

Peter's Denial

By
Jack G. Robbins

March, 1948



IF it had not been for Jesus there would have been no testimonies like you have heard tonight. All we heard you can just thank Jesus for. It is written in the Book: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy **Ghost** is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Jesus said we are His witnesses, and He meant that. He wants witnesses to do as the demoniac whom Jesus healed. Jesus found the demoniac over by the seashore, walking up and down — out of his mind, hopeless, helpless and despairing. Jesus rebuked the devil and cast him out, and set the demoniac free, made him a rational being with a sound mind. Of course, the man wanted to follow Jesus — go back with Him. When you get this old-time religion you want to stay as close to Jesus as you can. This man wanted to go along, but Jesus had made a witness out of him. Jesus told him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19).

That is the reason God has witnesses today — to tell what great things the Lord has done for them. It is not just a little quoting of the Scriptures, but right from the shoulder, out of a heart that is filled with love for Jesus Christ, these people are telling a story that God put in their hearts. He has delivered them from bondage and written their names in Heaven; and their hearts overflow with love. How we thank God for this great salvation!

"And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

"And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

"And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

"But go your way, tell his dikiples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you" (Mark 16:4-7).

The verse of Scripture I want you to remember is this: "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter." Why did He say "Peter"? That is what we want to figure out. He could have said, "Go and tell his disciples." Peter was supposed to be a disciple; he had been one. But something had gone wrong in this man's life. He had reached the place where he was self-confident and was leaning upon his own self-sufficiency. When you do that, there is going to be a fall, sooner or later.

In another place we read: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). We want to watch our step. We are nothing but human beings, and in the flesh. The devil has had 6,000 years of deceiving the human race, and if we don't watch our step and follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and keep down low at the foot of the Cross, he is going to get an edge on us and insert something into our lives that will cause us to slip; and when we start to slip we will keep on slipping until we have slipped clear out.

God says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." What we want to do is to keep what we have and get more of the same.

The Lord knows the hearts of men, and He knew Peter. He knew what was in his heart. He could already see that he was self-confident. He saw that he had already slipped.

"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 are converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Peter answers, in all his self-confidence and boasting:

"Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death."

That was a big statement. We might say that, too, but we want to be careful.

"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 22:31-34).

Peter probably said, "That will not be me."

Then, after the Lord's Supper, Jesus and His disciples were going out to the Garden of Gethsemane. Peter went, too. Jesus went about a stone's throw beyond them and knelt down and prayed. He told His disciples to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. Then He prayed and agonized, and .sweat, as it were, great drops of blood that fell upon the ground.

In His prayer He said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Why did Jesus say that? It was not because of what He was about to go through. He knew He was going to Calvary; He knew He was going to be nailed to the cross.

He had already told His disciples what would take place. That was not what He was suffering for; that was not why He was shedding the great drops of blood, as it were. He was suffering for lost souls; He was the Savior of the world; He had come to seek and to save that which was lost. He was giving His life's Blood for every sinner living on top of God's footstool, or ever would be born into the world. He could see in visions the multitudes and millions who would pass up the remedy He was about to give to the world, and refuse and reject it. He knew that He was the Creator of this world, for the Word says: "He was in the world, and the world was made by him." He was God Himself in human flesh, walking upon the earth.

That is hard for even the professors of religion to believe, and they are trying to deny the Deity of Christ. They say that Jesus was such a good man that even His deluded followers thought He was a god. Well, it took more than a man to create this world and put the stars in the heavens, and create all the things we can see with our natural eyes. It took a living God to do that thing. And we are told: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." God, the Creator of the earth, walked on earth in human flesh, as you and I do; and the world did not recognize Him.

Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). He has the power in both places. That is the reason you hear testimonies as you heard here — because Jesus Christ has the power in this earth to forgive sins. The Pharisees wouldn't believe that. They said, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" They knew that only God could forgive sins, but they did not recognize Jesus. Their blinded eyes and hypocritical hearts could not believe that they were standing before the living God. Thank God, He was there! John said, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

I'm glad I'm a believer. I'm glad I believe that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh, reconciling the world unto Himself. That belief and that faith gives me an assurance, gives me victory in my soul over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and gives me a living hope which is an anchor to the soul. Every Christian has that hope.

We can thank God that we have the greatest thing in the world. I am not boasting; I don't have to boast; I know it is the truth. If you can get anything better than this, bring it out. I've never seen it.

Paul found there was only one religion. He knew it and talked about it. He said, after he had already preached the Gospel, "Though we, **or** an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." He had carefully explained, "Which is not another," for there is only one Gospel, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to remove sin, to eradicate sin, and keep it out, and keep you clean and holy in this world as

long as you live here — if you walk in the light. That is what it means.

Peter thought: "I will go to the prison. I'm ready right now to go to death. I'll follow Jesus." Let us see if he will.

Then Judas betrayed Christ and the soldiers took Him. Jesus knew Judas would betray Him. That night at the Passover Feast when Jesus said, "One of you shall betray me," they all said, "Lord, is it I?" They all wondered who it was. They didn't want to betray Jesus. But Judas betrayed Him.

Then they took Him — those gangsters and murderers who claimed to be followers of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were so full of murder that they planned it from the time Jesus began His ministry. Yes, why did they do it? Because He was so straight and He could look down into their hearts and see the corruption there, and call them a "generation of vipers." He said, "**Now** do ye Pharisees make clean **the** outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness" (Luke 11:39). He said, "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). No matter how much you wash the outside, that does not make you clean. There is only one thing that can make you clean inside, and that is the Blood. That is what Jesus gave His life for.

