

THE BEST INTENTIONS

Luke 22:54-62

Have you ever felt like crawling in a hole somewhere and not coming out?

Hit the wrong note in an orchestra?

The clarinet squeak in a big performance?

Sung through the rest at the end of the Hallelujah Chorus?

Series of ads by Southwest Airlines: "*Wanna get away?!!*"

Series of not-quite-believable occasions when someone pulls a huge blooper and looks for the nearest escape exit.

It seems some of us don't know how to blow it gracefully!

I was out to dinner with a group of EFCA leaders.

One named another leader saying, "He doesn't blow it very often, but when he does, it's a whopper!"

He proceeded to tell us of one such time.

Another leader proceeded to tell of a time when he did the same thing.

We went around the table sharing our "greatest moments."

We've all had such occasions.

Moments of fame (or infamy) when we wish we could just crawl under the table and quietly slip away.

In Luke 22 we get a glimpse of a man who is about to become one of the most significant leaders in the church,

committing one of his all time great blunders,

that would go down in history, be analyzed

and preached about for more than 2000 years!

I'm relieved that my great moments are usually not remembered 20 years later, much less 2000 years! Aren't you?

Nevertheless, we know the feeling.

We've all blown it big time!

We hope we can slip away unnoticed into the night.

That's Peter's experience.

His heart's in the right place.

He wants to do what's right.

He wants to be faithful, even to the point of dying with our Lord.

But he just can't quite make it to stand up and be counted

as one of Jesus' followers.

Peter's sincere desire to be faithful to our Lord isn't enough to enable him to resist the pressure of self-defense

when confronted about his relationship with Jesus.

HIS ARREST AND CONDEMNATION 22:47-23:25

PETER'S DENIAL 22:54-62

As we evaluate the passage we've been studying,

Luke wants to make it obvious that

What the leaders do is illegal. 22:54 *Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance.*

ILLEGAL ACTION AGAINST OUR LORD 22:54

They take him to the home of the High Priest which is not the legal place to conduct such a trial

Neither politically nor religiously correct.

They hide their actions behind closed doors.

They try Him by night, which is prohibited by their own law.

They take Him to Roman authorities and accuse Him,
before the people of the city are even up and around
to know what's happening.

He's arrested at about 2 a.m.

He's on the cross at 9 a.m.!

(Due process??)

There's a crowd present but it's a chosen group

–loaded with their own supporters,

the same mob that went to the garden to arrest Him.

What's Peter doing there?

He keeps his distance, but he comes!

He comes because Jesus is his Lord,

because Jesus would have come for him,

had the tables been turned.

He comes to help, not knowing what he can do,

or how, or when.

A thousand scenarios crowd his mind.

He's confused and torn.

PETER'S DENIAL OF OUR LORD 22:55-60a

Peter gives in to the pressure and denies the Lord 3 times

22:55-60a *But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. ⁵⁶ A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." ⁵⁷ But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. ⁵⁸ A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. ⁵⁹ About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." ⁶⁰ Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!"*

Peter is overconfident

about his ability to stand with the Lord.

About time we say "I'd *never* do that,"

is the time to watch out.

Castles have been taken because invaders attacked the way everyone assumed was invincible.

That's the point where a defender is off guard.

Satan is subtle.

He attacks the point at which we are too sure of ourselves.

That's where we are least likely to be prepared.

1. "I don't know Him, woman!"

2. "Man, I am not [one of *them*]!"

Finally, his accent gives him away.

He'd have to think quickly to get around that one.

He curses and swears (Matt. & Mark), letting loose a herd of expletives hoping to kick up enough dust to cloud his identity.

3. "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" (???!!)

In no uncertain terms he denies any association with Jesus.

The ploy seems to work.

"Deny" is the opposite pole from "Confess"

We're to confess Christ but deny ourselves.

Peter does just the opposite.

He denies Christ, to serve his own interests.

But somewhere in the night a rooster stretches its neck, shakes its feathers, and crows an indictment.

OUR LORD'S RESPONSE TO PETER'S DENIAL 22:60b-61

Immediately, ... 22:60b-61a *Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.* ⁶¹ *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."*

1. **The rooster crows.**

2. **The Lord turns and looks on Peter.**

3. **Peter remembers.**

How does Peter demonstrate courage in this situation?

