call me Christian?”

After a moment of awkward silence

One young boy meekly replied

“Because they don’t know you?”

If our works do not line up with our words

Then we deny Jesus and are hypocrites.

Jesus says we are like white-washed tombs
Looking good on the outside
But dead and decaying on the inside.

As the following poem suggests
Christians may be the only Jesus people will ever know.

13

*You are writing a Gospel
A chapter each day
By the deeds that you do
And the words you say.*

*People may read what you write
Whether faithful or true
Just what is the Gospel,
According to you."*

14

Titus 1:16a ESV They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.

~~

This man used Christian vocabulary in all his speeches.

He talked about the blessing of the Almighty
And the Christian confessions which would be
The pillars of his new government.

This man handed out stories of his faithfulness to the press.

He showed his tattered Bible
And declared that it was where he drew his strength.

Who was this man? Adolf Hitler!

He and others were masters at using religion
For his personal gain and evil deeds.

15

1 John 2:4-6 CEV But if we claim to know him and don't obey him, we are lying and the truth isn't in our hearts. ⁵ We truly love God only when we obey him as we should, and then we know that we belong to him. ⁶ If we say we are his, we must follow the example of Christ.

~~

We deny Jesus by our words, and our works
And we deny Jesus by our worship.

Or should I say we deny Jesus by what we worship.

It comes as no surprise that we worship
Things other than the LORD God.

Possessions, jobs, relationships, retirement
Wealth, TV personalities, etc., etc.,
These are the we worship.

And every time we worship something other than God
We break one of the commandments and deny Jesus!

And even in our worship
Many times we worship other gods
The god of music, the god of architecture
And the god of tradition!

After attending a Sunday morning service
One little boy prayed to God

*Dear God we had a good time at our church today . . .
Just wish you could have been there!*

16

Romans 12:1 NIV Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a

living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

~~

True worship is in Spirit and in Truth
Jesus said to the woman at the well.

Worship is the offering of our selves
Mind, body, soul
Our allegiances and our loyalties

As a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

So that all of what we do will be done as an act of worship.

~~

No, before we get too pious
Thinking about Peter's denial of Jesus

We need to remember that we too can deny Jesus
By our words,
Our works,
And our worship.

And I pray that it doesn't take the crowing of a rooster
To convict us of our own denials of Christ.

~~

The Good News is that Peter was forgiven by Jesus.

And with renewed strength of the Holy Spirit
Peter became the rock
On which Jesus built his church.

Where he stands at the Pearly Gates
Holding the keys to the kingdom

17

You were a believer, yes.
But you skipped the
not-being-a-jerk-about-it part.



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