

Melva's Corner

The Second Chance Resurrection



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(Luke 22:54-61)

Central Truth: Jesus' resurrection offers transformation: transformation from death to life, from despair to joy, from sorrow to a second chance.

Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." (Luke 22:54-61)

I have always been moved by this account of Peter's denial. The raw emotion of the scene sends shivers up my spine. There's no polite way to say it-- Peter, the brash, impetuous disciple, openly betrayed Jesus. Three years of life with Jesus, three years of expectation and hope seemed to vanish. How his heart must have melted as each word of treachery left his lips and spilled out heavily into the night air. Each word must have ripped a hole in his spirit. Each word was another nail in the dreams of the coming Kingdom. Each word only made the fear that much more wretched. A few hours before, Jesus was with His disciples. A few hours before, Peter was willing to die for his Master. A few hours before, there was still a future. Now

the Master was a few yards away-- forsaken, condemned, about to be beaten.

But what strikes me most about this scene is verse 61. Right after Peter's third denial, we read, **"The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."** The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. It's bad enough to betray someone you love. The weight of that alone has crushed many a soul. Yet, to betray the one you love and at the same moment, look into their eyes! It's like the moments of an out of control skid before impact. This was one of those moments that seemed to last forever. For Peter, everything else seems to freeze in time - the voices, the footsteps and the crackling of the fire. They all faded into the background as Jesus locked eyes with Peter.

What was in the face of Jesus as He turned and looked at Peter? Anger? Who would blame Jesus if His face was strained with lines of anger? None of His disciples stood by Him. He was alone. Didn't the last three years mean anything to these people? Was it disappointment? Jesus turns precisely at the moment of Peter's third betrayal. Perhaps it was the downcast face of Jesus that caused Peter to run and weep bitterly. Peter's betrayal had to hurt Jesus even more than Judas' dirty deal. After all, Peter was one of the inner circle. Jesus had shared things with Peter that He hadn't shared with most of the other disciples. It was Peter whom Jesus called out of the boat to walk on the water. It was Peter whom He called to see the transfiguration. It was Peter's house that became home base for Jesus during the time He spent in Galilee. The closer the friend, the deeper the wounds of betrayal. Jesus had every reason to look at Peter with deep disappointment.

But I don't think that Jesus had the look of anger or disappointment. How could Jesus be angry at a friend whose life was crashing down around his feet? How could he be disappointed with a friend who denied Him out of legitimate fear? No, I think what Peter saw in Jesus' face was overflowing compassion. Jesus could read the heart of Peter. He knew the pain, the fear, the confusion racing through Peter's mind. Jesus Himself had weakened with the thoughts of that night. He had asked that His cup be removed. He looked for a way out. Furthermore, He had to be supernaturally strengthened by

angels to endure what the next few hours would bring. Jesus understood.

Jesus knew that Peter's heart was breaking and He turned with tears in His eyes and love radiating from His being. It was the compassion of Jesus that sent Peter running from His presence. It was the love of Jesus that was on Peter's mind as he wept bitterly.

Poor Peter! If ever there was someone in desperate need of a second chance, it was Peter. Peter had blown it and he knew it. He felt it. He tasted it. But how do you get a second chance when the person you have betrayed is about to be crucified? How do you undo the damage when the damage is done and there's no way out? You can't! But God can, if we turn to Him. Peter got a second chance when Jesus told him to feed His sheep, but that was only after Peter rushed towards his Lord. **"As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water." (John 21:7).**

As a result, Peter's life was redeemed, empowered, released from the despair of death and given the freedom of a second chance. What an amazing God we serve! God has woven this tapestry millions of times since Peter. Jesus has given us the gospel of the second chance. Do you fully realize what He has given you? Do you fully realize what He has offered you and all who would come to Him?

Jesus offers transformation: transformation from death to life, from despair to joy, from sorrow to a second chance. In fact, if we were to call the resurrection of Jesus from the grave anything at all, we should call it the good news of a second chance. I'm so glad I got a second chance, aren't you?

Scriptural References:

**"The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."
(Luke 22:61)**