

# *The Easter Experience*

## **Episode Two: My Life Can Change**

We all make mistakes. It's part of being human.

1. What is the worst mistake you have ever made? How did you reconcile the situation? How much did God play a part in that process?

**Read Matthew 26:1-5; 14-16; 47-50 and 27:1-5.**

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, <sup>2</sup>"As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." <sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. <sup>5</sup>"But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

<sup>14</sup>Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup>and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. <sup>16</sup>From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

<sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. <sup>48</sup>Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." <sup>49</sup>Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. <sup>50</sup>Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

<sup>1</sup>Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. <sup>2</sup>They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor. <sup>3</sup>When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned; he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. <sup>4</sup>"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." <sup>5</sup>So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

2. Why would God allow all of this to happen during the Passover; one of the holiest days on the Hebrew calendar?
3. Why did Caiaphas need to bring Temple guards with him to arrest Jesus? What does this reveal about the High Priest? What does this reveal about his perception of Jesus?
4. What time of the day do the events in the Garden take place? Why do you think Judas needed to identify Jesus with a kiss?
5. Judas is suddenly seized with a sense of deep remorse and guilt. Why is this only happening now? What might he have been expecting to happen differently?

6. Judas' story ends in suicide, which only compounded his mistakes. What other options did he have that he failed to take advantage of? What does this reveal about his perception of Jesus?
7. There are times when we all have been in what seemed a hopeless situation. How do you handle feelings of hopelessness? What does this reveal about your perception of Jesus?

**Read Matthew 26:31-35 and 69-75**

<sup>31</sup>Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' <sup>32</sup>But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." <sup>33</sup>Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." <sup>34</sup>"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." <sup>35</sup>But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

<sup>69</sup>Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. <sup>70</sup>But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. <sup>71</sup>Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>72</sup>He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" <sup>73</sup>After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." <sup>74</sup>Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. <sup>75</sup>Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly."

8. Think about the last time you were in a highly charged emotional situation. How did you handle yourself? Do you have any regrets? If you had the opportunity for a "do-over" would you take it? Why?
9. Describe the emotions that accompany the interaction between Peter and Jesus in vv. 31-35. How well did Peter do? What might you have done in that situation?
10. Peter claimed that he would follow Jesus, and protect him even if it meant his death. But Jesus predicted that Peter would do exactly the opposite. Do you think Jesus' statement resonated with Peter? Why or why not? Are you surprised with Peter's inability to follow through with his promise to Jesus? How are we sometimes like Peter?
11. Have you ever had the rooster crow in your relationship with Jesus? What happened? How did you respond?
12. Describe a moment when you greatly disappointed yourself. What helped you overcome that disappointment?
13. When the rooster crowed, it was too late for Peter. His failure was complete. What did Peter do with his failure that Judas did not? How does that make all the difference?

14. What advice would you give someone who failed deeply and is in need of a “comeback?”

**Read John 21:1-19**

<sup>1</sup>Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Tiberius. It happened this way: <sup>2</sup>Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. <sup>3</sup>“I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup>Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.

<sup>6</sup>He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. <sup>7</sup>Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. <sup>8</sup>The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. <sup>9</sup>When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” “Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup>This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. <sup>15</sup>When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” <sup>16</sup>Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” <sup>17</sup>The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. <sup>18</sup>I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” <sup>19</sup>Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

15. What do you suppose was on the minds of the disciples as they returned to their homes after the resurrection?

16. Why do you suppose Peter and many of the other disciples returned to their old businesses and ways of life?

17. Peter can’t wait to get to the shore. Instead he jumped in the water and frantically swam to Jesus. Why do you think his reaction was so dramatic?

18. Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?.” Why do you think Jesus did this? What points did the Teacher stress to the student about Peter’s purpose, value, and ministry?

19. What is the closest you have come to “blowing it” so badly that you thought God would never forgive you? What have you learned since about God’s character and His grace?
20. How has studying the themes of failure, remorse, forgiveness, and the hope of return helped you see your faith in a new or more significant way?
21. What message do you think Jesus has for you today?

## Digging Deeper

One of the most confusing issues with the betrayals of Judas and Peter concerns the expectations both men had for Jesus and his work on earth. As you close this lesson, consider the following Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah and perhaps begin to see the plight of the disciples through their own eyes.

### Read Psalm 2

Psalm 2 describes the common Near East practice of the Covenant Renewal Ceremony. When kings or chieftains died or were displaced in the ancient world, their successors expected the local leaders to swear allegiance to their new reign.

1. What is the span of the coming king's rule?
  - a. Psalm 2:8- \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who will worship the king?
  - a. Psalm 2:2 and 11- \_\_\_\_\_

The New Testament connects this coming king with Jesus the Messiah.

3. Acts 4:25-27 refers to what verse(s) in Psalm 2? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Why is this significant? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 1:5 refer to what verse(s) in Psalm 2? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Why is this significant? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Revelation 19:15 refers to what verse(s) in Psalm 2? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Why is this significant? \_\_\_\_\_

### Read Psalm 45

Psalm 45 depicts an ancient king preparing for his wedding day. The first half of the psalm (vv. 1-9) describes the king, and the second half (vv. 10-17) describes his bride.

6. The name given to the king in v. 6 is \_\_\_\_\_ and his throne is promised to last \_\_\_\_\_.

The New Testament connects this coming king with Jesus the Messiah

7. Hebrews 1:8-9 refers to what verse(s) in Psalm 45? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Why is this significant? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Psalm 110

Psalm 110 illustrates a King-Priest (a position that did not exist in Israel) who is given victory over his enemies by the Lord.

- 8. From where will the King-Priest rule?
  - a. Psalm 110:1- \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. How long will the rule of the King-Priest last?
  - a. Psalm 110:4- \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. How far does the King-Priest's rule extend?
  - a. Psalm 110:6- \_\_\_\_\_

The New Testament connects the King-Priest with Jesus the Messiah.

- 11. Acts 2:32-36 refers to what verse(s) in Psalm 110? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Why is this significant? \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Hebrews 5:5-6 refers to what verse(s) in Psalm 110? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Why is this significant? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Isaiah 9:6-7

- 13. What are the four names of the coming child?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. With titles like these, what expectations might you have had about the Messiah? How did Jesus fulfill each title? Can you sympathize with Peter and Judas for understanding then the way we do today?  
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The difficulty is to remember that the Old Testament statements are not clear. Otherwise the Jews would have known exactly who Jesus was, and He never would have made it to the cross.

## **Journaling Activity**

How do you think Jesus' life would have been different if he was immediately accepted by everyone he met? Now that we are able to view Jesus' life in view of the cross what do you think are some of the greatest barriers against his acceptance today?

## **Digging Deeper Answers**

- 1a. "All of Creation"
- 2a. "All the Kings of the Earth"
3. "Verses 1-2"
4. "Verse 7"
5. "Verse 9"
6. "God" and "forever"
7. "Verse 6"
8. "At the right hand of God"
9. "Forever"
10. "The whole earth"
11. "Verse 1"
12. "Verse 4"
- 13a. "Wonderful Counselor"
- 13b. "Mighty God"
- 13c. "Everlasting Father"
- 13d. "Prince of Peace"