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Sunday School Lesson

TOPIC:

“Peter's Devotion Tested”

Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 22:31-34, 54-62 (KJV, Public Domain)

Prepare

- Using old fashioned felt cut outs, pictures, or downloaded images on the computer, highlight some of the more memorable events leading up to the night of Jesus' arrest in the garden of Gethsemane and Peter's denial of the Lord.
- Use ideas from the **Explore** section below as a lesson lead in.
- Demonstrate Peter's denial of Christ with an object lesson as a lead in (internet search).

Explore – “Standing Firm for Jesus”; Full Lesson Available on pages 5-12

Verses 31-34

One of the best places to play, run, and exercise the body and imagination is on the playground. There is often equipment there to hang from, climb on, and explore the world of pretend play. What is your favorite thing to do on the playground (wait for responses)?

Some of the favorites down through the years have been slides, swings, and teeter totters (show pictures of these). It is so much fun to swoosh down the slide, go back and forth on the swings, or grab a friend to go up and down on the teeter totter (seesaw).

While all of this is fun, when it comes to faith in Jesus Christ, identifying with Him, and standing firm in that, people can't slide, swing back and forth, or try to balance what they believe. Jesus asks us to be all-in for Him every day (Luke 9:23).

And one of His disciples, Peter (show a picture), thought he was. Before His arrest, Jesus told Peter and the other disciples something very astonishing. He said, “*All ye shall be offended because of me this night...*” (Mark 14:27; make an astonishing, “Oh no!” face). But Peter and the rest of the disciples remained confident (make a confident stand/pose) that they wouldn't and said as much (Mark 14:29, 31).

To Peter, Jesus said that Satan wanted to “*sift you as wheat*” (Luke 22:31).

Do you know what sifting looks like (demonstrate with a sifter of some sort and flour)? We run the flour through these tiny holes over and over again to remove unwanted particles and to make

the flour fine and fluffy. But the enemy didn't want to make a fluffy cake. He wanted to shake their faith in the Lord.

But Peter declared that would never happen. He would go to prison or die for the Lord if he had to. He would never deny Him (Luke 22:33).

Jesus knew better and told him the sad truth: *"I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me"* (Luke 22:34; make a rooster cut out with a sad face and hold it up at this point).

Verses 54-62

So, after the Last Supper, Jesus and His friends went to a special garden called, Gethsemane. There, Jesus went before the Heavenly Father and prayed really hard three times while His friends were asleep.

When He was finished, Judas showed up with a multitude of people and guards, and arrested Jesus and took Him away. While they were going toward the place of Jesus' trial, Peter followed at a distance far behind.

When they arrived, out in the courtyard Peter huddled around a fire with others to keep warm (demonstrate). It was at that moment when one of the maids present spotted Peter and said that he was one of the ones with Jesus. But Peter said, *"Woman, I know him not"* (Luke 22:57), denying Jesus for the first time (hold up 1 finger).

Shortly after, another person said that Peter was with Jesus, and for the second time (hold up 2 fingers), Peter said no, he wasn't.

And for a third time (hold up 3 fingers), someone else thought surely Peter was one of them because he was a Galilean. Peter got so upset and flustered that with swearing, he said he did not know Jesus!

Whew!

Do you know what happened after that?

The rooster crowed (show a picture of a rooster crowing or a sound on your phone), just like Jesus said it would happen. Peter, realizing the mistake he made, became very sad and began to cry. He knew he did not stand firm for Jesus like he said he would.

But thankfully, that is not how Peter's story ends. While he made a mistake, like all people do sometimes, Jesus forgave him after His resurrection and restored him. Peter eventually became a great leader for the church, standing firm for Jesus and teaching others about Christ.

Activities

- There are many thoughtful reflections that come from the account of Peter denying the Lord on the night of His arrest. What stood out to you? What is one take away you wish to record, remember, and reflect upon for future use? The adult or children's **Blank Journal Pages** found on site can be printed and used for your personal recording and reflecting.
- Using the **Draw the Scene** page, students can use their hands to draw a rooster to remind that we are to stand firm in our faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Younger students can put together a **Craft Necklace** using the printable on site to affirm their stand for Jesus.
- A **Fill in the Blank Poem** is a fun activity available on site for printing.
- Alternate activity sheets such as **Wordsearch, Crosswords, and more** are available on site to print.

Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***“And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”***
Luke 22:34
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 13)

Life

Conversion and restoration are beautiful words, ones that Peter was able to experience after his denial of Christ.

This week, do a bible verse search for words about redemption, restoration, salvation, and new life. Write these words down and keep them close to remind you of the promises God has for all who come to Him through Christ Jesus (John 14:6).

TOPIC:

“Peter’s Devotion Tested”

Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

VERSE DISCOVERY: Luke 22:31-34, 54-62 (KJV, Public Domain)

I have heard much said over the years regarding good intentions. As the name of it suggests, all speaks of wanting to choose what is right, yet is often compounded by the struggle to carry it out, not allowing the plans thereof to come to full fruition.

The execution of what is good has been the slippery slope man has attempted to climb since time began. The struggle is real. Many people are well-meaning, but a well-meaning gesture without follow-through is as empty as if one had never made it in the first place.

*Peter the determined, a fisherman who left all to follow Christ. Peter the bold, a spokesman who declared without hesitation, “**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,**” (Matthew 16:16). Peter the courageous, the only one in the ship who had enough gumption to try to walk on the water with Jesus (Matthew 14:29). Yet, for all his boldness Peter would experience a test of his devotion, and he would stumble.*

THE WARNING

Luke 22:31-34 “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”

Time was drawing near. Jesus was coming to the last leg of His race in ministry here on earth. The shadows of evil were purposed against Him, and the plan has been put into motion. All will come to pass on this night as had been prophesied for ages leading up to the culmination of these events.

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He has been anointed by Mary before His death (Mark 14:3-9). Judas has agreed with the chief priest to betray Him (Mark 14:10-11). The last Passover had gotten underway when Jesus testifies of the new covenant and the ordering of the Lord's Supper to be done in "remembrance" of Him (Luke 22:19). With the supper ended, Jesus gave one final lesson on servanthood in the washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:2-20). And, after giving "sop," He tells Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly," (John 13:27), speaking of the carrying out of His betrayal.

The time of testing had come. Not just for Judas, but each one of His disciples would face a faith crisis on this night.

Each one would face their own moral dilemma. Each would be confronted with the reality of their devotion. Each would have some questioning of the heart to answer for themselves.

Once, I wrote:

"What would it be like to sit across from Jesus, face to face, and have Him question your trust? Would we be able to look Him in the eye as we pondered our answer? Would our heads be bowed, feeling unworthy to lift it and look into the eyes of love pleading with us to believe? What would it be like? I imagine it would be self-revealing because in those questions we find where our hearts and our true belief lie. It reveals where we stand in our faith..." (Devotional – ["Jesus Questions Trust"](#)/©WordforLifeSays.com)

Even more so, what would it be like to not only look into His eyes but hear the words coming from His mouth, saying, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Mark 14:27)?

If the shock of those words wasn't enough, Jesus specifically points out Peter and says, "**Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...**" Jesus prepared Peter by warning him of the impending temptation he would face. And judging by Peter's response, the warning, in his opinion, was unnecessary.

He had devoted the past 3 ½ years of his life to Jesus and the ministry. As far as he was concerned, he was all-in: "**Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.**"

Peter's intentions were good. He had no other plans than to be by Jesus' side, no matter what it would cost him.

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Please Note: Like Peter, nobody plans on failing. But the Apostle Paul tells us, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (1 Corinthians 10:12). That is a warning not just for Peter or the disciples to pay attention to, but for us all to mind our steps and not to be boastful about who we think we are. As humans, when push comes to shove, one’s response may not be as they imagined. Therefore, we must always be on guard (1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:8).

Peter could not imagine doing anything less than standing strong and standing with Jesus through whatever He faced. Previously, Peter made a bold declaration of faith, saying, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God”* (John 6:68, 69).

As far as we know, Peter, like many others, is positively sure of what his response would be.

But Jesus knew better. He said, **“I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”**

Jesus’ prediction, unfortunately, would come to pass whether Peter believed it or not.

Three occasions would present themselves to Peter to stand firm upon his personal declaration. Occasions he would not recognize until it was too late. In this one night, he was told he would, in fact, deny the Lord Jesus Christ three times.

