

⁶¹ *And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* ⁶² *So Peter went out and wept bitterly.*

Text: Luke 22:61-62 A 3-17-19 Passion History, part 2 Psalm 32 Resp. Rdg.: Ps 130
Hymns: 149, 289, 324 (1, 5-8), 376

REMEMBER JESUS' WORDS

The Law commands and makes us know
What duties to our God we owe;
But 'tis the Gospel must reveal
Where lies our strength to do His will.

The Law discovers guilt and sin
And shows how vile our hearts have been;
The Gospel only can express
Forgiving love and cleansing grace. (TLH #289:1-2)

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Who of us doesn't have things we've done in our past that we wish we hadn't done? If only we would have stopped to think about what we were doing before we did it! If only we would have done what God says instead of what we did!

In our Lenten services we're looking at the way the Bible uses the word "remember" – both remembering something and the action that follows. Our text recalls the time when a rooster crowed, and what followed when Peter remembered Jesus' words.

Peter had good intentions. Jesus had told His disciples, "*You will all fall away,*" Peter responded, "*Even though they all fall away, I will not.*" Jesus warned Peter, "*Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.*" But Peter insisted, "*If I must die with You, I will not deny You.*" (Mk. 14:27, 29-30).

When Jesus' enemies arrested Him and took Him away, Peter and all the other disciples deserted Him. But later when Jesus was taken to the house of the high priest, Peter followed at a distance. He was let into the courtyard by the high priest's house. There a servant girl "*looked intently at [Peter]*" and said, "*This man was also with [Jesus].*" Peter said, "*I do not know Him.*" (Peter's first denial.) A little later someone else saw Peter and stated, "*You are also one of them.*" Peter insisted, "*I am not!*" (Peter's second denial.) Later on we're told that "*another confidently affirmed, ... 'Surely this fellow was with [Jesus]....'*" Peter exclaimed, "*I do not know what you*

are saying!” (Peter’s third denial.) *“Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed”* (Luke 22:54ff.).

Why did Peter end up denying Jesus those three times? Jesus had warned Peter about this, but Peter didn’t listen. God warns us about sin in His Word. We know what God’s Word says about sin. Every time we sin we’re not listening to God’s Word. We’re doing what we want to do instead. God has given us His Word so that we know what’s right and what’s wrong, what’s good for us and what isn’t. When we’re tempted to sin we need to remember what God says, opening up our Bibles if we need to and getting God’s words in front of our eyes. And we need to pray and ask God to help us to resist the temptation and do what He says. We pray with the psalmist, *“Remove the false way from me.” “Strengthen me according to Your Word”* (Ps. 119:29a, 28b, NASB).

Peter and all of the other disciples had assured Jesus that they wouldn’t deny Him (Mk. 14:31). But they didn’t have the power to keep their word. Jesus, however does have the power to keep His Word. Jesus would keep His Word and be deserted and denied and crucified.

Jesus used a rooster’s crow to remind Peter of His words and bring him to repentance. God gives us His Law so that we ‘remember’ His words, and repent. The Law acts like a mirror to show us our sin. When we do what the Bible tells us not to do, we have sinned. That’s what the Bible means when it says, *“By the Law is the knowledge of sin”* (Ro. 3:20). God’s Law shows us what we’re really like – how sinful we are, and how we have sinned against God in our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

James says, *“If anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was”* (Jms. 1:23-24). This fits in well with our focus on the word “remember” in the Bible and how it involves both the thought in the mind and the resulting action. When we see our sins in the mirror of God’s Law, the resulting action is to repent. If we don’t repent when we hear God’s Law it’s like looking away from that mirror and forgetting what we look like because we don’t like what we see. But then we would still be in our sins. When the Law shows us our sins, we need to repent of them. We may or may not be moved to tears over something we’ve done wrong as Peter was, but we do confess to God that what we did was wrong.

The Bible says, *“Repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed”* (Lk. 24:47). Repentance and forgiveness go together. When God leads us to repent and confess our sins to Him, *“He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* – 1 John 1:9. That’s because Jesus died on the cross for all of our sins. In His grace Jesus forgave and restored Peter. After Jesus rose from the dead, He reminded Peter of his three-fold denial. He

then assured Peter that He had forgiven him, and that he was still one of Jesus' apostles, telling Peter, "*Feed My lambs. ... Tend My sheep. ... Feed My sheep. ... Follow Me*" (Jn. 21:15-19).

God assures us in His Word, "*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins*" (Is. 43:25). When God forgives us, our sin is gone. Peter's denial was gone. Peter's sin was forgotten. It was by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and from personal experience, that Peter wrote: "*Humble yourselves ... under the mighty hand of God that He may [lift] you [up] at the proper time*" (1 Pet. 5:6). When Jesus warned Peter he would deny Him, He also spoke of Peter's repentance, telling him, "*When you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren*" (Lk. 22:32). Peter does just that in these words from his first epistle: "*The God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, [will] [make you complete], establish, strengthen, and settle you*" (1 Pet. 5:10).

We don't get do-overs on the things in our past that we've done wrong. But with God's help we can learn from them, and not do those things again. God has given us His Word, Law and Gospel, because He loves us and only wants what's best for us. Through His Word of the Law God shows us our sins, and our need to repent. Through His Word of the Gospel God shows us our Savior, Jesus, and assures us that He forgives every one of our sins for Jesus' sake. Dear friends in Christ, **REMEMBER JESUS' WORDS.**

I, a sinner, come to Thee
 With a penitent confession;
 Savior, mercy show to me
 Grant for all my sins remission.
 Let these words my soul relieve:
 Jesus sinners doth receive.

Now my conscience is at peace,
 From the Law I stand acquitted;
 Christ hath purchased my release
 And my every sin remitted.
 Naught remains my soul to grieve,—
 Jesus sinners doth receive. Amen. (TLH #324:5, 7)