

MONDAY, AUGUST 16TH

DAILY READING ASSIGNMENT: **Mark 14-16**

"A WORK IN PROGRESS"

SCRIPTURE Mark 14:27-31; 66-72

OBSERVATION

I love that we can learn so much about Peter throughout the Scriptures. If ever I could identify with a follower of Christ, it is good old emotional-roller coaster Peter, who's sometimes clueless, often impetuous, and was once even, as illustrated in today's reading, disloyal.

Shortly after what is now commonly referred to as the Last Supper, Jesus tells the disciples that this night, as the events will be set in motion to fulfill everything he's been telling them about his impending suffering and crucifixion, they are going to desert him. Peter responds immediately [of course] in self-righteous indignation. No way will he desert his Lord, even if everyone else does. I wonder how he felt when Jesus responded, "I tell you the truth...before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." [v.30]

Fast forward a few hours: Jesus has been arrested and the abuse has begun, with the crucifixion soon to follow. Peter is terrified and laying low. Still, he is recognized by his appearance in the courtyard as one who'd been with Jesus. He denies this and moves away. He is then recognized by his accent as a Galilean, and thus a follower of Christ.

Not me, he says. Finally, he is asked again. This time Peter loses his temper, and swears and curses his denial. "Immediately the rooster crows a second time." [v.72]. Peter was devastated.

APPLICATION

Many of us have a difficult time relating to people about whom we've only read. It's too easy to read history casually and miss the magnitude of these moments. We want to believe we would be strong and courageous, stand by our beliefs no matter what. Peter certainly felt that way the evening before Jesus was crucified.

Like Peter, at one time or another, we've all denied Christ – if not in word, then in deed.

And as with Peter, Jesus is not finished with you or me. Just about everyone has heard of John 3:16 [especially if you watched football during the years in which Rainbow appeared on nearly every broadcast in the stands with his poster-board sign – and if you have no clue who I'm talking about ask someone over 40.] But once you get John 3:16, check out John 3:17; to paraphrase, Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but to save it.

Jesus did not condemn Peter for his sin, nor will he condemn you or me for ours. Peter went on to do magnificent things in the name of Christ, for Christ, as you will learn in the upcoming study of the book of Acts. When you hear of the powerful way Peter lived out his faith, think of the Peter you read about today – and know that if God will forgive and use a frightened man who denied his Savior one night in the heat of the battle, he can and will forgive you – no matter what – and deem you free to continue the good works he has set before you.

PRAYER

Father, forgive me for the times I've denied my relationship with you. There is nothing worth turning against you even for a moment, regardless of how minor it may seem in today's culture. Thank you that when you forgive me you remove my sins from me as far as the east is from the west. Thank you for freedom, not condemnation. Help me today shine your light brightly. *Amen.*

S.O.A.P. Entry Author: Kelly Ellis