

What's in a look?

“And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.”

Luke 22:61

If the Bible is anything, it is honest. No one can believe that the Scriptures have falsehood in them after they are read, and the various failures of the leading characters can be clearly seen. In numerous places we read of the glaring mistakes of the disciples of Jesus, and yet they expect us to believe their message about their Master. This is what makes their witness to Jesus believable. They are willing, it seems, to let us in on their lack of loyalty to Jesus at times. The denials of Jesus by Peter is an excellent example of what I mean.

In the Upper Room Jesus had told the eleven apostles that He was going away and they could not come with Him (John 13:33-36). Peter insisted that he would follow Jesus to the death if necessary. Jesus then told Peter that he would deny any knowledge of Jesus before the cock crowed. In other words, Jesus told Peter in front of the rest that he would deny any relationship to Jesus before dawn the next day.

It is a sad scene between Jesus and Peter. Peter insisted that he would die for Jesus and that was the truth. However, Peter had many years of growing

in the knowledge of the Lord before he would do any such thing. Peter was not ready to do what he promised he would do and Jesus knew it. So Jesus demonstrated His deity by predicting the future to Peter.

When push came to shove during the religious trial of Jesus, Peter was seen hanging around the house where the trial was being held. He had enough love for Jesus to risk being identified by coming near the place where Jesus was on trial. However, when push came to shove, and people started saying he was a follower of Jesus, Peter denied any such thing.

The denials by Peter escalated in vigour as he ended up in the third denial by cursing and swearing that he did not know Jesus. As he spoke the third time, Jesus turned and glanced at him. Peter's eyes and the eyes of Jesus briefly met when Peter was in the act of denying his beloved Lord. Jesus did not stare, glare or otherwise give Peter away. It was brief, and I and I believe full of love and sorrow, at the fall of His beloved disciple. Knowing Jesus as I do from studying the Gospels for many years, I imagine there was a look of hope in Jesus' expression.

A wonderful poet, Elisabeth Barrett Browning wrote a poem entitled *The Meaning of the Look*. She describes this intimate and sorrowful exchange between Peter and the condemned Saviour. The following lines describe some of what might have gone through Jesus' mind at that instant of recognition.

*Did I yesterday
Wash thy feet, my beloved, that
they should run
Quick to deny me
'neath the morning-sun,*

Yes, Jesus did wash Peter's feet so he might come to the place of denial. At the same time Jesus also washed the feet of Judas Iscariot so he might walk the path of betrayal.

Our Lord helps his beloved disciple and the one who proved a traitor. Can you not come to Him today with your failure and receive the love and forgiveness He promises to all who seek Him? Come and come today.

© Rumford Ministries
www.RumfordMinistries.org
Some rights reserved