

## FRIGHTENED, FAR-OFF FOLLOWER

**TEXT:**     *Mark 14:54: And Peter followed Him afar off, even into the palace of the High Priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.*

The arrest of Jesus had been made. Peter, after so bravely but unwisely taking the sword fight for Jesus, had run away like the rest of the disciples to safety:

***Mark 14:50: And they all forsook Him, and fled.***

But Peter had claimed Jesus as the Christ. You can't do that, and then turn away from Him easily!

Sometime in our own life when we have known panic or great discouragement, haven't we understood how it was for Peter? We have felt like taking to our heels and running away. Sometimes we even start to run but are brought up short with words that Peter himself said earlier in his discipleship: ***"To whom, Lord, can we turn?"*** Once we have known fellowship with the Savior, nothing else can compare; and we know He has a better goal in life for us than being a coward!

But Peter stayed too great a distance away!

***Matthew 26:58: But Peter followed Him afar off unto the High Priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.***

Peter and "another disciple" went to the palace:

***John 18:15: And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the High Priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the High Priest.***

Why did Peter remain out in the courtyard? Did his fear for his own life hold him back? Was he ashamed to face Jesus after deserting Him when he had vowed to be the most faithful? Could he have been so discouraged with himself that he forced himself to now stay on the sideline?

Fear and discouragement are tools used by the devil, and they do not lead to the kind of meek and humble spirit the Beatitudes call for at all!

Satan was oppressing Peter again — making him feel he could not be faithful to Jesus; making him feel like the most hopeless of sinners. Satan planned to write

Peter off as an Apostle of Jesus! The more Peter had pledged allegiance to Christ, the more Satan wanted to make him slave to the natural feelings of fear and failure.

Peter was in a place of danger! The “courtyard episode” began harmless enough. Peter just sat with the servants, just warmed himself with their fire. But he already was “afar off” from his Lord.



When we have sinned and are in a time of weakened faith, we need to stay away from temptation as much as possible. When the devil has us on the run, we are more apt to stumble!

Peter found that one sin leads to another one; one lie must be covered by another lie. The satanic plan is succeeding — but only temporarily in Peter’s case!

After the three denials — after the crowing of the cock — just then is Jesus led from the trial room out through the courtyard.

***Luke 22:61: 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.***

What message was in those eyes of our Lord? We are not told — but, knowing Jesus, we know there must have been love that expressed forgiveness, compassion, and encouragement to this distressed disciple who was following so far off now, and so very fearfully.

When we are conscious of faults, failures, and sin in our life, can we think of His eyes meeting ours? What would He need to say? We would feel reproved, forgiven, loved, and encouraged; and we could understand the meaning of the words in:

***Psalms 32:8: I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye.***

Later, after Pentecost, Peter would again be bold. He would preach the Gospel to rulers; he would confront great crowds with the claims of Christ. He would be instrumental in the saving of 3,000 in one day, and 5,000 more soon after!

But first... there were tears!

**Luke 22:62: And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.**



His tears were shed in private; they were not for show. As Paul would later write,

**2 Corinthians 7:10: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

Jesus sent a ray of hope to Peter's grieving heart after His resurrection. "Go, tell my disciples and Peter that I go unto Galilee, and there shall ye see Me as I said unto you." The women, early at the tomb on resurrection morn, were the message carriers. When Peter heard that his name was the only one called out, he made a beeline for the grave to see if Jesus was really out of there. It was so! John saw the evidence which did much to convince him that Jesus was alive.

Have you sinned — and have you become discouraged? The Savior who redeems you from sin sets you free from the power of discouragement. Don't be afraid of tears of repentance.

Churches used to have a mourner's bench! Tears of a penitent sinner are a prelude to joy.

"The tears I laid before thy shrine  
Are turned to joy, and hope divine."

**Psalms 30:5: For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.**

The love that drew Peter was stronger than the fear which held him back. The joy in Jesus Christ is stronger than the remorse for forgiven sins. Peter knew the benediction of:

**Psalms 32:1: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**

To all of you who may be afar off just now: Come back to Jesus. Repent. Then go out to tell others of His love and His power.

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