

Mark 14: 66-72

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, 'You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.' 68 But he denied it, saying, 'I do not know or understand what you are talking about.' And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. 69 And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, 'This man is one of them.' 70 But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, 'Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.' 71 But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, 'I do not know this man you are talking about.' 72 At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he broke down and wept.

Meditation: This passage captures the most devastating moment for a disciple of Christ: to be confronted suddenly with the realization that you have betrayed your Lord. To make matters worse, Peter had made bold statements about his allegiance to Jesus. He would never betray him or abandon him. Here, he has done both. But let us not misunderstand ourselves as Peter has. Fear, a loss of nerve, weakness, cowardice: these are all part of the human condition. Peter had to confront his human frailty. Only then would he have the inner equipment to deny himself and trust God more completely. We must discover experimentally that we are fundamentally weak and inadequate creatures alone. Only in and through God can we become something of the image in which we were created. Humility and negation is the path to godliness. But we resist such cross-bearing. We prefer the highroad. It is out of compassion that God breaks through our illusions and brings us to our knees before the cross; for only in this way can we truly discover the God of Jesus who raises the dead.

Whether we blame others or circumstances, or whether we blame ourselves as inadequate or failed as an excuse for inaction, we resist the hard work of doing what is right, true and good, better and best for ourselves and others. If we are going to follow Jesus all the way, better that we confront honestly our avoidance in our excuses, cowardice and betrayal now.

Many believe Peter is the actual author of Mark even as Mark's is the script. If so, Peter tells the story in all its raw honesty, especially where he is concerned. He will get to the resurrection, but this cannot happen unless he faces those times and places in his life and his character that reveal his weakness and failure.

Prayer: We need faith, O God, faith that you are ever present with us from beginning to end on our inner journey, even when it will take us to some darker places. We want to live in the light. We are made for joy. But how can any of it be authentic, real and true if we must repress, suppress and deny those things in our lives that reveal our broken humanity. We're all broken, O God. We know that. But each of us is broken in our own unique ways we must confront. And each of us has our own unique manifestation of light and joy to share with the world. Keep taking us along our journey, O God, so that we get ever closer to what we're made for; Amen.