

He Is Risen, He Is Risen Indeed

The Difference Robert Morris

Focus We, like Peter, sometimes make hasty declarations to God, deny Him with our works, or follow Him at a distance. When we make a decision to follow the resurrected Jesus, it changes everything.

Fun What is your favorite Easter memory or tradition?

Review Key Scripture: Matthew 26

- **The Declaration**

Jesus told all the disciples that they would be scattered like sheep, just like the Bible foretold. Peter made an emphatic declaration that even if he had to die, he would never deny Jesus. We can all relate to Peter because we have all promised things we have not actually done.

- **The Denial**

Not only did Peter verbally deny Jesus three times, he took an oath and swore when he did it the third time. Luke 22 tells us that Jesus turned and looked at Peter after he denied Him. According to Titus 1:16, we often deny Jesus with our works too.

- **The Decision**

In John 21, we read about Peter's encounter with Jesus after the resurrection. He was so eager to see Jesus, he jumped out of the boat and swam to Him. When Jesus asked if Peter loved Him, three times he said "yes." After Jesus ascended, Peter was the apostle who spoke boldly and with confidence. Peter had a resolve to follow Jesus no matter what. In the same way,

although we may have fallen short on our commitment to Jesus, we can make a decision to follow the resurrected Jesus!

Group Dynamics Idea At this point in the semester, it's time to think about anyone in your group who might be a potential leader. Take time to have a conversation with them about taking on a larger leadership role. Pray with them about the possibility of launching a new group next semester.

Discuss

1. Read Matthew 26:31–35. Have you ever made an emphatic commitment to God to do something? What was it? Did you follow through on your commitment, or can you relate to Peter in this passage?
2. Read Luke 22:60–62. How would you have responded if you were Peter in this situation?
3. Can you think of a time you fell through on a commitment you made to God? Why do you think we sometimes make hasty commitments to God?
4. Read Titus 1:16. What are some “works” that would qualify as denying God?
5. Read Matthew 26:58. What does it look like for people today when they “follow Jesus at a distance”?
6. God is a redeemer. Although Peter made a mistake, God redeemed it. Can you think of something in your life God has redeemed?
7. When Peter encountered Jesus after the resurrection, he made a resolve to follow Jesus no matter what. What is the difference between Peter’s first commitment and the second commitment he made? Have you made that kind of determined commitment to follow Jesus?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- We, like Peter, sometimes make hasty declarations.
- We, like Peter, often deny Christ by our words or our works.
- When we make a decision to follow the resurrected Lord, we live a bold life like Peter did.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for forgiving us when we make hasty commitments to You. Thank You for redeeming us in times we have denied You with our words or our works. We want to take up our cross daily and follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip As a new group, the most effective way to bring more people to your group is through personal invitation. Encourage the members of your group to personally invite people they know to the group. Also, during weekend services, lead by example: always be on the lookout for someone at church you can invite to your small group.