

Denied  
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Luke 22:54-62

Happy Mothers Day!

*“Never say never.”* Charles Dickens gets the credit for first giving us that saying. What does it mean? Is it accurate? Have you ever proven it true in your life?

Jesus had warned the disciples in **Matthew 26 (ESV), 31** ...*“You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” 33 Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” 34 Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” 35 Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!”...*

Careful Peter, “never say never.” The Apostle Paul gives the same warning in a different way in **1 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV) — 12** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

This brings us to today’s passage in Luke chapter 22. Jesus had been arrested, the disciples fled, but Peter needed to see what was going to happen:

**Luke 22:54–62 (ESV) — 54** Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance. **55** And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. **56** Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.” **57** But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” **58** And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” **59** And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” **60** But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster

crowed. **61** And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” **62** And he went out and wept bitterly.

- *“The Lord looked at Peter...and Peter remembered...and he went out and wept bitterly.”* There’s hardly a more poignant passage in scripture!
- Spoiler alert: Jesus forgave Peter. Jesus restored Peter. Peter went on to lead the first century church. That’s the grace that Jesus bought for us!
- In a minute we’ll see what Peter learned from this painful experience of denying Christ and how to apply it to our lives today.
- When you hear this passage and consider the topic of denying Christ you will likely expect a lesson about martyrdom. A study in the faith God gave people who refused to deny the Savior and paid with their very lives.
- While it’s possible we could be confronted with “deny or die,” most of us battle instead with what I would call “everyday denial of Christ.”
- What is everyday denial of Christ? We’ll cover that in a moment.
- First, let’s look at how Jesus **COMMANDED** us to live as His followers.
- Jesus said in **Matthew 5:13–16 (ESV) — 13** “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. **14** “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- Salt and light are simple illustrations.
- Why was salt important in ancient times?
- Salt was a preservative in the days before refrigeration. We are to be a preservative force in a world that is decaying because of sin. Salt also brings out the flavor in food. When salt is in the

food you can taste it. Christ-followers should be the positive “spice” in our world. Salt creates a thirst. Salty Christ-followers promote a thirst for the “living water.”

- Why would Jesus use light to illustrate reflecting Him to people (Jn 8:12)?
- Jesus basically said, don't lose your saltiness and don't hide your light.
- Not being salt and light that glorifies God is “everyday denial” of Christ.
- Salt and light are the “treatment” needed in a sin-sick world. What is the first warning we always hear about medicine? USE ONLY AS DIRECTED.

Truth that should change us: To avoid everyday denial of Christ we must apply salt and light, but use “only as directed” by the Holy Spirit and scripture.

- Salt and light are not optional in the life of a follower of Christ.
- It's kind of like southern cooking and an emergency light! What?
- Southern cooking ALWAYS contains salt (and butter!) It's not optional.
- You know those emergency lights in buildings that come on when the power goes out? If there's darkness those lights are designed to (hopefully) always come on. That's their job. If it's dark they shine.
- This world is always dark so Christ-followers must always shine!
- Being salt and light isn't optional for followers of Christ.
- If you can't taste our salt and see our light, that's a subtle but real form of “everyday denial” of Christ.
- *“My faith is a private matter so I keep it to myself.”* That's a little bland.
- *“I don't want my neighbors to think I'm weird.”* That needs some salt.
- *“It's awkward talking to a pagan about Jesus.”* Is your light broken?
- *“I'm trying to fit in so I can win them to Christ!”* I have no words.

- Point number one: Salt and light should be evident in a follower of Christ.
- What did the forgiven and restored Peter tell us about this?

**1 Peter 4:3–4 (NLT) — 3** You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. **4** Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you.

- We should be salt by “tasting” differently to unsaved people.

**1 Peter 2:9–12 (ESV) — 9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. **11** Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

- Point number one: Salt and light should be evident in a follower of Christ.
- We’ll never be perfect, but we should be lovingly different.
- Point number two: Instead of light in a dark world sometimes (in our zeal) Christ-followers can be “more heat than light.”
- Another form of denying Christ is embarrassing Him with conduct that pushes people away from Him instead of attracting them to Him.
- What is the “stereotype” of Christians? Does our conduct ever strengthen that stereotype?
- Remember I said, “Use only as directed.” Here’s what I mean.
- Ever tasted a dish with too much salt? Yes, too much salt is possible!
- For a romantic dinner would you light a candle or fire up a spotlight?
- Salt is good, light is necessary but we must use both properly.

- Passionate Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.  
*"Jesus, I love you so much I'm gonna fight this whole bunch."  
"Put that knife away!"*
- Sometimes in our zeal Christ-followers seem more angry than winsome.
- Ed Stetzer wrote a book: "Christians in the Age of Outrage: How to Bring Our Best When the World Is at Its Worst" Here's a quote: *"We live in a world where our beliefs are increasingly odd and even offensive. But, as Christians, we must allow the Holy Spirit to guide our response... Christians are indeed on the receiving end of this outrage machine. However, I also see churchgoers contributing to and participating in much of the online hostility and misinformation. Our digital outrage damages our witness to the world daily. It seems like people who claim to be Christians are often the worst at spreading false or inaccurate information...when is Christian anger warranted? And when does outrage defame the name of Jesus and undermine our witness?"*
- But Ed, we Christians need to take a stand!
- *"When are we righteously overturning the tables of the moneychangers, and when are we just wreaking havoc concerning our pet peeves? These questions do not have easy answers, but they deserve our consideration if we want to be faithful disciples of Christ." Jesus provides the ultimate example of how to live righteously in a hostile world. As Peter describes it, "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (1 Peter 2:23)."*
- What else does Peter say about using salt and light as directed?

**1 Peter 2:15 (ESV) — 15** For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

**1 Peter 3:16 (ESV) — 16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

**1 Peter 3:9 (ESV) — 9** Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

**1 Peter 2:12 (ESV) — 12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

- Remember, Jesus said, “...*let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*”
- Ask: Does my conduct glorify the Father or strengthen the stereotype?
- Illustration: Clint Eastwood in “Grand Torino” – “*Get off my lawn!*”
- Illustration: Quote from Ed Stetzer on “Merry Christmas at Walmart.”

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- To avoid everyday denial of Christ apply salt and light, but use only as directed by the Holy Spirit and scripture.
- Our “salt and light” should always be evident, but it should glorify God.
- John Piper coined a term. He said we need to be “winsome wierdos.”<sup>iii</sup>
- Piper says, “*The apostle Peter is calling for a special breed. Not the kind of conservative who gives all his energy to embracing and defending his weirdo status. And not the kind of liberal who will embrace any compromise necessary to avoid being a weirdo. But rather a breed that is courageous enough to be joyfully weird, and compassionate enough to be zealous for good deeds.*”
- How do I know how to apply my “salt and light” so it glorifies God?
- Give the saltshaker and dimmer switch of your conduct to the Holy Spirit.
- Spend more time in scripture and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance before you respond with an angry unloving attitude.

- Remember that moment when the Lord looked at Peter and Peter knew he had messed up?
- We all have moments when we can imagine Jesus looking at us and shaking His head in disappointment.
- This week let's strive, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to apply our "salt and light" in a way that we can imagine Jesus looking at us with a smile that says, *"Good job kid, that's how to be salt and light that glorifies God."*

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2019/april/staying-on-mission-in-age-of-outrage.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/winsome-weirdos>