

## Mark 14:66-72

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Preacher: None

[0:00] Please do grab your Bibles again and turn to Mark chapter 14, starting verse 66. We'll be looking at these six verses.!

Lord God, we pray for Christ to be known this evening.

Would we know his grace and the forgiveness there is in Christ, and would your Spirit work in us faith to receive that. And we pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are watching a red carpet tonight. We stand on the sidelines as we watch a red carpet. So you know when there's a big celebrity event like the Oscars, and they have a red carpet, and you have all these actors walking down the red carpet toward a fancy building, and the red carpet tells you about what kind of event they're heading to, doesn't it?

You see the red carpet, and you know that they're heading toward champagne and awards and glamour and money. The red carpet tells you about the kind of event coming up.

[1:34] Well, today, Mark is showing us a red carpet. It is the red carpet that Jesus walked on toward his death. We are deep into Jesus' journey to the cross.

It is the night before he dies. And as we see him walk there, we begin to see exactly what he's heading towards. The journey there tells you about the main event itself.

This passage, in fact, all these events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion, they all tell us about what's going to happen at the cross. And we're going to look at these events, this night before the crucifixion, or the lead up to the crucifixion.

We're going to look at these over the next few weeks. And just like a red carpet before the main event, this shows us what's going to happen on the cross. But this red carpet, it's not fun.

It's not full of flashing lights. No, it's dark. And it's lonely. And it involves Jesus' closest companion turning his back on Jesus.

[2:44] So things will be dark this evening. This red carpet is not leading to anything glamorous, but it is glorious. Because we're going to see something in particular about the cross tonight.

We're going to see what kind of people Jesus died for. As Jesus walks this red carpet to the cross, there's a question in the air.

Who is Jesus going to the cross for? He's already said the Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many. But who are the many?

What are they like? Who did Jesus die for? Well, today, as we see the story of Peter, we see exactly who he's dying for.

It is a very vivid and personal glimpse into the kind of person Jesus saves. So let's watch Jesus walk the red carpet tonight and see who he died for.

[3:46] And this is the first thing we see. Jesus died for very bad sinners. This story, as Paul read it earlier, it leaves you with a bad taste in your mouth, doesn't it?

And it should. That is the point. This is meant to be shocking. And we need to appreciate how shocking it is. This is the night before the crucifixion.

Jesus is currently arrested. He's being tried by the Sanhedrin. That's the Jewish court. And tensions are high. It's not a safe thing to be one of Jesus' disciples.

That is why only a few verses before, Mark writes that as soon as Jesus is arrested, all his disciples left him and fled. Jesus had no one. But in verse 66, we see Peter.

He's below in the courtyard. He's outside while Jesus is inside being condemned by the Jewish leaders. Peter, he's kind of still following Jesus at this point.

[4:56] But he's at a distance. He's not too close, not too open. He's laying low, trying not to draw attention to himself. So he just stays outside, warming himself by the fire.

And why Peter? Of all the disciples, why Peter? Well, Peter is Jesus' closest companion. When you read the Gospels, Peter, he's kind of like the go-to disciple. We get to hear Jesus' conversations, private conversations with Peter.

For example, we don't hear much about Simon the Zealot. But Peter is different. Peter is, he's the loud disciple. He's the one who shouts about how much he loves Jesus.

Back in verse 25, Jesus tells all his disciples, you will all fall away. And Peter, he's the only one to respond.

[5:55] And he blurts out and he says, even though they all fall away, I will not. Peter, he's the big, keen disciple. So just think of, for a moment, who followed Jesus?

Jesus. So when we read the Gospels, Jesus had crowds following him. They were kind of just the mass of people that were interested in Jesus.

And those people came and went. And then within that big crowd, he had a large group of disciples, people who really followed him. Luke mentions the 72 disciples.

And within that larger group, you have the 12 disciples. They're Jesus' closest group. And within that, Jesus often picked out three. It was Peter, James, and John.

He would kind of sometimes take them in just to a room to perform a miracle. But within those three, Peter stands out. He's the most eager one.

[6:56] He's the close one. Peter is Jesus' closest and most loyal companion. Which makes what happens next all the more tragic.

Verse 66. And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. And seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, You also were with the Nazarene Jesus.

A young girl approaches Peter. And she says, Hey, you're with that Jesus guy, aren't you? And how does Peter respond? Verse 68.

But he denied it. Saying, I neither know nor understand what you mean. How the mighty have fallen. He's happy to follow Jesus from a distance.

But as soon as following Jesus means something, Peter, the eager one, he gives up Jesus in an instant. And did you notice what makes Peter abandon the one he so proudly loved?

[8:06] Look who makes him fold. It's not a big bouncer coming along. It's not a guy with a gun threatening him. It's not a mob like they had for Jesus. No, it's a little question from a servant girl that makes Jesus' closest companion crumble.

He realizes what it means to be associated with Jesus. It means maybe getting arrested. It means danger. It means trouble. And he makes up his mind.

