

2026-09-06

How Would You Respond?

Mark 14:27-31

One day last week, after we exited the elevator at the hospital, we walked that long hall to the lobby. The husband and wife in front of me were leaving the hospital with their father, who was in a wheelchair being pushed by an aid. The husband suddenly stumbled, then said, “Did you see that big crack in the floor?” We looked but there was no crack. He just made the remark to be funny, trying to explain why he stumbled. Have you ever stumbled? Have you ever fallen? Probably all of us have stumbled over something or maybe over nothing at all. Stumbling physically over something can cause some real **physical pain**. We may even break some bones. It is also possible to stumble spiritually. We can struggle and fall in our faith over a teaching or a conviction of God or, like these disciples, they stumbled over their commitment to Jesus. They all stated their willingness to die with Jesus, but none of them did. They all stumbled and scattered just as Jesus said.

Mark 14: 27 *“Then Jesus said to them, ‘All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”’”* Jesus and the disciples had just finished eating the Passover meal together. They all confessed that none of them would betray Jesus. During this last meal together, Jesus established a **new covenant** with these disciples. The wine that they drank, Jesus proclaimed, represented His own blood that He would shed in the coming hours. The disciples understood what Jesus was telling them. Jesus said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God”* (Mark 14:25).

Jesus told His disciples that He was going to die. They were **expecting a fight**. The disciples were mentally preparing themselves for battle. They thought they were prepared, ready to give their lives for their Master. Yet, none of them did. Nothing turned out the way they imagined it would. You would think that of these twelve men, at least one of them would fight to save the life of Jesus. And Peter did. Peter brought a sword. He would swing that sword and cut off a man’s ear, but no fight broke out. Jesus would not allow it. He was in control of the situation. Instead, Jesus healed the man (Luke 22:49-51). Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested. He went without a physical fight. **The disciples were not ready for this**. Jesus’ arrest caused the disciples to stumble. They disapproved of how He was handling things. They were not ready to be arrested like Jesus. The disciples deserted their Lord and fled. Jesus’ fight was spiritual, something the disciples did not understand at the time.

Jesus told the disciples they would all stumble. They would all turn their backs on Him and run. Jesus quoted part of a verse from Zechariah 13:7. *“I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”* Jesus knew what the disciples were going to do. It had happened in the past. **Gamaliel**, a Pharisee told the Jewish council about two different men who had risen up in their lifetime. These men each started a rebellion. They were both killed and their followers all scattered (Acts 5:34-37). Jesus told His disciples that they would be no different at first. They would scatter. But things will be totally different because of what Jesus will do after He dies.

Verse 28 *“But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”* Jesus lets His disciples know that after they scatter, He will rise from the dead. He will bring them back together. He will continue to lead them. He will appear personally with several different disciples individually. Then He will appear to all of them as a group. Eventually Jesus will be with them in Galilee. I am sure the disciples heard what Jesus said to them. I am just **not sure they totally understood** all that Jesus was saying. Sure, they had all witnessed Lazarus being raised from the grave. That happened because Jesus was there. But if Jesus is dead, how can He be raised from the dead? Or, how can He raise Himself? It is hard to imagine what the disciples are thinking. We know what was on Peter’s mind.

Verse 29 *“Peter said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.’”* If Jesus told you what you were going to do and you did not like what He said, **how would you respond?** Would you argue with Jesus, trying to convince Him that He is wrong? Or, would accept what Jesus said and ask for help to change or mercy and forgiveness when you fall? Peter thought he knew himself better than Jesus knew him. Peter said in front of all the other disciples, that if all the others stumble and scatter, he would never leave Jesus to fight alone. **Peter is very confident.** He has a sword. He is willing to die, but that is not what Jesus wants. Jesus wants Peter to believe Him, trust Him and live for Him. Since Peter is so confident in himself, Jesus tells Peter that he is going to have **more to overcome** than he realizes. He is going to have more to overcome than most of the other disciples.

Verse 30 *“Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’”* Jesus tells Peter the truth about himself. Peter’s open display of his over confidence will be **put to the test** before the rooster crows twice. That is just hours away. The first two times Peter is asked about his relationship with Jesus comes from two different **servant girls**. Before these servant girls, this big strong fisherman, who was so confident in the presence of Jesus, will deny knowing Jesus at all. How could this happen? **Fear** of the unknown, the **fear** of death, the **fear** of the future all play a part in Peter’s denial.