In Peter's defense,

we must ask where are Jesus' other followers?

At least He's still there!

At same time, you have to recognize that Peter's in enemy territory.

Some would say that this's the beginning of his downfall.

He's sitting around the fire with the enemy.

22:55

"When they kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them."

Is that good or bad? It's neither.

God calls some to infiltrate the enemy camp; he tells others to avoid it.

The key to where we ought to be is KNOWING WHY WE ARE THERE!

If God calls you to sit around the fire with the enemy,

you'd better know why He called you there!

If you're there because you want to be "one of the boys,"

you're headed for a fall.

You'll never take a stand for Jesus

while trying to gain acceptance by the crowd!

On other hand, God has called His people to be His ambassadors

in the world—in the world, but not of the world.

In that situation, God wants us to mingle with the world that our lifestyle might catch people's attention and our testimony be heard.

BUT you can't do that, while trying to gain acceptance as one of the crowd.

We have to know who we are, why we're there;

and determine to take our stand for Him.

Otherwise we'll blow it every time.

The compliment: *"This man was with Him!"*

We can read too much into her statement and over-spiritualize it,

BUT the passage notes that she sat there watching him closely.

She's staring at him

Maybe she recognized him

More likely, there's something in his mannerisms that tips her off.

Do our mannerisms tip people off?

—Praying? —Not swearing? —Being kind

She means it as an accusation (insult ?).

Peter receives it as a threat.

He should have taken it as a compliment!

When people observe us for a while, does it motivate them to ask whether we've been following Jesus?

Jesus knows what's going on in Peter's life.

When the rooster's moment comes,

Jesus turns and "looks upon" Peter.

It appears our Lord is more concerned about what happens to Peter, than about Himself and His own suffering.

In the midst of His trial, our Lord looks toward Peter.

Jesus knows what Peter's going through and He cares.

This isn't an angry or critical look.

John uses the same word to describe the first time Jesus looks Peter's way **Jn.**

1:42 "[Andrew] brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas' (which means Peter [rock]).

It normally means a look of interest, love or concern.

Notice the power of that look in Peter's life.

PETER'S RESPONSE TO OUR LORD'S LOOK 22:61b-62

Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times. 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly."

Our Lord's look accomplishes more than thousands of words.

It penetrates to the depth of Peter's life—It turns his heart back.

Gire: "With that look, all of Peter's pent-up emotions suddenly cave in on themselves. He runs from the courtyard, bitter tears stinging his eyes. He stops somewhere outside and beats his fists against his chest. He pulls at his hair. He gnarls his face. The weight of his guilt is too much to bear. He collapses in a wailing heap."

He doesn't try to tough it out in the crowd.

He doesn't try to act like he doesn't care.

He doesn't try to act like everything's ok.

He goes out by himself into the darkness and wails before the Lord.

What about Peter's final response: "*He went outside and wept bitterly*"?

Is that a good or a bad response?

Is it bitterness? Is it healthy?

22:62

This is a turning point for Peter.

The struggle isn't complete yet.

He still has to face the issue of God's forgiveness for failure.

But this IS turning away from self.

It's the moment of truth, coming to the realization

he'll never be the man he thought he was.

The recognition that he isn't going to stand up to the crowds and win the battle for God.

God will never come to him with affirmation that He's *lucky* to have such a great one on His side!

He's a failure! A coward!

But now He's useful.

WHAT ABOUT US?

The Psalmist had said years before, "*A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*" **Ps. 51:17**

Everyone of us must come to that point in our lives.

We'll "hear the crowing of the rooster." When that happens, . . .

Satan will tell us we're finished.

That **we're useless.**

That our future has been destroyed.

But **that's not God's message to us.**

God's message: **Offer of forgiveness and restoration to usefulness.**

Mark 16:7 *"Go get the twelve, especially Peter,
[especially Ralph, especially John or Mary,]
and tell [them] I'm waiting to see them."*

*"I have a special place for them
and now they're ready to let me work through them!"*

1 John 1:9 hasn't been written yet, but the God of 1 John 1:9 is there, waiting for Peter to repent and turn back to Him.

God's message: *"My grace is sufficient for you, for **my strength is made perfect in weakness**"!! **2 Cor. 12:9***