

## Never Say "Never"

### Scripture Reading — Matthew 26:31-35

*"Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you."  
Matthew 26:35 —*

Peter ended up doing the very thing he said he would never do: he betrayed Jesus—three times!

Jesus knew he would. Jesus knew all his disciples would. He told them so by quoting a passage from Zechariah (see Matthew 26:31). Jesus himself was the shepherd who was about to be struck down. And all the sheep, his disciples, would "fall away." The Greek word here is the root for our word scandalized, which refers literally to being "tripped up."

It was Jesus' arrest, trial, and death that tripped up his disciples. Frightened and confused, they all fell away. During Jesus' trial with the chief priests, Peter painfully and pointedly disowned Jesus when people said they recognized him as one of Jesus' followers.

The truth is that there has never been a disciple who has not fallen away from Jesus. Sin by its very nature is a denial of God the Father and his Son. And we are all addicted to sin. Indeed, whoever claims to be without sin is a liar: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

What are we to do? Go to Jesus. God himself struck the shepherd so that by his death we might receive the forgiveness of sins. Jesus' cross must trip us all up. It must bring us to our knees and move us to ask God for mercy. Then we'll be forgiven, for Jesus' sake!

### Prayer

*Teach us, Jesus, never to say "never." All of us have denied you. Let your death on the cross humble us to ask you for the forgiveness of all our sins. In your name, Amen.*

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*Printed on August 14, 2020*