One may stumble and make a spiritual misstep once, but to be told that he would not only have the opportunity, but take it three times, was probably a thought Peter could not wrap his head around.

Mark 14:50 lets us know that not only would Peter struggle in his declaration, but all the disciples would: *“And they all forsook him, and fled.”*

THE TIME IN BETWEEN

But before we arrive at the moment and events surrounding the arrest of Jesus and the disciples’ abandonment, we find Jesus and His remaining disciples going out to the Mount of Olives, Luke 22:39.

There, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus began to pray in agony. This was not a normal prayer, nor could its fervency be matched. The weight of the world literally rested upon His

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shoulders there that night. The contest between good and evil, between God and the devil, was coming to its peak for our Lord.

At all costs, the victory had to be won for the sake of the souls of humanity, the very reason His ministry led Him to earth (Luke 19:10).

So, He prayed and prayed, and *"His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44). So challenging was the fight that the Bible informs us, *"There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him"* (Luke 22:43).

Although their struggle paled in comparison to what our Lord was facing and would face, Jesus knew the disciples would face great temptation that night. Written in almost all the accounts of the gospels, Jesus warned them to *"Pray that ye enter not into temptation"* (Luke 22:40; Mark 14:38; Matthew 26:41).

Their faith would be severely tested, and they needed spiritual strength to endure.

Would they stand the test of the trial?

Would their devotion to Christ hold up under the pressure of persecution?

As history tells us, after His three agonizing prayers, Jesus was betrayed and arrested (Luke 22:47-53). Everyone is gone, Mark 14:50 reminds us. Jesus is left to face the high priest and the Sanhedrin alone (Luke 22:47-53). This would be just one of the many illegal night trials held that night until its culminating purpose puts Jesus on the cross for all our sins.

THE DENYING DEVOTION

Luke 22:54-62 "Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

55) And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

56) But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57) And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

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58) And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59) And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaeen.

60) And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61) And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62) And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.”

The proverbial stage is set, and Peter will be faced with the reality of his devotion to Jesus.

“Peter followed from afar.” Ironically, when he was first called to be a disciple, Peter gave up everything to follow Jesus closely. In fact, his devotion and closeness to the Lord led to Peter becoming one of the Lord’s closest confidants, one of His inner circle.

Now, after His arrest, we see Peter somewhat withdrawing from that nearness.

He was still following, which was more than what some of the other disciples were doing. But Peter’s following was marred by the word **“afar.”**

Has fear spoken to Peter? This bold and sometimes brash disciple, who normally was not afraid to be the first to speak up or to step out and try new things, now experiences some hesitancy in his relationship with the Lord.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” Paul once taught regarding sin (Galatians 5:9). But much of that truth can be applied here, too.

Giving space/foot to a little anxious thought caused Peter’s devotion to Jesus to momentarily spiral until we see him eventually denying the Lord with swearing in his mouth.

“Peter sat down among them.” Snuggling around a fire for either warmth or distraction, Peter wanted, most likely, to blend in and not stand out in any way.

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I can imagine him trying to get his bearings on all that has happened so far, as well as trying to gauge what to do next. The fire, the blending in with the crowd, would normally offer space for that sort of contemplation. But as the next verse tells us, it was not to be so.

“But a certain maid beheld him... and earnestly looked upon him.” Peter was recognized for being with Jesus. Which at this point in his spiritual growth, he was not ready for.

Later, when Jesus does rise from the dead with all power (Matthew 28:18), and ascends back to heaven in victory (Acts 1:9), and those present in the upper room became filled with the Holy Spirit's power (Acts 2:1-4) – that version of Peter, who became the forefront spokesman for the Kingdom (Acts 2:14-36) and this great moving of the gospel, did not mind being recognized as one who had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

Peter was then courageous for Christ.

But the version of Peter huddled by the fire most likely wished this maid would turn her eyes elsewhere and be quiet about what she thinks she knows so that he could shrink back a little bit more into obscurity.

Obscurity was not to be Peter's friend. After she belted out, **“This man was also with him,”** Peter lied. The Bible tells us flatly, **“He denied him.”**

Putting the actual words aside for a minute, in the words Peter spoke: **“Woman, I know him not,”** he was already fulfilling what Jesus said about Peter's denying response back in verse 34.

