



Introduction:

Have you ever found yourself cracking under pressure? What happens if you fail? You can find this week's sermon notes [here](#)¹ and listen to the sermon by clicking [here](#).²

**“Fortunately for Peter,
the church, and us,
failure is not fatal.”**

Scripture:

Please turn to Mark 14:66-72 in your Bible [or click here](#).

So What?

Pressure comes from many different sources. The right amount of pressure can help us, but too much pressure can cause us to crack. In Mark 14:66-72, Peter cracks under pressure and denies Jesus three times. Rather than a sudden fracture, Peter's failure was the slow erosion that takes place over time. In the hours leading up to his denial, Peter: Boasted too much (Luke 22:31-33); Listened too poorly (Mark 14:27-31); Prayed too little (Mark 14:37-41); Acted too fast (Mark 14:47); Followed too far (Mark 14:54).

Peter's failure exposes one crystal clear principle: When we follow Jesus from a distance, we will crack under pressure. When you follow Jesus from a distance, you give in to fear. Peter was bold enough to attack a servant with a sword (47), but now is intimidated by a servant girl (66-68). While Peter was not ready to abandon Jesus, he was not willing to confess him publicly either. Peter denies Jesus three times, and as his denials become more forceful, Peter moves further away from the light and from Jesus (68-71). Peter, the rock, has cracked under pressure.

Though he failed, Peter repented, weeping (72).

Fortunately for Peter, the church, and us, failure is not fatal. Jesus went out of his way to restore Peter back to a relationship with himself and to ministry (Mark 16:7; John 21:15-19). Peter became the rock who led the early church (Acts 1-5). *I take three key lessons away from this passage. (1) Don't follow Jesus from a distance. (2) Don't rely on your own strength. (3) Don't give up when you fall.*³

What Now?

1. Doing things in our own strength often looks just like it did with Peter. If we ignore the word of God (in Peter's case, he ignored Jesus' warning), if we fail to humble ourselves and pray, we can find ourselves falling victim to our fears and to sin. *Compare with [James 4:7-8](#)*. Let us commit to humbling ourselves through prayer, and to obeying all that God commands in his word, according to the grace he gives us.
2. Do you ever feel as though you have sinned so much in your life that God wants nothing to do with you? Remember that Jesus came to forgive our sins and to reconcile us to God the Father. Like Peter, we too can find forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Read the following verses: [Rom 6:1-11](#); [Rom 8:1-4](#); [1 John 1:8-2:1](#). Who is responsible for our forgiveness? What are we to do, or how are we to think in response?

¹ <https://wheelsms.wordpress.com/2016/04/17/dont-crack-under-pressure/>

² firstcentralbaptist.com/sermons/gospelofmark.html

³ This excerpt has been adapted from Pastor Mark's sermon notes.