

The Sheep Will Scatter
Mark 14:27-31

It is Jesus' pursuit to Calvary and where we know He is going that brings us back to Mark's gospel this morning as we continue to reflect on His life and learn from His perfect example for us. The reality that we face as believers here (hopefully assuming that we all have come to that place) where we have willingly laid down our life and declare that the end of our selves has come so that Christ may be all in our lives, that moment that is known as justification, that moment where God has declared us righteous, that moment where we come in genuine and sincere faith recognizing that Christ is our Savior. He is the One who is broken and bled for us, and we deserve to be on the cross. He is the One who has actually taken all of our sin and given us His righteousness. When we do that, that is that moment of faith. That is that moment that the Scriptures talk about as justification, that moment where we have been saved, and hopefully that's everyone here. Alright? I hope that's where everyone has come to; everyone has at least come to that point where they have recognized the glory of our Savior Jesus Christ and recognized the depravity of their own sinful condition and called out for grace and mercy and forgiveness through the name of Jesus.

While we rejoice in that, we sing of that, we remember that in communion, that is the good news. That is how we are justified, made right in the sight of God. And many of us, however, know that it doesn't end there. We have come to that place. We have come to that decision, and yet here we are still on this earth, still in this body, still awaiting that future day. We have been justified, but here we are still dealing with sin. We still have the setbacks. We still have the sinful tendencies of our flesh that arise within us. We still have the enticing and alluring elements of the world around us, and we still deal with all this until that moment when we are brought before God, when He does call us home, and we will be glorified. We will be transformed into our new body where we will no longer have sin and sorrow plaguing us anymore. So, we're in-between, aren't we? We're justified. We're at that place where we have confidence and faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we are not yet glorified. We're in-between. We're in this process, and as we all know too well, this process can be difficult, and it is. There are so many times where we go through this process and we still feel the burdens of the flesh. We still have the failures that plague us. We still have these setbacks. We still have these moments where we ultimately fail to

bring the honor and glory to God that He deserves. This is what happens when we're in this process of sanctification, of becoming more like Christ.

This is the process we're in, and while we are aware of these failures, we still recognize God will bring us home. He is faithful. He Himself will bring us into His presence, and there will be a joyous occasion where we are brought before Him in that glorified state, but how do we know that is that? Because we've done good enough? Is that because we tried really hard? Is that because God acknowledges our effort and says well done? (You did a really good job. You really put that effort. Yeah, you weren't perfect, but you gave a good try, and I see that. I see that good try. I acknowledge that.) No. We recognize that ultimately the confidence we have in that future day when we'll be glorified and in that joyous moment being with Him is because of Him, because of His Spirit that actually keeps us, because of His Spirit that actually does secure us so that we will be presented before Him, and we will not be stumbling. We will not fall away. Ultimately, we put forth this effort, and we labor diligently because we're called to, yet we ultimately recognize that it's God's Spirit. God's Spirit is what keeps us. God's Spirit is the One who has sealed us and promised us that day where we will be glorified unto Him.

Unfortunately, when we have these setbacks and these failures, the reality is it's not anything that is lacking on God's part. It's our failure. It truly is our ownership of that moment of weakness and sin because God is there, and He is able, and He is willing, and He desires us to walk in godliness, and yet those failures are because of our own flesh, our own imperfection that still exists. And that's what we see in our passage today, a testimony to that, the failures that we still experience in the flesh, that we find in Peter and the disciples. And why that is? Not because of anything lacking on God's part, but because of the reality of mankind still being in this flesh in this life. Let's look at our text and see this, where we see, really, again, the unfaithfulness of man and yet the faithfulness of God to bring us through in that process. Mark 14:26-31; "And Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter said to him, 'Even though they all fall away, I will not.' And Jesus said to him, 'Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.' But he said emphatically, 'If I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And they all said the same." Our passage before us, a

familiar one, where we are brought into the life of Peter and these disciples, one where there is this intense desire to bring glory to God, this desire to follow, to follow Him, this desire to actually put forth the energy that would please God and yet falling short, and yet failure at the same time. Why? Because of man relying upon himself rather than man doing what God intended, for us to rely upon Him and His Spirit.

