

WHEN THE ROOSTER CROWED

By Keith Greer

“Then he began to curse and swear, saying, ‘I do not know the Man!’ Immediately a rooster crowed.” {Matthew 26:74} Just a short while earlier, Peter had promised that he would rather die with the Lord than to deny Him. *“Peter said to Him, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And so said all the disciples.” {Matthew 26:35}* Sadly, Peter did just what the Lord said he would. Let’s look at some things that occurred when the “rooster crowed.”

Jesus’ words had proven true. *“And had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.” {John 2:25}* The Lord knew what was in peoples’ hearts. Peter meant every word he said when He was with the Lord. Yet, when surrounded by the enemy, with his own life in jeopardy, his actions were quite different.

A disciple had denied His Master. *“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.” {2 Timothy 2:12}* Jesus had loved His disciples, taught them, and been close to them during the previous three years. Remember, it was Peter who confessed that Jesus was the Christ {Matthew 16:17}. Peter never thought he would deny His Lord, but the fact is he did.

An overconfident man had fallen. *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” {1 Corinthians 10:12}* Jesus had gathered together with His disciples to observe the Passover and give them some final instructions. He had instituted the Lord’s Supper and was preparing them for His death at the hands of His enemies. They confidently pledged their allegiance, no matter what the circumstances might be. It’s easy for us to say what we will do when we are facing only a hypothetical situation.

Peter followed the course of least resistance. *“And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, ‘This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.’ But again he denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the Man!’” {Matthew 26:71,72}* At this time, Peter was surrounded by the Lord’s enemies, with his own head on the chopping block; so he took a safer course of action. When the problem actually confronted him, remaining faithful was not as easy as he thought it would be earlier when he was with Jesus.

A moral coward remembered. *“And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times...” {Matthew 26:75}* At that very moment, Peter remembered his own words just a few hours earlier. Now those words were ringing in his ears, and he realized that he had done what he had promised not to do. How could such a thing have happened? Why had he grown weak and unable to exhibit courage?

A man was moved to weep bitterly. *“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times. So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” {Luke 22:61,62}* Yes, Peter felt deep regret and remorse because of his cowardly behavior. He was overwhelmed by the fact that he had failed his Master,

and all he could do was weep bitterly. Peter showed true repentance and godly sorrow for his actions. Did Peter mean what he had earlier told the Lord or had he lied? No, when he told the Lord, he was with Him and the other disciples. Now he was surrounded by the Lord's enemies!

Thankfully, this story ended well. Peter recovered from his lack of courage. He later did many great things in service to his Master. In the end, he also gave his life for the cause of Christ! True repentance and determination to learn from one's mistakes can be a recipe for future success. Just examine the lives of Peter and Paul. Remember, one moment of weakness doesn't have to destroy you and define who you are. Just pick yourself up, make the corrections and move forward! ***