Verse 31 *“But he spoke more vehemently, ‘If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And they all said likewise.”* When Peter learned that he was going to deny knowing Jesus three times this very night, **Peter knew Jesus was wrong**. Peter used some very strong language here. There was no way this was going to happen, according to Peter. Peter was willing to die with Jesus if need be. Then Peter gained the whole support of all the disciples. All the disciples were **willing to die** with Jesus. Peter would **not deny** Jesus. Neither would all the disciples. Peter would **not leave** His side. Neither would all the disciples. Yet Peter and all of the disciples would deny Jesus that night. **All would be scattered**. Peter and the disciples were ready for a physical fight and ready for death. **They were not ready to be arrested** and condemned. To be honest, Jesus did not want them to be arrested and killed. **He needed them alive**. Jesus knows what will happen. He understands their struggles to believe He is the Messiah, God in human flesh. **It is hard** to not hate. **It is hard** to not physically fight. **It is hard** not to retaliate. **It is hard** to love your enemies. **It is hard** to suffer for doing good and die for doing right because it seems like evil wins if they do not fight. This time was not the time for killing. That will come when Jesus returns. That battle will be quick. Jesus will speak a word and His enemies will drop dead. It is recorded in Revelation 19:15 and 21 like this. *“Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.” “And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse.”*

If Jesus said you were going to deny Him, how would you respond? The tendency is to be like Peter and deny that you could do such a thing even if it means telling Jesus He is wrong. But we are on this side of the cross and the resurrection. We know that Jesus always speaks the truth whether we like it or not. What He says will happen just as He said.

Some will argue with Jesus, with scripture, and the teachings of God. If you choose to argue with God, you are fighting a losing battle. I suggest you **learn to believe God and His word**. If it does not make sense, do not ignore it or pass it by. Dig deeper into the word of God. Seek Him and you will find the truth (Isaiah 55:6). It is also written: *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him”* (1 Corinthians 1:9). Paul is quoting Isaiah 64:4. Paul wants people to know that God did not reveal everything to everybody before the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, not even to the Jews. But now, to those who have the spirit of God, through God’s Spirit He will reveal many things (1 Corinthians 1:10-13).

One thing that I have learned is that **repentance** is not a one-time thing we do when we first began our relationship with Jesus. Repentance is **a continual action**, a daily

action we are to do. We are sinful by nature. We are not perfect. Only God is perfect. We sin every day. If we sin every day we should repent every day. This will help us realize how much we need God's presence in our lives to lead us. Paul encouraged us to "*present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God*" (Romans 12:1). This is just a reasonable thing to do as we live to serve God. We are not to be conformed to this world. We are to be transformed by renewing our minds. Especially as we get older and in this society with all the additives that are put into our foods and drinks, we need to be careful. You only have one mind. Use it well for the glory of God. It is important to believe what God teaches us in His word. **Learn to believe Him and not argue this Him.**

When you learn things about yourself as you study God's word, **seek God's guidance**. What if Peter believed what Jesus told him was true. I can hear Peter asking Jesus, "Am I really going to deny you three times tonight? Is there any way to avoid this? How can I do the right thing?" Can things change? I believe so. This is what prayer is all about. Sometimes our situations cannot change but our actions and response can. Peter learned a lot about faith and being faithful to Jesus through his denials of Jesus and the restoration he received from Jesus. **Peter learned that a faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted.** Your faith will be tested as Peter's faith was tested, as Judas Iscariot's faith was tested, as every disciples' faith was tested. Peter wrote in his first letter, the first chapter. "*In this you greatly rejoice though now for a little while, if need be, you have been distressed by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (1 Peter 1:6-7). How genuine is your faith. As I say, it is easy to praise God when everything is going your way. Can you praise, honor and glorify God when nothing is going your way? How genuine is your faith then? **Seek God's guidance.** Believe Him and do as He directs you.

Questions to ask yourself: Have you learned to listen to God's Spirit. Have you learned to follow God's Spirit?

Actions to take: 2 Corinthians 13:5 Learn to test yourself. Christianity is not a game. Your eternity depends on your faith in Jesus. Continually grow in your faith in Jesus.

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