Jesus is not worth that. And did you see how slippery his response was? He doesn't say at first, oh no, I don't know him.

He's not as blatant as that. Instead he says, no, I don't know what you mean. He's cowardly about it. He's trying to worm his way out. He does what he can to kind of dodge and worm his way out of the situation.

But Mark is clear what he's doing. He denied knowing Jesus. And this is just the beginning because from here on in, we see a shameful downward spiral of sin.

[9:18] Peter moves away from the fire and it says he goes into the gateway. So away from the fire, into the shadows. And that says a lot about the nature of sin.

Sin is shameful. It doesn't want to be seen. Sin loves darkness. Sin loves to stay secret and hide. Sin loves to stay secret. Peter heads into the darkness of sin.

But things get more public from here. In verse 69, the servant girl saw him and began saying to the bystanders around, this man is one of them.

But again, he denied it. Now, Peter doesn't just deny Christ to one girl, but he denies Christ to a crowd nearby.

His sin is clearer, more public. It's sharper. And then comes the final nail in the coffin. Maybe Peter was being slippery or vague about Christ before, but now look in verse 70.

[10:26] And after a little while, the bystanders again said to Peter, certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean. But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know this man of whom you speak.

Remember who this is. This is Peter. This is the keenest of the disciples. Only a few verses back in verse 31, Peter said to Jesus, even if it means dying with you, I will not deny you.

Now listen again. I do not know this man. Peter's sin is on display here. And it's ugly.

It's really ugly. He's denied the Lord Jesus. And it's not just a single slip up. No, it's repeated, thoughtful, willful sin.

And he even does it with such force and aggression, doesn't he? He invokes a curse on himself. He swears. He says, I swear on my life. I don't know him. I'm not interested in him.

[11:37] I'm telling you, I have nothing to do with Jesus. And actually, he can't even say his name. He just calls Jesus this man.

He's a nobody to me. What we have here are the details of a shocking and appalling sin. Peter is a very bad sinner.

And it's written down for all of us to see. And why do we see this? As Jesus walks to the cross, why is this on the red carpet?

Well, because it's showing us what Jesus is heading towards. What the main event is all about. We see here what kind of people Jesus died for. Jesus is going to the cross to die for Peter.

To suffer for this very sin. And he went to the cross for sinners just like Peter. Jesus died for very bad sinners.

[12:47] We have on display a particularly terrible sin to show the sheer depths of sin that Christ died for. Christ died for blatant, public, repeated, spiralling down, caught in the web of it, painfully shocking sin.

And Jesus is on his way to die for this sin. So Jesus didn't go to the cross only just for small sins or sins that we don't mind people knowing about that much.

No, Jesus went to the cross even for the most shocking sins. Sins that make us want to retreat into the shadows. We have this passage in front of us so that we know there is no sin too shocking for Christ to save you.

He forgave Peter and he can forgive you. So it needs to be said there is no sin too shocking to confess.

If there's a sin in your life right now and you're needing to talk about it and you're wanting to confess it to Paul or one of the elders and you're needing help with it but you're worried that maybe it's too shocking.

[14:04] Well, whatever it is and I mean whatever it is it's not as shocking as this. You can talk about it with Paul.

You can talk about it with the elders. They won't be shocked. They won't be shocked that someone could do whatever sin that may be because just look at Peter here. Jesus died for very bad sinners. Sinners just like you and me. And as he walked this red carpet as he approached the cross this wasn't a surprise to Jesus either.

He knew how bad our sin was. And this is my second point. Jesus knew he would die for very bad sinners. Jesus knew he would die for very bad sinners.

Just look at verse 72. Verse 72. And immediately the rooster crowed a second time and Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him before the rooster crows twice you will deny me three times.

[15:13] And he broke down and wept. Now we need to see a point here. Not just that Jesus did die for very bad sinners but he knew that he was to die for very bad sinners beforehand.

Did you notice Jesus predicted this whole event. You can read it in verse 30. Jesus knew what Peter was going to do and yet Jesus still went to the cross for Peter.

He knew the very sin he was going to carry. He knew the price that had to be paid. And he still went there. As Jesus approached the cross he knew that he was to pay the penalty for his people's sins.

And it wasn't vague sin. It wasn't kind of a mystery punishment that he was heading towards. He knew who he was dying for and he knew that their sin would be shocking. He knew how bad it was. He looked at the sin of his people and he said that sin I need to die for that sin. Jesus knew he would die for very bad sinners.

[16:27] And just like Peter's sin he knew it was sin against him. We don't need to think Peter's sin is so unique here because we need to understand that all our sin is against Christ and a denial of him.

We sang Psalm 51 earlier and it's a prayer of confession to God and it says against you you only have I sinned.

So yes we definitely sin against other people all the time but ultimately all our sin is against God. All our sin is a rejection of God. All our sin is a denial of the Son of God.

the Apostle John says this about Jesus the world was made through him yet the world did not know him. They rejected him they denied him.