In one moment, he renounced even knowing Jesus. And this relationship that has been built over the past 3 ½ years, Peter rejected the intimacy of.

At that time, Peter's heart had been overwhelmed by all that he saw and heard or else he would have recalled the words of Jesus: *“But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven”* (Matthew 10:33).

As a side note, Mark 14:68 lets us know that upon the immediate denial of the Lord this first time, *“the cock crew.”*

Did this first crowing gain Peter's attention? Would it jog his memory, recalling what Jesus had just hours before warned would happen?

Apparently, at this point, it does not appear so.

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As the story unfolds, we find, **“after a little while another saw him.”**

People like to use phrases and encouraging quotes about trying again when the first go-round didn't turn out as they expected. There is this belief that the second time will yield better results if they just try again.

Thankfully, that is true on many occasions. But for Peter's situation, sadly, it wasn't. When confronted with the words, **“Thou art also of them,”** Peter's response was, **“Man, I am not.”**

And neither would the third time yield better results for Peter. After **“about the space of one hour,”** his allegiance to Jesus was tested once again.

I wonder if perhaps, after an hour without any further confrontations, Peter thought he was in the clear or flying under the radar?

But it was not to be so. With this third and final confrontation, we are told, **“Another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.”**

Was it just because Peter was a Galilean that he was identified as a close confidant of Jesus? I don't think so. For I am sure that Peter was not the only Galilean gathered in the halls or around the fire pits that night.

Nonetheless, Peter was identified **“confidently”** of being with Jesus. But it's not being identified that matters. What matters most is Peter's response to being identified.

And his response here in Luke 22:60 was, **“Man, I know not what thou sayest.”** Or, in today's terms, “Man, I don't know what you're talking about.”

Either version is gentler than how Mark 14:71 records this final denial: *“But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.”*

“This man,” just a few hours ago, Peter and the rest of the disciples were enjoying the Passover meal with and fellowshiping with. This man, just a few hours ago, they were signing hymns with and celebrating.

But instead of singing and celebrating with His friends, Jesus is now preparing to go to the cross, knowing the rejection He prophesied had come to pass: **“And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.”**

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As a momma rings the triangle to call the family to the meal, and as the bells in the church steeple toll the hour, the sound of the rooster signaled it was done. None of the boastfulness he had earlier that day was present. The only thing present at the moment was the stark reality of what he had done.

Not only had he failed Jesus. He failed Him miserably.

Words weren't needed. Peter would feel the repercussion of his response when **"The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter."** One can only imagine the overwhelming sorrow and sadness Peter felt when he looked into the eyes of his friend and his Savior.

In that moment, Peter experienced the weight of his choices, and he **"wept bitterly."** Words could never express the pain he felt of letting Jesus down – nay, denying Him altogether when He needed him the most.

Peter struggled with his devotion and failed. There are times when we can look back on our lives and admit the same shortcomings in faith.

But failure doesn't have to be final.

Before Jesus died, when He was predicting the denial of Peter, He looked forward to a time when Peter would be restored and *"converted"* and would go on to strengthen his brethren (Luke 22:31-32).

That word "converted" gives the impression of turning back for Peter and for anyone who finds themselves in a waning state, when their faith and devotion are not up to par.

Through this, I encourage you to look to the Lord for forgiveness and restoration.

NOTES:

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Please Answer the Review Questions Below

1. **T or F.** When Jesus was arrested, Peter stayed as close as possible. (Luke 22:54)
2. “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired... that he may sift you as _____.” (Luke 22:31)
A. Sand B. Rice C. Wheat D. None
3. “All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the _____, and the sheep shall be scattered” (Mark 14:27)
A. Lamb B. Shepherd C. Lord D. None
4. What does the word “**Converted**” mean?

5. The garden where Jesus prayed three times was _____.
A. Golgotha B. Gethsemane C. Gibeon D. None
6. **T or F.** Peter’s reaction during his third denial of Christ was to take it all in stride.
7. Peter didn’t plan on denying Christ. In humanity, all are subject to weaknesses and sin. What are some things people can do to strengthen their stand in Christ?