This is where we find ourselves. We have come out of the Last Supper, that Passover meal where Jesus identified, in that dramatic fashion, the traitor that existed in that room, one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot. He was dismissed from the meal, and he went out to go do what he had already arranged to do. And then, we come, and we had Jesus actually explaining why He would go to the cross. He predicts yet again that He must suffer and die, but He gave the reason for it. Why will His body be broken? Why will blood be shed? Why will He go to His death? Because He's bringing in a new covenant. He's bringing in an ultimate relationship between God and mankind that they need desperately where there is forgiveness because of Jesus' bloodshed. That meal ended, and as verse 26, like we reread this morning, stated, they sang a hymn together, and then they left. And it's on this journey as they leave this house (they leave the Last Supper meal, and they're leaving Jerusalem going to the Mount of Olives, not very far at all), as they're exiting the city and on their way that this conversation takes place.

And in this, we have these predictions that come to start off our passage in verses 27-28. Jesus's predictions that come in verses 27-28. You see in these final moments (it's worth noting again) the absolute control and power and sovereignty that Jesus has over all - over all. None of this is out of His control. This is significant to note because while every historian and general secular historian looking back on the events of Jesus and the time period and what was taking place at this moment, they will all acknowledge there was a significant character in history; His name is Jesus, and He did some things. But when they talk about His death, we're going to depart in how this goes. We will talk about His death very differently than how a secular historian might. The secular historians like to say he's a radical. He had some ideas. He almost got a pretty big following that was willing to kind of promote him into that role of king. It didn't work out, and so he became like a rebel, and he got killed for it. He got crucified. Obviously, that's not the case. A secular historian will say he was unsuccessful. It didn't work out. You and I read the Bible, and we say He knew exactly what He was doing. He was in

complete control. He willingly laid down His life. And we continue to see that as it gets closer and closer to this final wicked evil hour where He would die. He is showing over and over again the control that He has in every element of it, through the traitor, through the plan, through how He would be arrested and all of this that would take place, and He continues to do that. He continues to show His control in these predictions.

So, then we come to this new prediction that we've encountered in this account, the prediction of scattering - the prediction of scattering. As Jesus said in verse 27, "You will all fall away..." ... "And Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away...'" He continues to show this control, His sovereignty, His foreknowledge, of all this. Jesus has predicted already His arrest. He's predicted His death. He's talked about His resurrection. He's even talked about His betrayal when He identified Judas at that Last Supper meal, and now He predicts another element, that is His abandonment by His own disciples - He predicts His abandonment by His own disciples. His own pupils, His own students that He had been mentoring for years will now abandon Him in these last moments of His life.

"You will all fall away..." is what He says. This is what you find in the ESV. The NASB says this, as well as the NIV. And this is the same word that we find in the parable of the soils if you recall, going all the way back to His Galilean ministry when He was teaching and preaching and using parables and this popular parable about the different soils when He talks about the rocky soil. And what was wrong with the rocky soil? This is the result, ultimately that which was sown among the rocky soil, it fell away in verses 16-17 of Mark 4; "And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away." This is what Jesus is saying to His disciples in a similar fashion here. You all, all you eleven who are still with Me, all of you will fall away. This tribulation, this persecution that He's already alluded to, this will come, and "You will all fall away..." You will not be able, you will not be willing, to endure. The very loyalty of the disciples will be challenged that night, and they will fall short.

It's interesting because this word is actually a significant word. If you have the New King James Version, it actually says in our verse, "All of you will

be made to stumble...” ... “All of you will be made to stumble...” And this is similar to... this is really coming from... the Greek word here behind it is “Skandalizo” (pronounced skan-dal-id'-zo) which is where you get the word scandal or scandalize. This is this idea that you will actually be offended. He’s saying the disciples will be offended at Him and thus fall away. In fact, this same word is used and translated differently at a different point in Mark’s gospel. This same word in Mark 6:3 where Jesus went to his home town of Nazareth and was preaching and declaring that He is in fact the Messiah as the Scripture and the prophecies declare, His hometown didn’t really like that, and they were offended at Him. As it says, they said, “ ‘Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?’ And they took offense at him.” They didn’t just fall away. They didn’t just go, eh, I’m done with Him and walk away and turn away from Him. They were offended. They were offended at Jesus. They were offended and took offense at the very things He was saying and doing, and this caused them to fall away.

