

Week of May 19 - I Don't Know the Man | Small Group Lesson 4

Connect

Have you ever tried to deny or hide your relationship you had with a person who is actually very close to you? Why? How?

Verses - Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75 (CSB)

31 Then Jesus said to them, "Tonight all of you will fall away because of me, for it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. 32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." 33 Peter told him, "Even if everyone falls away because of you, I will never fall away." 34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to him, "tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." 35 "Even if I have to die with you," Peter told him, "I will never deny you," and all the disciples said the same thing.

Related Passages: (Zecheriah 13:7, Mark 14:27–31)

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69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl approached him and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean too." 70 But he denied it in front of everyone: "I don't know what you're talking about." 71 When he had gone out to the gateway, another woman saw him and told those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene!" 72 And again he denied it with an oath: "I don't know the man!" 73 After a little while those standing there approached and said to Peter, "You really are one of them, since even your accent gives you away." 74 Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed, 75 and Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Related Passages: (Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; and John 18:15-18, 25-27)

Study

1. Jesus knew in advance that all of his disciples would abandon him when he was arrested. Why did he let this happen?

   Hint: consider Matthew 26:39, 56; Genesis 50:20

2. Why do you think Peter and the other disciples (except Judas) were so brave when Jesus was with them, but so cowardly after Jesus was arrested and taken away?

   Hint: consider Luke 22:31-32, Luke 24:49, and Ephesians 6:12

3. After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, his disciples (except Judas) regained their loyalty and trust in him. They fearlessly told the world about Jesus, so they suffered persecution, hardship, and torture. Yet they remained faithful until they died. How, where, when, and ***by whom*** were the disciples so greatly changed?!

   Hint: consider John 14:16-17, Acts 2:1-4, Romans 8:14

4. **SHARE:** Do we sometimes express our devotion to Christ but later deny him and act as if we never knew him? Please share your own experiences along these lines, if you are comfortable doing so.

5. **DISCUSS:** What lessons—fearful and hopeful—can we learn from the example of:
   (a) Judas (total denial)
   (b) Peter and the other disciples (eventual denial to rededication)

Magnify

Based on today's lesson,

- Praise God for his goodness, the life he has created and sustains, and for our hope of salvation unto eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Thank God for speaking to us, through the Bible, about Jesus, including how his disciples ran away from him when he was taken to be crucified, but later were revived and strengthened by the Holy Spirit after Jesus's resurrection.
- Thank God the Holy Spirit for making such change possible for them **and us**!
- Ask God to help us to yield more fully to the transformation and leading of the Holy Spirit, and to deliver us from all evil. Amen