

LOYAL?

Following Jesus demands loyalty in the face of risk.



TRANSFORMATION
for Adult LifeGroups

MATTHEW 26:63-75

MARCH 7, 2018/MARCH 11, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: MATTHEW 26:63-75 (NIV), But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." 64 "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. 66 What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. 67 Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him 68 and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?" Peter Disowns Jesus 69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. 70 But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. 71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" 73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." 74 Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 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.

FIRST THOUGHTS

- How do fans show loyalty to their favorite teams? What are some of the crazier things you have seen?
- What does it mean for us as believers today to be loyal to Jesus? What might it cost us to be loyal to Jesus?
- Are you as loyal to Jesus as you are to your favorite team or athlete?
In today's study we will explore what it means to be loyal to Christ even in the face of potential costs.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In the pre-dawn hours leading up to what is now Good Friday, Jesus had just finished praying at Gethsemane when Judas approached Him with a kiss of betrayal. Immediately, Jesus was arrested. When one of the disciples tried to protect Him with a sword, Jesus commanded him to put it away (26:47-56). Those who arrested Jesus led Him to the palace of the Jewish high priest to be interrogated. There He acknowledged that He was the Messiah. The religious leaders agreed that He should be put to death for blasphemy, and Peter denied that he knew Jesus (26:57-75). Judas also came to realize what he had done. Remorse over his act of betrayal prompted him to hang himself (27:1-10).

Meanwhile, the Jewish leaders handed Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate questioned Jesus and came to the conclusion that He had committed no crime. However, the religious leaders had stirred the crowd into an angry mob that wanted Jesus to be crucified. When Pilate offered to release Jesus, they rejected his offer and asked him to release Barabbas instead (27:11-18). As the crisis worsened for Pilate, he received a message from his wife encouraging him to have nothing to do with Jesus. The crowd continued to call for Jesus' crucifixion, so Pilate ordered Him to be scourged and crucified. The Roman soldiers mocked Jesus in an attempt to humiliate Him before they led Him away to be crucified (27:19-31).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

AFFIRMED BY SCRIPTURE

> Read Matthew 26: 63-64

- How did Jesus use Scripture to affirm His identity?
- How does knowing Scripture help us when we face situations where we need to defend the faith?

DENIED BY HIS OPPONENTS

> Read Matthew 26: 65-68

- In what ways did the religious leaders misunderstand Jesus?

- ° In what ways do people misunderstand Jesus today?
- ° How does knowing the persecution Jesus faced help us as we face challenges to our faith today?

ABANDONED BY HIS FRIENDS

> Read Matthew 26: 69-75

- ° How far did Peter go in denying Jesus? What was Peter's reaction when he realized the full measure of his denial?
- ° Have you ever been abandoned by a friend or felt they were being disloyal to you in some way? How did that feel? How did that change the friendship?
- ° How might we deny Jesus today? Through words? Attitudes? Actions?

There's one particular lesson we need to take away from Peter's grief: While Jesus agonized in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, He was able to overcome everything that came His way – torture, beating, and death. Peter, on the other hand, slept, and when the test came, he was unprepared. We must be in constant prayer as we face the days ahead, so that when the trials come – and they will – we will not deny Him but identify with Christ

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

For Peter, loyalty to Jesus required him to acknowledge that He knew Jesus on a dangerous, difficult night. Peter stumbled and did not show himself loyal in this situation. Jesus would restore Peter after the resurrection (see John 21), and he would go on to accomplish great things for the kingdom as a loyal follower.

° What are the potential costs of remaining loyal to Jesus today?

In Summary:

- Jesus is the promised Messiah who will reign eternally.
- One's denial of Jesus' identity does not change the fact of who He is.
- Believers must remain loyal to Christ regardless of the potential costs.

Personal Challenge: Are there areas in your own life where you need to show greater loyalty to Christ? Commit yourself again to loyal, obedient living as a Christ-follower.

Pray: Close in prayer, asking God to strengthen everyone present to remain loyal to Him, no matter what circumstances arise.

UPCOMING LESSONS

- Read Matthew 27:41-52
- Which of these terms bring the greatest response from you: mocked, forsaken or sacrificed? Why is that?
- Next week we will look at the crucifixion of Jesus and how he experienced all three of these things.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

11th - Deuteronomy 16-18; Psalm 38; Galatians 2 | 12th - Deuteronomy 19-21; Galatians 3 | 13th - Deuteronomy 22-24; Galatians 4 | 14th - Deuteronomy 25-27; Galatians 5 | 15th - Deuteronomy 28-29; Galatians 6 | 16th - Deuteronomy 30-31; Psalm 40; 1 Corinthians 1 | 17th - Deuteronomy 32-34; 1 Corinthians 2