

# Peter's Darkest Night

*"Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.  
'Simon,' he said to Peter, 'are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?'"*  
Mark 14 :37 (NIV)

*"While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by.  
When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.  
'You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,' she said. But he denied it.  
'I don't know or understand what you're talking about,' he said,  
and went out into the entryway. When the servant girl saw him there,  
she said again to those standing around, 'This fellow is one of them.'  
Again, he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter,  
'Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.'  
He began to call down curses, and he swore to them,  
'I don't know this man you're talking about.' Immediately the rooster crowed the second time.  
Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him:  
'Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.' And he broke down and wept."*  
Mark 14:66-72 (NIV)

*"And then the Lord turned and looked at Peter.  
And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him,  
'Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.'"*  
Luke 22:61 (NASB)

**P**eter most certainly loved his Master. No one denies that fact. He had his Lord's best interests at heart on almost all occasions. Falling asleep, when asked by the Good Shepherd to "watch and pray" in Gethsemane, was a great disappointment for the Master. But after pledging to go with the Saviour to death if necessary but fleeing when push came to shove was likely the lowest point for Master and disciple both. One author dubbed the scene of the three denials, "The coward in the court".

As the third denial was being uttered by Peter, the rooster crowed and Jesus glanced at His beloved disciple. Peter heard the crowing, saw the glance of his Master, and fled the scene convulsing in sobs. Surely the burly fisherman was at the lowest point in his entire time as a follower of the Good Shepherd.

Many of us as Christ followers have had experiences like Peter's. If our experiences have not been as dramatic, they have been as real to us. We all grieve when we sin one way or another regardless of how much pressure was on us to stray.

The gentle look our Lord gave to Peter

was one of love, forgiveness and hope. He did not glare at His disciple, nor did He look with contempt. The One Who said He was "meek and lowly of heart" would never despise a stumbling follower. Jesus' mission was described by Paul in the following words, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them..." 2 Corinthians 5:19 (NASB)

If you or someone you know has denied their Saviour there is good news. Jesus wants to draw you or that person back into intimate fellowship. He met with Peter alone at the first opportunity following the resurrection (Luke 24:34). Do you need further proof of the welcome you will receive when you return to the One Who loved you with an everlasting love, Who willingly died to redeem you, Who sent His Holy Spirit to be your Comforter, your Teacher, your Advocate, your prayer Partner? How can you doubt you are precious in His sight? Come to Him and come now.

Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!  
Jesus! lover of my soul;  
friends may fail me, foes assail me,  
he, my Savior, makes me whole.

Hallelujah! what a Savior!  
Hallelujah, what a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
he is with me to the end.

Jesus! what a strength in weakness!  
Let me hide myself in him;  
tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,  
he, my strength, my victory wins.

Jesus! what a help in sorrow!  
While the billows o'er me roll,  
even when my heart is breaking,  
he, my comfort, helps my soul.

Jesus! what a guide and keeper!  
While the tempest still is high,  
storms about me, night o'ertakes me,  
he, my pilot, hears my cry.

Jesus! I do now receive him,  
more than all in him I find;  
he hath granted me forgiveness,  
I am his, and he is mine.

- J. Wilbur Chapman

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