So, too, like the people of Jesus’ home town in Nazareth, the disciples would also take offense at Jesus this very night. Why, you ask? How could they go through so much of His ministry and life and appreciate Him and all of a sudden come to the very last night and take offense of Him? Because of the path of suffering ... the path of suffering. The path that would be... it’s tribulation. It’s persecution that would come upon Jesus, and they would be offended at that very path. This is the Messiah. How dare He have to go down this path. He shouldn’t have to go down this path. This is wrong. They would take offense that Jesus would even be willing to entertain this future for Himself. We’ve already seen this with Peter and how they’ve responded. Surely, You’re not going to go to the cross. Surely, You will not die. It is not fitting for You, but Jesus tells them explicitly, “You will all fall away...” You will all take offense with the path that I must take. You all are not able, and you’re not willing to go down this same path. You’ll be offended by the thought. You’ll be appalled at it.

And that’s the reality that we still even see today. This rocky soil is still even present in modern-day evangelism as we share truth with people and as it goes forth. People latch on to certain aspects of the Word of God that they hear or certain aspects of Jesus and God, and they get excited and receive it with joy, and then the reality is persecution comes, tribulation comes, hardship comes, and they’re offended by it. They won’t have any of it, and

they fall away. Not to say they were saved and lost their salvation, but to simply say that they were never saved to begin with. They liked one aspect of it, but they weren't willing to embrace the whole of what Christ has called us to.

Jesus' bold statement was actually sourced in the Word of God. This wasn't just Him knowing the future, this is Him actually understanding the Scripture. This prediction comes from the Scriptures. It comes from the Scriptures. Obviously, we've seen Jesus' knowledge of the future, time and time again, and He's pretty good at that. He understands things. He knows what's in people's hearts. He knows what's going to take place, but He knows the Scriptures too, and this is what has been stated. That's why it says, "...for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered'" ... "...for it is written..." That phrase... to recall and to help the audience understand that this is referencing back to the Old Testament. This is the Word of God. He's citing from Zechariah 13:7. Zechariah 13:7, one of the minor prophets here, and this is the whole of the verse even though He only cites from a portion of it. It says, " 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me,' declares the Lord of hosts. 'Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.' " This is an amazing prophecy, and it really is just continuing to add to the profound wisdom of God. When you look at the Old Testament and how it sets up for what Christ will do; and if you just take a second to look at this, you learn some amazing things. And first of all, you ask, well, who is "...the shepherd..."? Because if you think of the Israelites and you think of the people who were receiving this prophecy from Zechariah, it could be a little confusing.

What exactly is going on here? Who is being referenced here? But you and I get to cheat because we have Jesus' interpretation. When Jesus refers to this, He says "...strike the shepherd...", and He's referring to His own life. He's referring to Himself. So, we know that this reference to "...the shepherd..." here is a reference to the Messiah. It's a reference to Jesus. We have Jesus' interpretation of it, but what do we learn about this shepherd based upon this verse? I think this is amazing. This shepherd, this Messiah, is not just a man. We continue to see that over and over again. He's not just a man. He is so much more. How do you know that? Well, look at just what this verse says. How does this verse talk about the Messiah? He's identified as "...my shepherd..." He's identified as God's shepherd; "...my shepherd..." He says

this is "...my shepherd..." And then, if you go and read on "... against the man who stands next to me...", this shepherd, this Messiah, stands next to God. He's a close associate of God. He's a peer. He's a colleague, or a comrade of God, is kind of how the Hebrew word is trying to fill this out. This is one who participates with God, shares in divine nature of God. Alright? This is no mere man. God is referring to His Messiah who is divine.

What else do we learn? In Zechariah 13:7, this stated fact, again, that it is God's plan to strike down His shepherd. It is God's plan that the Messiah must suffer. Like we said - completely contrary to the view of secular historians that, somehow, He lost control, and Jesus didn't know what He was doing, and at the last moment, unfortunately, He fell as a criminal. No. This was God's plan to strike down His shepherd. It is just like was stated in Isaiah 53:10 when talking about the Messiah who was the suffering servant; "...it was the will of the Lord to crush him..." It was not the will of the Romans that overpowered Him. It was not the will of the Jewish people that overpowered Him. It was the will of God that this must take place. He has put Him to grief. This is what Zechariah 13:7 continues to show us, that this is God's complete control and plan over all of this - over all of this - in regard to His own Messiah that this is what He must do. Of course, that's significant because, I don't know, what do you think was the Jewish view of this verse when He quoted it? What were the disciples thinking when He quoted from Zechariah? I think when they thought about a shepherd, I think they were thinking something different. I think when they thought about their Messiah being a shepherd, they were thinking about something a little bit more positive. For instance, in Ezekiel, "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord; I have spoken." This is in their minds. Right? When they think of... certainly, sure, the Messiah is God's shepherd, and He will rule over us... and that's why they have this view, this perspective, and yet Jesus quotes from Zechariah referring to the shepherd who must be struck down, who must die, continuing to confront their wrong view of Him, their wrong view of the Scriptures, and this is the reality. This is what must take place,

