

Luke 22:31-34

22:54-62

### The Final 24 Hours: Can You Hear the Rooster Crow?

The college basketball tournaments began this week and already we have heard the stories about players who were able to make the clutch shots when they really counted. Already teams that everyone expected to go deep into the tournament are out. If our relationship with God could be compared to a basketball player who was called upon by the coach to make the clutch shots in a game when it really counted, what would God say is your spiritual shooting percentage? Would it be 100%, 70 %, 50%, maybe less. Last Sunday when we did our spiritual assessments at the depot, John Uitendaal came up to me with a grin on his face and said I cannot wait to tell my wife I had a perfect score on my assessment.” I said yeah and when you tell Donna that you made a perfect score, remember we have an extra couch at the parsonage if you need a place to sleep.

In the passage of scripture we are about to hear Jesus in his final 24 hours warn Peter, the leader of the disciples, that no one who follows Jesus keeps a perfect score.

#### **Read Luke 22:31-34**

Jesus warned that the devil wanted to sift the faith of Peter. Jesus used a really violent image to communicate his concern. When grain is sifted, it is a process of jarring, tumbling and shaking the grain until the seed is separated from the husk. If you're the seed, being sifted is a big deal. For Jesus to say your going to be sifted like wheat was a big deal. It was his way of saying your going to be really tested and you're not coming anywhere close to a perfect score.

So Jesus was warning Peter that a test of his loyalty to Jesus was

nearing. But when Jesus tells him this, Peter reacts with over confidence. He thinks he is going to pass the testing of his faith with a perfect score. Peter tells Jesus he was willing to go to prison even die with Jesus. He thinks spiritually speaking if the test was making free throws from the foul line, he is going to be perfect every time. But even though Jesus loved Peter, and trusted him with the leadership of the church, he had to tell Peter he would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crows.

### **Why we should listen to this story**

Scripture like this pleads with us to take careful concern about our relationship to God. Scripture like this speaks to any congregation to beware of over confidence. Churches can voice that over confidence when statements are made like “we’re a sound church” “we’re a friendly church,” “we’re a loving church, we want to grow,” “we believe the bible is God’s word to live by.” Because Jesus is pleading with us to see that the claims we make, we’ll be tested, sifted and no one makes a perfect score.

Luke’s story goes on to tell us, Peter did in fact have three opportunities to confess that he was a follower of Jesus. But each time he had the chance, when the clutch shot was there for the taking to confess Jesus; Peter denied knowing him.

It would be like all of us admitting were a Christian here, or at a gospel concert, funeral or a wedding and we talk about what Jesus means to us. However, when we’re at work, when hanging with friends, when making money is on the line, our words and actions deny the influence God is suppose to be having over our lives. We say things like “we believe but we’re not religious fanatics,” which is code word that we only want to be associated with Jesus from a safe distance when there is something in it for us.

Peter swore to Jesus he would never run out on him. An observation has been made about this story by Dr. Fred Craddock

who said that Peter made that commitment to Jesus without prayer or repentance. Peter speaks without deep soul searching. Maybe that is how we get into trouble. We speak before we have prayerfully considered and wrestled with our beliefs, doubts and fears and the cost to us if we are faithful to God.

Later on in his ministry, Peter would write to Christians and tell them, **“The devil is a roaring lion seeking whom to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)** Peter ought to know because he found out first hand.

### **The rooster crows at the denials**

But verses 60-61 states that when the third denial by Peter was made the rooster crowed, then Jesus looked at Peter, and Peter remembered what Jesus said, and then went out and cried bitterly. In that moment it all came crashing in that he had fallen so far from a perfect score. Peter didn't go 3 for 3, not 2 out of 3 not even 1 out of 3. He denied Jesus three times. Three chances to put his action behind his claims and missed on every opportunity.

After Jesus was raised from the dead, he would meet with all his disciples and he would restore Peter to be the leader of the early church. Often Peter is made out to be a coward who folded when Jesus needed him most. **But lets give Peter credit. He heard the rooster crow. He remembered the words of Jesus.** He took to heart the truth of Jesus and his heart was broken and Peter would turn back to live fully for the Lord.

