



In *The Characters of Easter*, you'll become acquainted with the unlikely collection of ordinary people who witnessed the miracle of Christ's death and resurrection. Enter their stories and ultimately draw closer to Christ Himself as you encounter His Passion through their experiences.

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courtyard, by the fire, and outside the high priest's house. We can only read about it in the gospels because Peter must have shared it, over and over again, with audiences large and small until it became such a part of the eyewitness narratives that later became the gospels and inspired canon of Scripture. What's more, if Mark was the first gospel written, as many scholars believe, then this means Peter *intended* for God's people to see him at his worst moment.

We can only wonder how many thousands, perhaps millions, have converted to Christianity because this Apostle cut open his heart and shared his most vulnerable moment. Only heaven knows. So maybe it's time we stop looking at Peter as a foolish coward and instead see in this man an example of Christ's transformative gospel work. Peter's response to his sin, in contrast to that of the sad tale of Judas, is a study in true repentance. Like David's transparent confession in Psalm 51, we find no justifications, obfuscations, or anger. We just see a once-proud, self-confident man reduced to a mess of tears. This is why Jesus would name him "the rock," not because he was bursting with brava-do, but because of a tender, contrite heart.

Most importantly, Peter's denial shows us something about the Savior. Jesus, at a moment of extreme agony and personal shame, turned and looked with compassion at His friend who was at that moment sinning against Him. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). He didn't go to the cross for perfect, whole people. He died for the sick and the broken. He died for you and me.

Jesus, while predicting Peter's demise, also quietly said the words, "When you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." *When you have turned back*. Jesus saw through Peter's failures and toward his future as an Apostle. This is a word for Christians: The way to personal

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