And if you think about it, shepherds are supposed to gather sheep not allow them to scatter, and so, that's what their viewing the Messiah is, the ultimate shepherd who gathers everyone. Of course, that day is still future. Ezekiel's

not wrong; he's referring to this future day that will still take place. But Jesus quotes from Zechariah to identify Himself as that shepherd that must die under the will of God and His own hand. But Jesus emphasis that the sheep will scatter. The sheep will not go along with the shepherd. The sheep will not stay right by the shepherd's side. The sheep will scatter. This is what will happen. Jesus obviously knew what was in the hearts of men. He could look at every single disciple there and look them in the eye and say you can't handle it. You will not be willing to go to the death of the cross. You will not be willing to suffer and die like I am about to. Jesus not only knows that because He knows what's I their hearts, but He can look at the Scriptures and interpret them accurately and say this is what must take place. The shepherd, God's shepherd, must be struck down, and His sheep must scatter. This is what the Scriptures foretold, and this is Jesus' interpretation of it.

The reality is the disciples are just not ready for this level of commitment and loyalty. They're still ashamed to an extent. They're not ready to be mocked and ridiculed. They're not ready to be arrested. They're not ready to go on trial and give testimony to why they're preaching the gospel. They're not ready to die for their faith in Christ. The disciples are not there; that's why they will scatter when this moment comes as we know how it plays out. The disciples are weak and immature and ashamed in this area. The disciples, just like you and me, are in a process. They're in a process. They're in a process of moving and trying to grow and become more like how God would have them to be, grow in righteousness and holiness and look more like Christ. Yet, they still fall short because this example will come, and they will all fail the test. They will all fall short. Much like how you and I still have moments that come, and we can look back on the last week and see moments where we failed an opportunity to ultimately bring glory to God. The truth is this happens because we fail to rely upon God's strength to begin with. It's not God's strength that's getting us through. It's not God's power that allows us to say what we ought to say. It's not His Spirit that we're looking toward to guide us in those situations and scenarios. We're looking to ourselves, and that's why we fall, that's why we fail so miserably; and that's exactly why the disciples here will also scatter and fail. It is a failure to lean upon and rely upon the Spirit of God, His power, His strength.

If you're trying to follow Christ and you aren't truly saved, you will fall away. You will fall away because, how long can desire, how long can good will, how long can your energy and effort keep you close to God so to speak? Maybe you're brought up in a good family. Maybe you go to a good church. You haven't been burned yet. You've had good experiences. But that energy and effort will only take you so far, and then you toss a little tribulation, you toss a little suffering into that life, and will that person still be committed? Will that person still follow through in giving themselves to God? Absolutely not. Once you hit suffering, once you hit persecution, the truth comes out, and that's why we see so many people in the American church particularly (we know this way too well) ... that people have this generally good view of God and Jesus and the Bible and the church until hard times hit, and then they're done, and they turn their back on it. And that's when the truth finally came out. They hadn't had the suffering yet. They hadn't had the opportunity to really show who they are. But if you are saved, then you possess the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is who keeps you from stumbling. The Holy Spirit is the One who actually causes you to endure to the end, no matter the persecution, no matter the suffering and hardship you face. The Holy Spirit is what keeps us from falling. The Holy Spirit cultivates new desires in us that focus our attention upon Christ and not ourselves.

Jesus has highlighted the grim reality of the disciples' immaturity. This moment of testing is going to come, and they will all fail. They will all look to their own strength. They will all look to their own power. They will all neglect the very power and Spirit of God and instead fall back on their own desires. They will fail. Even in the midst of this prediction, Jesus gives hope with another prediction, and it's a reminder really that we've seen before - the prediction of the supernatural. The prediction of the supernatural, that is His resurrection - His resurrection that He states in verse 28; "But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." ... "But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." He prophesies His resurrection yet again. This is actually the fifth time in Mark's gospel that He's prophesied this. This is the fifth time that He's actually told them about His resurrection, not just His death, but that He's going to come back to life. Of course, this gets veiled. This gets missed by the disciples because they're having too hard of a time trying to comprehend what He means by suffering and going to the cross. There will be a scattering of these sheep, but there will also be a

regathering. There is that hopeful truth and promise that there will be a gathering.

