

“and Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoke, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.” Matthew 26:75 (CSB)

Today I'm continuing on from yesterday's theme of Peter's denial, but I want to focus primarily on the last part of verse 75 when we read that Peter wept bitterly. I think this speaks volumes about both Peter's humanity and ours.

Peter has been found out, he's recognised as a disciple and he fears for his own life and doesn't want to die or be beaten. He doesn't really know what is happening. All of a sudden this man, who Peter himself declared to be the Messiah, that he has been following for the past 3 years is arrested after someone who had walked the same path during this time (Judas Iscariot) had betrayed him (Luke 22:47-48), and therefore all of the group. Peter is already confused, scared and acting out of a natural sense of human self-preservation. He loves Jesus, this strange and amazing preacher from Nazareth. He's often shown his belief in the cause Jesus promotes in very reckless and seemingly insane ways - walking on water anyone? (Matthew 14:28-29). Yet, the fact that Peter was even there in the first place, in the courtyard with the servants, is testament to how much Peter loved his Lord deep down - deeper than human understanding.

Peter's subconscious, at least in part, has him follow Jesus to Caiaphas's house. Can you imagine the level of fear and confusion this poor man is going through at this moment in history? Peter then acts out of instinct and starts to deny the very person he swore to die for. Not just once, but three times. And then the crucial change happens...the rooster crows. Not only is the rooster awakening the world, but awakening Peter from his autonomous, fear filled state to make him realise what he has done. Jesus knew. Jesus warned him, but his own self-confidence had made him deny, even when he was told of this happening by one who had never got it wrong before, that he was capable of such a level of denial.

How must Peter have felt awakening to what he did. He had just denied that he knew his Lord. What else was there to do but weep bitterly. Peter was probably a mass of emotions that he needed to work through at that very moment. Shame. Guilt. Realisation. Confusion. Fear. Peter was very human and we can all learn from him. Not just that he made mistakes that 'we would never make'. Who are we kidding? We would all make the same mistakes given the circumstances! Peter is so very human and if Jesus can forgive and make Peter strong in faith, then we can Believe for the same.

Pray

Lord who came and walked among us, we acknowledge that we are the reason you had to come to the Earth at the first Christmas and that we are the reason you were nailed to that tree 2000 plus years ago. We thank you that you love us so much that you did this for us knowing that we, like Peter, are prone to acting rashly and will deny you time and time again. We may not outwardly deny you to others but denying you the time you desire to spend with us and not standing up for You and our persecuted brethren. Please forgive us for our shortcomings and help us to have the strength of faith necessary to go forward as You ask of us and to not deny you anything. Amen.