

Lent 2023 Week 3: You Certainly Are One of Them

Description

But again he denied it. After a little while those standing there said to Peter

Mark 14:70 HCSB

This is a very familiar passage of scripture which is told in each of the 4 gospels, that details Peter's denial of Jesus in the high priest's courtyard. Interestingly enough I don't want the focus to be as much on Peter's denial, as on the fact that the people RECOGNIZED Peter as a follower of Christ, and his fear in the moment of being associated with Christ.

In the context of scripture, the people recognized Peter as a follower of Christ for 2 reasons: they had seen Peter with him on several occasions, and they recognized his Galilean accent which was the same area which Jesus had been raised in. The Jews of Jesus' time were very well adept at identifying foreigners, and travelers by their accents or attire, which explains their quick ability at distinguishing Peter when he spoke. What's interesting about the whole situation is that Peter is denying Jesus in fear though he had professed to Jesus that he was willing to die with him earlier in that same evening. He had left family, friends and comfort earlier just to follow Jesus, now he is possibly faced with his greatest opportunity to defend his faith, and represent Jesus to others, but he chooses to deny his faith, and cover his light to "blend" with the others.

Let's bring this story to modern day and our lives. We as believers in Christ should be distinguishable from non-believers in certain, sometimes obvious ways. For example, I don't believe that cussing, or foul language is representative of Christ, and it is normal for others to observe that about me and ask why I don't talk like others. Another example is drinking alcoholic beverages, because I believe that scripture tells us the sin in drunkenness, and it is my personal belief that alcoholic beverages serve no dietary value, and are often become a crutch or stumbling block for those who believe they are in control of the habit. There are many believers who were raised in the purity culture, which pushed abstaining from sex until marriage, which is biblical, though it is not often held or practiced by those in church, and definitely in modern culture. I use these examples because I, like many others have been faced with moments and decisions where our faith, and convictions have been questioned or challenged. It is in those moments that we are given the opportunity to represent Christ, and defend our faith or convictions. There are even more subtle moments where others are able to see our lives and behavior, and may ask or observe us to see why we do what we do, and if our character will remain consistent.

There are people observing our words, actions, and character, like the servant and others did Peter in the high priest's courtyard. In a world of chaos and confusion, it should be even more clear the distinction between followers of Christ and those who don't choose him. Lets be clear about this, I'mnot saying that believers are supposed to go around beating people with the bible, I also don't believethat believers are called to live this reclusive or highly segregated life from those around him, but I do believe that believers are called to and have the opportunity to best reflect Christ in the way that we speak, love, and impact others as Christ did during his time on Earth and called us to do.

I won't condemn Peter for his actions in the courtyard, because I have also denied Christ in my life through my words, actions, and character. However, I am grateful that there are moments in my life where God has allowed me to minister to others in very subtle ways through my words, actions, and character. The greatest moments in ministry and our lives are not the ministry opportunities that we seek out, but the ones where people are attracted to, or search us out because of the light that they see radiating from us, and the love of Christ that magnetizes others to us because they see and feel something that can't explain but realize that they need.

Reflection Time

Are you a follower of Christ? What is your reaction/response to someone identifying you as a Christian or different because of your faith in Christ? Is there anything in your life that you are aware of that you need to strip away to be a more effective representative of Christ?

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