Of course, as we've seen before, the disciples fail to appreciate the resurrection and the hope that Jesus gives here, and, instead, they focus in on the death prediction that Jesus gave. Let's look at Peter's first response in our passage. His first response is a response of pride in verse 29. Peter's pride in 14:29; "Even though they all fall away, I will not." ... "Even though they all fall away, I will not." He attempts to display his commitment again. And this is what we know of Peter. We can go back to Mark chapter 8, and this is how he acted. He was bold. He steps out. He speaks his mind immediately. Maybe he doesn't think too much and just talks. And at one point, Jesus says well done. That's true; I am the Messiah. And at another point, Jesus has to rebuke Peter and say I must go to the cross. "Get behind me..." This is the reality, and so, Peter, being this way, has to say something even now, and his commitment? He has to voice his commitment. Jesus, you got it wrong. You don't know me - you don't know me. I am committed. I will not scatter. I'll be right by Your side. In fact, just listen to how arrogant this sounds; "Even though they all fall away, I will not." Throw all your buddies under the bus, real quick. Right? "Even though they all fall away..." Because we all know they're weak, Jesus, but that's not me. I'm Your committed one. I'm Your righthand guy. In the Greek it literally comes across that he says, "Though they all fall away, not I." "...not I..." Don't put me in the same category as them. That's not me - just arrogance and pride.

And think about how, really, how prideful this is in light of what Jesus has just said. It's not just that Jesus was predicting the future, which by the way we've already decided He's pretty good at, that and Jesus predicts the future and he gets it right. And so, he's questioning Jesus' predicting of the future, but also, he's questioning Jesus' interpretation of the Scriptures. He's saying, Jesus, You're reading Zechariah wrong. Jesus, that's not actually true. Can you imagine that? What gumption! You know, to come to the Messiah like he's done before, but to actually say You don't know what You're talking about in regard to the future, and You don't know what the Bible really says. You're talking to the Messiah here, buddy. You might want to tone it down a notch. This is arrogance. One commentator states, "He will prove Jesus to be a false prophet and invades against any suggestion that he will wilt under pressure. Peter disputes Jesus' word in a spirit of rivalry and must regard himself as a triton among minnows. He

insists that he will prove himself more trustworthy than the rest who he implies probably will fall away.” Terrible arrogance. Who is Peter thinking about? He’s thinking about himself. Who is Peter relying upon? He’s relying upon himself. Where does this bold declaration come from? You know, where is this actually kind of based in? Where’s the foundation of this claim? It’s not the Spirit of God, that’s for sure. He’s not relying on God’s strength for this. He’s simply saying that he has the ability, and he has the power, and he has the strength. It’s arrogant in the way that it challenges Jesus, and it’s arrogant in the way that it exalts himself.

And Jesus uses this as a perfect moment to set up a teachable opportunity for Peter, and if we’re honest, for all of us. In verse 30, we see Jesus’ precise prediction. Verse 30; And Jesus said to him, ‘Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ You know, every time Jesus has said, “Truly, I say to you...” or “Truly, I tell you...” in the gospels, it’s always plural. He’s always speaking to a group of people; “Truly, I say to [all of] you...” But this is the one time where He says, “Truly, I say to you, [Peter]...” This is for you buddy. This is for you. You think you’re that good? You think you are the champion of following Me? Let Me say something for you, and you can mark My words on this, “...this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” Jesus getting even more specific now; he’s prophesying now. He’s predicting about things Jesus isn’t even involved with. Jesus isn’t even involved in those conversations. He’s not going to be there when Peter denies Him, and He’s not going to be right next to him and watching this happen. And so, He’s able to look ahead. Jesus knows all these details of every single one of them, and what they will be doing when they scatter from Him in His final moments.

Jesus prophesies this three-fold denial of this most brave and committed disciple, and the reality is singling him out because Peter exalted himself above everyone else. Some people try and identify that there’s some harmonization issue here in Matthew 26:34. And it just simply says that “...before the rooster crows...,” and it doesn’t say twice, and it’s a simple thing where anybody giving an account of an event - some people are more specific, some people are just summary. And so, Matthew is summarizing this event. And why is Mark so specific? Because Mark gets all of his details and information, to write his gospel, from Peter. So, you think Peter remembered this moment? It would be hard to not have nightmares about

this. Right? Peter has had plenty of nightmares about this, and he could tell Mark, oh, I know what He said, "...before the rooster crows twice..." I remember that exact moment, and I remember exactly what I did, and I remember my response. Peter knows this, and so, Mark is just simply giving us more detail. It's not a conflict at all with Matthew's account. The reality of what Jesus is saying is it's already nightfall, and the rooster will crow twice before the sun comes up, more than likely around 3 a.m., early, early, early morning. So, there's not much time, and yet within that short span of hours, Peter, you're going to deny Me, not once, not twice, three times here. You are bold, Peter, thinking you're better than all the other disciples, and you yourself will deny me three times.

