

I WILL NEVER DENY JESUS!

John 13:36-38 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." 37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times.

- Jesus is at the closing of the His last Passover Meal on earth with His disciples. Their focus was on what Jesus said in verse 33 *"Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'*
- He calls them "Little Children", a phrase that communicates a following that these men had for Him. John the apostle would also use the same endearment when describing his aged leadership to the readers of 1 John, being mentioned seven times. They probably felt like "Little Children" because they were feeling at risk of a little insecurity.
- Something BIG was about to happen that would separate them from Jesus for the first time in over three years. This was unsettling because they had been with Him through thick and thin, through the bet and the worst.
 - They were with Him when He was baptized and began the earthly ministry.
 - They were at the miracles, the parables, the confrontations with Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians.
 - They were with Him on cool mountaintops and hot valleys, in small boats on stormy seas in the calm of a wheat field, among the sick, the lame, the blind and the poor.
 - They shared experiences ranging from demoniacs, maniacs and personal attacks, suicidal pigs, a Samaritan woman at a well, funerals and wedding feasts.
 - They were with Jesus through all this and more AND NOW HE is GOING TO WHERE THEY CANNOT PURSUE HIM???
- Jesus was quoting what He had told the Jewish leadership six months prior at the Feast of the Tabernacles in John 7:34 "You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come."
- The disciples are naturally protective and defensive about the issue. They possibly even think that Jesus will leave for the completion of His mission without these dedicated followers. They have been through too much with Jesus to not be disturbed with this prospect.
- This is the environment that a scrapping young man named Peter begins his dialogue with Jesus. He was not going to be put off when the going gets tough or the tough must always get going. Peter was determined to stick by His Friend and Mentor.

Peter wanted to be with Jesus!

- Peter wants to know WHERE JESUS IS GOING? Jesus told him that he cannot follow Him now, but will be following later. Where was Jesus going that Peter could not follow?
- He had a date with the cross of crucifixion and the depths of Hades. This was and has always been a part of Jesus, the Man of destiny. This was “Jesus” trip, not a “Peter” trip.

Peter pressed harder to be with Jesus.

- It wasn't just a request, but a demand to make an emphatic effort to be with Jesus during this pressing time. Jesus was his friend, his Master and his Messiah. I want to go with you right now! He is READY NOW to be with Jesus! What a commitment!

Peter was willing to die for Jesus.

- I WILL LAY DOWN MY LIFE OR YOU! That is a statement of great faith from any individual concerning their love for another. *John 15:13*
"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
 Peter was willing to do this.

He wanted to be with Jesus on this trip; He was pressing Jesus very hard about it and he was willing to take it to the death if needed be. He was committed psychologically, emotionally, physically and spiritually to Jesus and to His cause, but yet we find a problem.

The Problem: The problem was that Peter made the issue of Jesus a “Peter” issue rather than a “Jesus” issue. Jesus was about to focus in the Garden on what was about to come in the crucifixion. Peter took the focus off of Jesus and focused on his personal commitment to the Lord. Now was neither the time nor the place.

Note: There would be a time that Peter would face his own cross. *John 21:18-19* *"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to {go.}"* 19 *Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow me!"*

Back to the Problem of Being Peter-focused: To drive Peter from this position, Jesus bluntly stated *"Truly, truly, I say to you, a cock shall not crow, until you deny Me three times."* I can already hear the little voice in Peter's head:

- I WILL NEVER DENY HIM!!! Surely Jesus is just a bit upset with all the pressure that is upon Him right now.
- I WILL NEVER DENY HIM!!! I am committed! I am willing to lay my life down or Jesus!

- I WILL NEVER DENY HIM!!! There is no way that that is going to happen!
- Take heed lest ye fall...PETER!

Look at the prediction of Jesus from Mark's account:

Mark 14:27-31 And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.' 28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." 29 But Peter said to Him, "{Even} though all may fall away, yet I will not." 30 And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me." 31 But {Peter} kept saying insistently, "{Even} if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all were saying the same thing, too.

- Jesus is quoting *Zech 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate," declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; and I will turn My hand against the little ones.* The apostles will see their Shepherd stricken and scattered.
- They can clearly see the danger that stands before Jesus here and the pressure is building or what will occur in just a couple of hours.

Let's follow Peter and watch how an overly-enthused fisherman turned a missionary for God could move to denial of our Lord and Savior Jesus. Here are but some of the events that he was made aware of in the next few hours from the Lord's Supper.

The situation intensified:

- Jesus' in passionate prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Luke 22:41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and {began} to pray...")
- 600 soldiers show up with torches to capture Jesus. (*John 18:12 So the {Roman} cohort and the commander, and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him*)
- Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss. (*Mark 14:45 And after coming, he immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and kissed Him.*)

Peter went into non-thinking mode.

- He was extremely fatigued. (*Matt 26:43 And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.*)
- He lashed out in violence. (*John 18:10 Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.*)
- He went into the enemy's territory. (*Luke 22:55 And after they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them.*)

Peter even knew the exact time in advance.

Note: The Discrepancy in the "Cock-crowing"

There is a difference in the accounts of Matthew, Luke and Mark. The first two say have a single cock-crowing whereas Mark lists two crowings.

- Matt 26:34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this {very} night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times."
- Luke 22:34 And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me."
- Mark 14:30 And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, that you yourself this very night, before a cock crows twice, shall three times deny Me."

Under the Roman system, there were four calls of the night watchman of the city (evening: 9 PM, Midnight: 12 AM, Cock-crowing: 3 AM and Morning at 6 AM)

- Mark 13:35-36 "Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

Similarly under the Jewish system there were also four calls of the night.

- Prov 7:9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of the night and {in} the darkness.

There was a caller of the night that would essentially cry out, "It is 9 PM and all is well". At midnight he would cry out, "It is midnight and all is well!" This would occur through the four calls of the night for every evening that passed. By the way, what did they call the man that stood in the tower and made the calls of safety for the night... you guessed it...the COCK or ROOSTER, for they called out like a rooster.

Note: This would also line up with the fact that chickens were not allowed to be in the city-limits during this time-period, for they did not meet the sacrificial standard.

Three viewpoints of the same account:

- Matthew wrote from the viewpoint of being a disciple.
- Luke wrote through the viewpoint of being a gentile investigator.
- Mark wrote through what he learned from the apostle Peter and had more of Peter's insight. He was not an apostle, but a reporter of Peter's account.

When Mark records his account of the betrayal in Mark 14:30, it was before the Garden of Gethsemane (Tis' midnight and on olives brow), making it before the midnight call of the evening. It was from the perspective of Peter and what Jesus had singled-out to Peter.

Let us forward to the moment of denial of Jesus his friend, fellow missionary and Savior.

Mark 14:66-72 And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, 67 and seeing Peter warming

himself, she looked at him, and said, "You, too, were with Jesus the Nazarene." 68 But he denied {it,} saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out onto the porch. 69 And the maid saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is {one} of them!" 70 But again he was denying it. And after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are {one} of them, for you are a Galilean too." 71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep.

Peter, knowing that at 3:00 AM there would be a "cock-crowing" of "All is well", was under the pressure of knowing also that Jesus said there would be three denials. He could not imagine this ever happening, but it did. He denied that this could ever happen, but it did.

Who do we really think we are in the scheme of things?

Better said, who do we think Jesus is in the scheme of things?

Three Points to Live By Concerning Denial of Jesus:

- 1) Never say never when it comes to man.
- 2) Always say always when it comes to God.
- 3) When you fail, weep bitterly, get up and march back into victory and have a new perspective.