Before The Rooster Crows  
Message 2 of 5 in The Road to Calvary Sermon Series  

Luke 22:54-62  

(Re-Introduction to The Road to Calvary Series)  

Today as we continue with our Road To Calvary sermon series I would like to share a message with you from the Gospel of Luke that I have simply entitled: “Before The Rooster Crows.”  

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 22, and let’s read verses 54-62.  

Read: Luke 22:54-62  

PRAYER  

INTRODUCTION  

It had been three years since Peter dropped his fishing nets and started following JESUS to become a “fisher of men.”  

Over the course of those three years Peter had seen a lot of “half-hearted” disciples come and go. He heard multitudes of people promise their undying loyalty and faithfulness to Christ, only to see one person after another walk away and forsake Christ.  

Peter couldn’t imagine in his wildest dreams that he would forsake JESUS under any circumstance. Nope, not in a MILLION YEARS!
Just hours before Jesus was arrested PETER boasted about his undying loyalty to Christ.

**MATTHEW’S GOSPEL** tells us that after Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn, they left the Upper Room and headed to the Mount of Olives on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

On their way to the Mount of Olives, Matthew 26:31 tells us,

> Then Jesus told them, “This very night you will all fall away on account of Me, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’”

In his book, *The Murder of Jesus*, John MacArthur states:

> “Christ words should have instantly sobered Peter and the others. A wise person would have been humbled----and would have begged the Lord for strength to resist such an imminent temptation.”

> **But not PETER. He bragged, “Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will.”**

*The Murder of Jesus* by John MacArthur
page 124
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In spite of his many great strengths one of Peter’s most glaring weaknesses was his impulsiveness.

Peter often spoke and acted before he thought. We saw an example of that in last week’s message when PETER drew a sword and cut off the ear of Malchus.
And now this man who made that great confession of faith in Matthew 16:18 when he said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” ……boastfully proclaims “Even if all fall away on account of You, I NEVER WILL! I……NEVER……WILL!

Peter must have never heard that old wise saying, “Never say never!”

As soon as Peter made his BOLD, BRASH statement, Jesus warned him:

“I tell you the truth, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” (Some translations say, “You will DENY ME three times.”)

Did that quiet Peter? NO!

Peter boasted a second time, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.”

You would think after three years of following Jesus that Peter would know by now not to argue with Jesus. JESUS was NEVER WRONG about ANYTHING…….PERIOD!!!

And yet right up to the very night of the betrayal……right up to the final few hours before the crucifixion…..PETER continued to argue with JESUS.
By the time they arrived at the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter hardly looked like the FAITHFUL disciple who had pledged his undying loyalty just a few moments earlier.

JESUS told Peter to “watch,” and what did Peter do? HE SLEPT!

JESUS told Peter to “pray,” and what did he do? HE SLEPT!

Then when the soldiers came to arrest JESUS, what did Peter do? He impulsively drew a sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest.

Peter was already taking backward steps.

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As we go back to our scripture text in LUKE 22 we see the final stages of Peter’s unraveling.

First of all, I would have you to notice.........

I. Peter’s Detachment From Christ vs. 54

1. Look at those last five words of verse 54 again very carefully.

   vs. 54b “Peter followed at a distance.”

2. Now its not hard to understand the meaning of this is it?

   It means, Peter is not walking close to Jesus.  
   Peter is not standing beside Jesus.  
   Peter is not standing with Jesus.  
   Peter isn’t even standing behind Jesus.

3. This man who proudly boasted earlier, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will!” “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you” .......this is the same man who is now “following Jesus at a distance.”
Jesus hasn’t even gone to the cross yet and Peter is already detaching himself from Jesus.

4. At this point Peter is coming to the sobering realization that to BOAST about one’s faithfulness in the presence of fellow believers is one thing, but to BE FAITHFUL to Christ under the heat of an intense trial is quite a different matter altogether.

5. Before we judge Peter too harshly, we must ask ourselves if we aren’t guilty of doing the same.

……It is easy to be a follower of Christ when you are with other followers of Christ, isn’t it?

…… It is easy to STAND with JESUS when you are with other people who STAND with JESUS.

……..It is easy to BOAST of one’s FAITH in CHRIST when in the presence of others who BELIEVE like we do.

6. But how strong is our faith when we are out there in the world with people who don’t believe in Christ? How strong is our faith when we are with people who might ridicule us……mock us……..make fun of us……..or question our faith?

……..By your silence, do you lurk in the shadows hoping no one will recognize you as a Christian?

……..Do you “distance” yourself from Christ by refraining from saying anything or doing anything that might identify you as a Christian?

7. While it is easy for us to be hard on Peter, perhaps many of us are more like him than we want to admit.
As we move on to **VERSE 55** we now see…………..

**II. Peter’s Disloyalty to Christ   vs. 55**

But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

1. Pay particular attention to those two pronouns “**they**” and “**them**” in this 55th verse. To whom do these two pronouns refer?

   *They* and *them* is likely referring to the **Temple Soldiers** who had just arrested Jesus.

2. Peter is actually sitting down with the **enemy**. He is in the company of those who reject Jesus.

   Peter is **warming himself by the fire of compromise**.

3. At least we can commend Peter for following Jesus this far, but to actually sit down with the enemy was an act of gross disloyalty to Christ. It was the last place Peter should have been.