So even if this is tonight the first time that you've heard about Jesus all your sin up to this point has been a denial of him. All our sin is a denial of him.

[17:35] That is what sin is. And as Jesus walked the road to the cross he knew our sin is shocking and he knew it was sin against him.

So it wasn't just generally bad things that he knew he would pay for it wasn't just wrong things done out there in the ether no it was sin against the Son of God and the Son of God came to die for it. Jesus knew he would die for very bad sinners which means your sin is not a shock to the elders here and it's not a shock to Jesus either.

When we commit sin in our shame we want to hide in the shadows don't we? We don't want to come to Christ with it almost as if in our minds we think that Christ would somehow be shocked by it or he didn't know that we would do that but don't think that your sin is a surprise to Jesus.

He knew about it as he walked to the cross and he's already paid for it. But let's ask what about denying Jesus like Peter did?

[18:51] Can we say Jesus died for those who deny him? Well let's look how this story ends. This story is ending it's a bit ambiguous isn't it?

So end of verse 72 these last few words and he broke down and wept. This short paragraph it doesn't tell us about Peter's fate.

We have to read on to the resurrection in chapter 16 where we see that Jesus he wants to meet with Peter and we see Peter does not deny him anymore he's restored to Jesus and if you come on a Tuesday lunchtime you can hear Peter's own words of the greatness of his salvation as we preach to one Peter.

So it's looking ahead that we can know and we can say that Christ died for Peter's sin. Peter denies Christ but he doesn't keep denying Christ.

There is no salvation for those who deny Jesus forever. there needs to be repentance and we see this glimmer of hope at the end. And he broke down and wept.

[20:03] Peter weeps over his sin and he weeps over the words of Jesus. So it's not just sadness in general he weeps over the words of Jesus. This is a glimmer of repentance.

It is a Jesus centered weeping. In Matthew's gospel we hear about Judas after Judas betrayed Jesus it only says that he changed his mind and he felt bad about it but he didn't weep.

There was no seeking after Jesus after his sin. You know Judas hangs himself. That isn't seeking Jesus that's seeking to escape Jesus. But Peter weeps and that is the right way to react to sin.

It's to recall the words of Jesus and weep. Not in despair not to be hopelessly crushed but to hate our sin and to turn to Jesus.

And that is what happens with Peter. There is hope for this man. There is hope for Peter. And so as we see the story of Peter this very bad sinner and as we as we watch this red carpet we see one final thing.

[21:21] There is hope for failed Christians. There is hope for failed Christians. Peter isn't just a very bad sinner.

Peter was a backslider. A backslider is someone who's walked with Jesus but who's fallen away. So not completely just fallen away for a time and in this moment Peter is a lapsed Christian.

Someone who confessed Jesus and then denied Jesus. Peter was a backslider and here in this passage we see that is very much a possibility for Christians.

It's a warning for us. A sobering warning. This moment of the red carpet tells about what the cross will be like. we learn the cross is something we will be tempted to be ashamed of, to deny, to walk away from and that might be like you this evening.

You might be like Peter and you grew up as a Christian and you confessed Jesus as the Christ but you've now walked away or you're living in sin and you're not willing to return.

[22:36] People may ask you if you know Jesus and you would deny it even though you might have before but you are here tonight in church like Peter you're still in the courtyard and you can't let go of Jesus entirely.

We'll learn from Peter tonight there is still hope for you. There's forgiveness for those who have denied Christ or maybe you know someone like that and they're on your heart and you pray for them and you long for them to return this is all the more reason to pray for them.

We don't know the Lord's will but we see even with someone like Peter someone who has denied Christ this publicly and aggressively they can return and if that is you tonight you can come back to Christ he knows your sin and he wants you to return it may feel shameful coming back to church and you might be worried about what people think but we won't be shocked we will rejoice forgiveness was for Peter and it can be for you too but this also goes for all those in Christ any Christian here today there is great hope and forgiveness for the failed Christian for any believer here tonight we can so easily feel like Peter can't we we look at our sin we look how we've fallen and maybe you have a particular sin in mind when I say that and we think about it and we think how could

I have done that how could I have done that to Christ and we weep over what we've done and it pains us well there is astounding forgiveness for you you're not some sort of lost cause no the cross is still and always will be your salvation the cross is salvation for sinners exactly like you as we stand by this red carpet we see that Jesus is heading to the cross for failed Christians not perfect Christians not sinless Christians no Jesus went to the cross for Peter he went to the cross for Christians like me and you failed Christians and there is astounding forgiveness for us Jesus carried the weight of shocking sins on his shoulders even the sin of denial and he did it knowing how bad our sin is so yes this is an ugly passage but in so many ways it is beautiful there is hope for failed

Christians a few years after this scene in the courtyard the apostle Peter this man in the courtyard he wrote these words he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree what sin did he bear on that tree it was this sin and it was our sin those words were written by a very bad sinner but praise God Jesus died for very bad sinners amen let me pray to to to to