"Then took they him [Jesus], and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

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

See! He had slipped. He was following afar off. There are many of that kind of followers — way off. They want to see how things are going to come out. Peter was following afar off. If anything happened, he did not want to get mixed up in the trouble. That is the way with people today: if persecution comes they want to get off as far as possible and just watch to see how things come out. He followed Jesus afar off, but he sat down among His accusers. In another place it says that Peter warmed himself at their fire. There are many backsliders who are trying to warm themselves on the fires of the world. It is mighty poor comfort for the backslider to get warmed on the fires of this devil-filled and hell-bound world! We want to get right into the midst of this Gospel and get warmed up there.

"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.

"And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not" (Luke 22:56, 57).

Think of that! Just a few minutes before, he had said, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." Now this little maid said, "This man was also with him." He said, "Woman, I know him not." He lied.

You know there is something wrong when a man lies. He has slipped, that's all. He has already denied his Lord once. Jesus said he would deny Him three times before the cock crowed.

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

He lied again — two lies!

"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 Galilean.

"And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest."

Then something happened. The rooster crowed. Jesus had told Peter he would deny Him three times before the cock crowed. Then what? Something else happened.

"And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter."

Jesus did not look for James or John. He knew where to look. Those great eyes that could look into the soul and read every thought, looked upon Peter sadly, as much as to say, "Peter, I'm sorry. I know you are

going to have trouble over this. I know you are going to suffer. I'm sorry. Don't forget, Peter, I have prayed for you. I have prayed for you!"

"And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

Peter wept bitterly! The Scriptures tell us that the angel said, "Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter."

Oh, Peter was suffering the pangs of hell, you might say. He was wandering out there. I don't think he slept a wink from the time he denied his Lord until they told him "The Lord is risen." He was one of the saddest men in the world. I can see him, and I can know something of what he went through. His memory went back and he saw all the kindness of Jesus. He remembered all the miracles He had done. He remembered that day in the boat when Jesus told them to launch out and put down their nets on the right side. They had said, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." And they caught that great multitude of fish. When Peter saw all those fish he just collapsed and fell down at the feet of Jesus and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." I'm a sinful man! I'm sure he remembered that, and he remembered much more.

He had been with Jesus three years and had seen Him heal the sick. He had seen Him heal the leper when He walked the streets of Jerusalem. The poor man had fallen at His feet and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Jesus put His blessed hand upon the poor leper whose skin was rotting away from his body, and said, "I will; be thou clean."

Peter remembered the man who had been blind from his birth, coming and feeling his way with his cane. The people wanted to know who had sinned, this man or his parents. Jesus said it was not that they had sinned but that God might be glorified, that this man had been blind. Jesus made mud of spittle and clay and told him to go wash in pool of Siloam. There was something in that voice that thrilled the blind man. He went to the pool, and took the water and washed off the clay. He washed off the scales — and he could see! Yes, Peter remembered that.

He remembered the man with the withered hand who had come to Jesus. The Pharisees had found fault when they heard Jesus say, "Stretch forth thine hand." And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole. Yes, Peter remembered that, too.

He remembered some other things. At the little town of Nain, Jesus and His disciples had met a funeral procession. Jesus had not looked at the coffin or at the people, but at the sad, brokenhearted mother. Her whole support and her only son lay there, a corpse; and Jesus' heart went out to that dear mother. He stopped the funeral procession. He walked up **to the** bier and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." Bless God, life came into that body. He came alive. Peter was there.

I can hear him say, "O God, I wish I had never done it. All I can see is those eyes looking at me. If I could only get to Him! But **He is** gone — He is dead! He is out there in the tomb. He died on the cross, and I followed a long way off, and I denied Him. I lied about Him. Oh, I'm a liar! And I'm everything else that is bad. I wonder if I am the man that Jesus said would betray Him. I must be he." Peter suffered!

Thank God, the morning came when they found the empty tomb. Yes, Peter, He is risen! Remember what He said? He will go before you into Galilee. Peter could not get out of the tomb fast enough. He was going to find Jesus, probably thinking: "I'm going to make this right." And he did. He loved Jesus. That is the Jesus we love.

He is alive! He is not in a tomb in Palestine. No, thank God, His body never did see corruption. He said, "I will arise the third day." That was the only thing they found against Him when they wanted to crucify Him. And they lied about that. They said He had said: "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Matthew 26:61). That temple had taken **40** years to build, and could Jesus destroy it, and build it again in three days? They didn't know what He was talking about. He was talking about His body. He would raise it in three days. And He did come back in three days.

He broke the Roman seal; He pushed the stone away; and He arose, the conquering Christ, with the keys of death and hell in His hand. He said: "I am the first and the last." There is no excuse for any one to go on in this world in sin, bound and shackled, when there is a living Christ who can put the devil out of

business, and speak peace to the soul, and write his name in Heaven.

Don't you thank God that you came in contact with this Savior? Oh, how you love Him when you know Him! I'm sure there are many here who love Him. They are praying, "Lord, take me through at any cost. Take me through the prison, through death — no matter what it is, keep me true! Keep me true! Keep me humble!" Yes, and He will do that if we are humble.