   Being the leader of the apostles he should have been with the remaining disciples. This was a time they needed to band together. It was a time they needed to be in prayer seeking strength and guidance from God.

4. While it is easy to point the finger at Peter, aren’t many of us equally as guilty of “warming ourselves by the fire of worldly compromise?”

   *We want it both ways. We want the excitement of our secular culture, but we also want the benefits of the Christian faith………that is COMPROMISE!*

   *To remain SILENT when we should SPEAK UP is to COMPROMISE!*
* To tolerate SIN rather than take a STAND against it for fear of making enemies is to COMPROMISE!

5. And when we “warm ourselves by the fires of compromise” are we not being just as disloyal to Christ as was Peter?

We have looked at Peter’s Detachment From Christ. We have looked at Peter’s Disloyalty to Christ.

Thirdly, let’s look at……..

III. Peter’s Denial of Christ vs. 56-60

1. Everything Peter did that night was bringing him closer and closer to this blatant denial of Christ.

   Sleeping when he should have been watching and praying.
   His reckless act of cutting off Malchus’ ear.
   Following Jesus at distance.
   Warming himself by the fire with the enemies of Christ.

   All of these things were warning signs that Peter’s faith was about to come completely unraveled.

2. Perhaps one of the soldiers stirred the fire with a stick causing the flames to flare up.

   Peter’s First Denial vs. 56

   At that moment verse 56 tells us one of the servant girls caught a glimpse of Peter’s face in the firelight. She then moved in to get a closer look.

   Certain she recognized him, she said, “This man was with Him.” Peter snapped back, “Woman, I don’t know Him.”
According to Mark’s account, Peter moved away from the fire at this point and walked over to the entryway of the Temple Courtyard. In other words Peter was hoping to conceal his identity in the darkness.

Peter’s Second Denial (vs. 58)

vs. 58 A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.”

Peter responded: “Man, I am not!”

Peter’s Third Denial (vs. 59)

Verse 59 tells us about an hour went by without any further interrogation. But just as Peter thought he might be off the hook, someone said to him:

“Certainly this fellow was with Him, for he is a Galilean.”

Now how did they know Peter was a Galilean?

Listen to Matthew 26:73, “Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away.”

Chuck Swindoll explains this in his book, The Darkness Before the Dawn:

Mr. Swindoll writes: “Most Galileans found it difficult to pronounce some of the gutturals in the dialect spoken in Jerusalem at that time. Native Judeans picked up on that. Also Galileans were sometimes considered ignorant and unlearned people, for while the Romans, especially the officers, usually spoke several languages, the Galileans, at best, were bilingual. Thus when Peter barked out, “I’m not! I do not know Him! I do not understand what you’re talking about,” the bystanders easily spotted him as a Galilean.”

The Darkness Before the Dawn by Charles Swindoll
page 50, paragraph one.
WORD PUBLISHING , Nashville, TN, Copyright 2001
Listen to Matthew’s account of how Peter responded to this third confrontation:

*Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, “I don’t know the Man!”*

This was probably not the kind of coarse, expletive laced cursing we commonly hear today. But rather Peter was saying in essence, “If I’m not telling you the truth may God strike me dead right here and now.”

**VERSE 60** tells us that while Peter was still uttering his third and final denial, **THE ROOSTER CROWED.**  **VERSE 61** indicates Peter didn’t fully realize what he had done until “The Lord turned and looked straight at him.”

It says, “**Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him:** “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.”

4. When Peter realized just what he had done, **VERSE 62** tells us, “**He went outside and wept bitterly.”**

The Greek terminology used here is: “**He went outside and KLAIO PIKROS,”** which means: “to cry with a sharp, stabbing pain.”
CONCLUSION

Peter’s denial of Christ serves as a stern warning to each and everyone of us:

BEWARE OF SPIRITUAL OVER-CONFIDENCE!

Peter was CONFIDENT his faith in Christ was unshakeable!
He was CONFIDENT he would never forsake Jesus under any circumstance.
He was CONDIENT he would never fall!

But he did! (repeat)

The apostle Paul warns us in I CORINTHIANS 10:12 “So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall.”

What happened to PETER could happen and probably has already happened to each and everyone of us.

*When we set such a poor Christian example we turn people away from the Lord rather than draw them to Him, WE DENY CHRIST.

Jesus said in Matthew 12:30 “He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.”

*When we pass up OPPORTUNITIES to witness for Christ, WE DENY CHRIST.

Jesus said in Matthew 10:32,33 “Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge before My Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown him before My Father in heaven.”
*When our SPEECH, our HABITS and our LIFESTYLE
totally contradict our profession of faith, WE DENY CHRIST.

In Matthew 18:6 Jesus said, “But if anyone causes one of
these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better
for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and
to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

When you stop and think about it there is really no difference between
DENYING CHRIST actively such as Peter did and DENYING CHRIST
passively through silence, through worldliness or through hypocrisy,
is there?

Stand Tall For Jesus, Stand Tall

When those around you mock His sweet Name,
stand tall for Jesus, stand tall!

When you are in a crowd that tempts you
to sin and shame, stand tall for Jesus, stand tall!

On a rugged cross Jesus stood tall for you
When you were lost in sin and there was nothing
you could do.

For you on that cross Jesus gave His all,
So every chance you get, stand tall for Jesus,
stand tall!

by Reggie Braziel, 2006