### **Spiritual awareness**

The rooster crowing is symbolic of our hearts being open to God speaking to us. One question this story raises is whether we hear the rooster crowing? When we live in ways that fall short of God's expectations, do we hear God bringing that to our attention?

See if we're really living and listening to Jesus all of us will hear the rooster crow, and we won't continue in the sin or wrongful

ways. We'll get the message when we are failing God, others and ourselves and our hearts will have sorrow and remorse.

So many times this story about Peter is told and preached like its all bad news because Peter denied Jesus three times. He should be so ashamed and we don't want to identify with him. We want to deny we could have anything in common with Peter.

### **It's good news when we hear the rooster crow**

But this story is good news because Peter heard the rooster crowing. He remembered the words of Jesus. He didn't have to see Jesus do any miracle. He remembered the words of Jesus and broke his heart. The Bible says he wept bitterly which means he did what Jesus said he would do "he would turn back." The broken heart of Peter was an indicator he was beginning the steps to turn back to full devotion to Jesus.

Peter experienced what 2 Corinthians 7:10 refers to as a **"godly sorrow that leads to repentance."** I think these days it has gotten popular in churches to not preach that sometimes we need to feel some godly sorrow about our sin. It was sorrow in the heart that led Peter back to the Lord.

### **Sorrow must lead into repentance**

Jesus didn't just say Peter, you will be sorry that you let me down. Jesus said "you'll turn back." The phrase turn back is what the word repentance means. Peter was so sorry that he denied Jesus, he began to repent of it. He began to know he had to stop the denial and get back to following. **Repentance is the real indicator we are hearing Jesus, we are hearing the rooster crow about the sin in our lives.**

This story raises the concern that we can get in such an apathetic, over confident, watered-down view of God, we aren't hearing the

rooster crow. God's word isn't being remembered in peoples' hearts.

When Christians ignore various teachings from the Bible about God's will in how we are to live, and we say that doesn't apply to today, we're not hearing the rooster crowing!

When Christians think just having your name on the membership role of the church is the same thing as being a follower of Jesus; we're not hearing the rooster crowing!

When we are neglectful about committing ourselves to worship of God we're not hearing the rooster crowing?

When we disparage other people whether we assault their character, or we despise the color of their skin or the neighborhood they live in the rooster is crowing and were not getting the point!

When leaders in the church turn to you for help and repeatedly you give them reasons why you cannot get involved, there is no way we're hearing the rooster crow.

**The only thing worse than hearing the rooster crow and being broken hearted is to be so stubborn, over-confident and apathetic toward God, we don't hear the rooster crow at all.**

Has is been a while since there was sorrow in your heart and admission how you have failed in following Jesus?

Has it been long since that sorrow led to some real change in you?

We won't hear the rooster crow if we decide that the Bible that contains the words of Jesus is only relevant as long as it tells us what we want to hear; but the moment scripture may start to come

in conflict with our plans we dismiss the bible's wisdom.

We won't hear the rooster crow if we only come to worship to get something; instead of to truly seek and honor God.

### **Spiritual Assessment**

This is why the spiritual assessment that many participated in last week is so important. It helps ask some questions we may not be taking the time to ask. It helps us look at our lives from more than just our point of view so we can remember the words of Jesus, be open to his presence, hear the rooster crow where our lives are getting off course and then practice repentance.

### **Not A Fan**

It's the reason I would encourage everyone to consider the new bible study Not A Fan. I believe it will help us remember the words of Jesus and hear the rooster crow.

### **Conclusion/Application**

Today put yourself into this story about Jesus and Peter. Dare to ask in what ways you fail to keep your word to God and keep God's word in you. Go deeper than the safe admissions like "I ought to pray more."

How about looking at the real gritty aspect of being used by God so others know you belong to him and they can see Christ through you.

Put yourself in this story and ask if your heart is hurting about the ways you haven't kept a perfect score with the Lord?

Put yourself in this story and decide what do you need to do to return to Jesus himself.

If we are unwilling to take questions like these serious, then we are not even hearing the rooster to crow. I would say, don't waste the guilt you feel, because that pain can be God's word reaching out in love to bring you back to him; not push away or bring you down.