It's significant that this word "deny" is used. Actually, it's the same word that is used back when Jesus was talking about what it costs to follow Him. And the reality of following Christ is that you do deny yourself. You deny yourself. When Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And what pain this must have caused Peter to reflect on this and think that Jesus' words were, "...you will deny me..." ... "...you will deny me..." when you should be denying yourself; "...you will deny me [Christ the Messiah] three times" in the span of hours. It's a thorough prediction aimed at Peter to show that this is the reality. You're going to be offended at Me. You're going to be offended at this path of suffering and persecution and death that I will take, and it will actually lead you to deny Me three times. Peter, of course, blinded in the moment, fires back at Jesus yet again. And we have his proud promise to end our passaging in verse 31; "But he said emphatically, 'If I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And they all said the same." Peter doesn't just simply respond with cool, calm, gentle reasoning with Jesus, now Peter says hold on a second. I think we both know I'm not going to deny You three times. Right? "Emphatically," He "emphatically" fires back; "If I must die with you, I [most certainly] will not deny you." Jesus don't You even start to go there. Don't You say that I'm going to deny You. That would be the worst possible thing. In fact, You don't have me figured out Jesus. You don't realize who I am. Not only am I better than the rest of my comrades over here, not only am I the stand-out disciple, but also (here's the big reveal), I'm willing to die! Even if I grant You that You are saying You're going to go to Your death, so will I; that's how committed I am. No one's been that bold thus far. And, of course, the rest crumble out of peer pressure

because they would sound terrible if they don't agree. Oh, yeah, sure, that's my commitment too.

But this is Peter's response, and it just continues to drip with pride and arrogance. He thinks He's committed to a level that Jesus just hasn't understood or seen yet. Obviously, we all know that Peter specifically and the rest of the disciples, their commitment to Christ would falter that night. Their weakness would show. There would be a setback. There would be sin in their denying of Christ, just like the commitment of any human being without the active working of God's Spirit to keep them close to God, just like you and me when we try to approach a day, a week, a task, a conversation, any action in front of us without the strength of God. Isn't it amazing! Peter is actually stating a good thing here. He's making a resolution. He's making a declaration of his commitment to Jesus. And we do the same thing; not just the menial tasks of everyday life, thinking we can do it on our own, but we even talk about spiritual things. We'll be there in a small group talking about how committed we are and how much we read the Bible and how we're going to do this and how we're going to do that for God. And we actually just deny the power that comes from God Himself, the power we need, the power by which anything can take place in our own lives. We don't look to God's strength and power in His Spirit working in us.

This is what Peter and the disciples had done. This is the tragedy here. It's an example of them looking to themselves, looking inward at their own abilities, not falling back on God, asking for His power, His strength, His Spirit. And this is why Paul has to tell Timothy (and it's a fair reminder for us) that (2 Timothy 1:7), "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." The power in your life to overcome sin is not because you tried so hard, and you did so great, but it comes ultimately from God Himself. It's His Spirit that works in us. It's His Spirit that creates new desires in you. It's His Spirit that recalls the Word to your mind. It's His Spirit that enables you to now walk in righteousness and no longer in the old ways and the old habits of your flesh. The reality is we learn from this that, unlike the disciples, we need God, to be committed to God. We can't do this on our own, and that is where we are, in this in-between. We've come to faith in Christ. We've come to realize that He is our Savior, and we need Him, and He forgives us of our sins. But we're still in this body, and we're in this process. So, how do we function in this process? We have to rely

completely upon the Spirit of God every day if we're going to look anymore like Christ. And then, ultimately, when we stand before Him in His presence, glorified, it's not because of us; it's Him saving us from the beginning. It's Him carrying us through in this process now, and it's Him keeping us so that we don't stumble and presenting us before Him in righteousness, blameless before Him, and this is what we look forward to, and this is what we strive to do now - less of us - more of God, His Spirit working in us.