

## Thoughts about roosters

Romania, 2017

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So it's pretty normal here in Romania to walk out the door of our little hotel and almost step on a rooster.

I got up early today because who knows what time my body thinks it is, plus the road is so close to our hotel that the cars sound like they're coming through the bathroom. So I made some instant coffee and settled into a chair at the table in the common area and listened to the local rooster announce that it was dawn. Slightly bored, I decided to look at my sunrise app because none of my other apps work without wifi, and I noticed that the rooster was somehow exactly on time (7:05) even though it was cloudy and there was no sunrise. How did he know?! Amazing the way God hard-wires stuff like that into his creatures.

Then I recalled the story of Peter, so I looked it up on the only other app that works without wifi, my Bible. I read in every gospel about how Peter was warned that he would deny Christ three times, and that when it finally happened he went out and "wept bitterly." An appropriate response for someone who had just the night before pledged his undying loyalty to Jesus. Then I wondered if Peter was reminded every single morning for the rest of his life of his wretched failure, considering there was probably always a rooster around to open the wound again. Kind of a cruel daily torture. He probably hated roosters with a passion after that.

And then I realized that maybe it was also a reminder of something else. After the resurrection, by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus had gone through great pains to make sure that Peter knew he was forgiven and invited back on the team. I wondered if Jesus had purposely chosen something - a rooster - to be a daily reminder to Peter, not of shame, but of forgiveness and restoration and grace. Of his weakness, and God's strength, like Paul's thorn in the flesh? A severe mercy, as they say. Perhaps Jesus, in the midst of his own captivity and pain, rather than being harsh with Peter, was actually thoughtfully and compassionately providing Peter with a grace that would follow him the rest of his days.

So, next time you hear a rooster crow...