

**Bishop Steven L. Ullestad**

**SERMON**

*[Slide] of Jan Hus*

This year we focus on Jan Hus who lived 100 years before Luther. He faced the same theological issues as Luther. You will hear more tomorrow about Hus and his witness that led him to be burned at the stake for his challenge to the Roman Catholic Church.

*[Slide] Peter Durer*

Tonight, I would like to remind us a bit about the bold leadership of St. Peter.

Bold leadership means bold confession of faith but sometimes it can mean bold sins.

Tonight's Gospel reading is an example of this. Our reading includes the confession of St. Peter, *[Slide] Stain Glass*

“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And just a few verses later we read that Peter denies the way of the cross

*[Slide] Denial Tissot*

and Jesus (again, just a few verses after he called Peter blessed). Jesus admonishes Peter to, “get behind me Satan!” From blessed to Satan in the very same story.

That seems to be the struggle of discipleship. There are times we get it right and times we miss it completely.

*[Slide] The Denial of Saint Peter Caravaggio*

Think of another occasion when Peter simply fails. There are more examples, but for now, let's remember Peter's denial of Jesus.

A favorite movie in our household is “Jesus Christ Superstar,” first released in 1973. I know that I have a bit of a reputation of seeing movies years after they are first released, and it is true. However, I want to assure you that I actually saw this one in 1973.

***[Slide] JC Superstar Peter Denies***

For whatever reasons, it has become a favorite of our children. In fact, we always knew when Erik was getting serious about a young woman he was dating when she was brought home to view “Jesus Christ Superstar.”

Tonight, I would like to use a clip from that movie to retell the denial of Peter.

***[Slide] VIDEO Peter Denies Jesus***

Peter was the one who knew Jesus so well, had given up everything to follow Jesus and yet....

In the June edition of *The Lutheran*, Presiding Bishop Eaton puts it this way:

***[Slide] Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton Sin Boldly***

“Martin Luther is often quoted as saying ‘sin boldly.’ He actually said, ‘Be a sinner and sin boldly, *but believe and rejoice in Christ even more boldly.*’ It’s an honest acknowledgement that we have fallen, but it is an even more joyful acknowledgement that we have been raised up. It’s a prescription against paralysis. It is not up to us to fix the church or the world—that has already been done in Christ.”

We acknowledge that we have fallen, yes—but there is an even more joyful acknowledgement that we have been raised up.

One more story as we let scripture interpret scripture. We will skip to a story in John's Gospel.

***[Slide] John 21 part 1***

John 21:15–17, 19b

<sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs."

<sup>16</sup>A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him,

***[Slide] John 21 part 2***

"Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. <sup>19b</sup>After this he said to him, "Follow me."

***[Slide] Cover for Gospel of John Movie***

The following clip from The Gospel of John the movie offers this story  
.... Feed My Sheep...

***[Slide] VIDEO Feed My Sheep Clip Gospel of JOHN***

***[Slide] Feed My Sheep Tissot***

In this dialogue, Peter finds redemption for his denial as he is commissioned three times: feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep.

In this conversation are words of grace, forgiveness and healing. Though Peter did not fully understand at the time, imbedded in this conversation is Jesus' call to Peter and all that it means to be called. "Call" comes loaded with trust that the one called is valued and needed. It also demonstrates grace and forgiveness. Peter, once called Satan, once a denier of Jesus, is now called. That is how powerful the grace of God in Christ is.

Notice with me that short little word repeated time and again. The word "my." "My sheep, my lambs, my sheep." Whose lambs/sheep?

It is not my vision or yours, not my mission or yours, not my work or yours, not my sheep or yours. They all belong to Jesus... and so do we.

Tonight we gather as the sheep and lambs of the Good Shepherd, Jesus. We will confess our sin and confess our faith. We will sing, pray and listen. We will care, console and seek together those who are in need because Jesus has said, "You are mine." Once again this weekend, Jesus will:

Feed

Tend

Feed—his lambs, his sheep, his flock.

***[Slide] JC Superstar Cover***

So that, when he says, "Follow me," we do

***[Slide] VIDEO Jesus Christ Superstar***