

One of the things the apostle Peter is most remembered for is his denial of Christ. It's interesting, however, to read about some of the events which occurred prior to this. We read in Jn 18:3ff, "So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons." After Jesus presented himself to them, we read in vs 10, "Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear." It is incredible to me the amount of courage that Peter showed here. A disciplined group of soldiers stood against a small group of disciples, who, if I interpret Lu 22:38 correctly, only had two swords. But Peter, as somewhat of the leader of the disciples, certainly had the spirit for it. Reading in Mt 26:35, "But Peter declared, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the other disciples said the same." It was quite obvious from the other passage which we read that he meant it very deeply. I believe with all of my heart that Peter was not afraid to die for a purpose or a cause. But Peter, like the rest of the apostles, had in his mind a purpose which had to be fulfilled by the sword. When, very abruptly, this dream was shattered, Peter became confused; his cause became unclear. And so, as we read in Mt 26:56, "all the disciples deserted him and fled." Later on, when the purpose had become clear again, Peter proved his heart and once again gave his all for the cause. Tradition has it that he was crucified upside down.

Peter shows us here what we are sometimes guilty of. He will draw his sword and lead the charge as long as it is on his own terms. He will put his whole heart into the game as long as it is played his way. How many times do we run away from God's will or hesitate because it doesn't fit into our plans? How many times are the plans for a good work suppressed because we felt that we had a better idea? Are we unable to translate the swashbuckling dedication of Peter, the man of action, into the less exciting dedication of teaching a class or sitting up with the sick? Does our confusion about things that happen in our lives cause us to hesitate and deny Christ? We must submit to God and dedicate ourselves to his plans and will. If you haven't then we hope that you will consider this as we stand and sing...