

MAIN POINT

Mature Christians aren't perfect, but they are defined by Jesus instead of their failures.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had a “falling out” with a close friend or family member? Share as is appropriate and as you feel comfortable.

How has conflict and restoration changed your personal relationships? How has it made your relationships stronger?

One of the best tests of the strength of a relationship is conflict. The people who truly love us and have our best interests at heart are those who we are able to endure conflict with and come out on the other side with a stronger relationship. Peter had something of a “falling out” with Jesus. Despite his bold claims that he would rather die than turn away from Jesus, on the night of Jesus’ betrayal, Peter denied His Lord three times. Peter’s failure, however, did not stop Jesus from loving, pursuing, redeeming, and reconciling Peter. Peter’s relationship with Jesus is a picture of the relationship God offers every sinner through faith in the death and resurrection of His Son. By looking at Peter’s relationship with Jesus, we will see that our past sins and failures do not disqualify us from receiving Christ’s love and participating in His mission.

DISCUSSION

> **READ MARK 14:27-31, 66-72 AND JOHN 21:15-19.**

What do you know about the relationship between Peter and Jesus?

Why was denying Jesus unfathomable to Peter? Why might it be dangerous for us to think that we are incapable of doing so?

What emotions might Peter have felt in the moment when he realized Jesus’s prophecy came true?

When have you felt like Peter? What do we learn about Peter from his response to his denial (Mark 14:72)?

Given Peter’s bold proclamation that he would die before denying Christ in Mark 14, how would you expect Jesus to confront him in John 21? How did Jesus interact with Peter? What does this tell us about Him?

What task did Jesus charge Peter with in John 21? Given Peter’s moral and spiritual failure, did Peter seem like a likely candidate for this charge? Why or why not? Based on what you know about Peter, how did he handle this charge?

What did Jesus mean by His prediction in John 21:18? What sacrifices might following Christ and living out His mission demand of us?

What are some tangible ways we might express the redeeming, reconciling, and gracious love of Christ to the people around us?

APPLICATION

How might remembering the resurrection of Jesus and the restoration of Peter change your perspective on your past failures? How might remembering these things empower you for ministry in the present?