

## Chapter 19    A FUTURE AFTER FAILURE

***Mark 14:27-31, Mark 14:66-72 & Luke 22:54-65***

Referring first to Mark 14:27-31; Jesus speaks to His disciples, telling them that;

***"....'all of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night'....But Peter said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble yet I will not be'. And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times', but he (Peter) spoke more vehemently, 'If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!'"***

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These words were spoken prior to but on the very day of the arrest of Jesus. In reading the whole of Mark 14, we see an account of the agony of Jesus in Gethsemane, His arrest in the garden and of Him being taken before the Council of the High Priest, elders and scribes.

*"And they all condemned Him to be worthy of death"*

(Mark 14:64)

Following this, we read of Peter warming himself at a fire in the confines of the Palace.

Using now the accounts in both Mark 14 and Luke 22, we read that Peter was, in fact sitting around a fire in the company of those who opposed and arrested Jesus. From three of the company present there, accusations were pointed at Peter that, *"this man was also with Him"* followed by *"you also are one of them"*, and *"this fellow also was with Him"*. Each time, Peter denies the accusations, with cursing and swearing, declaring, *"I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"* And immediately, while he was still speaking the rooster crowed.

What then? *"And the Lord turned and looked at Peter"* (Luke 22:61)

*"...And Peter remembered the Word of the Lord, how he had said to him,*

*'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times'." (Luke 22:62)*

Instantly, Peter was touched to the very innermost depths of his heart. If we can speak of the 'knees of our heart' surely this look brought Peter there as he looked into the face of pure, redeeming love and mercy shining out from the Saviour to himself. In that fleeting moment, as their eyes met, Peter was enveloped in the assurance of strong, enduring love, love that was reaching out to him as the depths of anguish for his betrayal now gripped him. He saw and was receptive to the look of Divine love that was not withdrawn or changed by any measure in that betrayal.

From Peter's earlier vehement words that, *"If I have to die with You, I will not deny You"*, we know that Peter's intentions were to be loyal. Impetuously, he had tried to defend Jesus with the sword at the time of his arrest. Yet, now, he had stumbled. It seems he stumbled because he had not yet settled within himself the issue that the opinions and opposition of men were to be counted as of no consequence when it came to choosing loyalty to his Lord in word and action. In time of fear of the consequences, the maintaining of the approval of others had been his priority.

Peter, in the moment that Jesus looked at him, experienced the piercing revelation that all else was worthless other than living to honour his Master; the heart-rending grief of his tears being that, in the light of His Master's love for him, his own love for the Master had proved so weak. How ashamed, how broken he now was but broken in the right sense, broken with a contrite heart, the very breaking that allows the Saviour to work inner healing and restoration.

- Peter REMEMBERED the word of the Lord;
- Peter RESPONDED to the word of the Lord;
- Peter was RENEWED by the word of the Lord;

Prior to his denial, the Lord had spoken other words to Peter saying;

*"...but I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*  
(Luke 22:32)

What comfort! The Lord Jesus had given Peter comfort in advance. He wasn't finished! The Master was not going to discard him, but was going to use him, even after his abject failure. The Master had a commission for him, not just for others, but for him, Peter. There was to be a ...

### FUTURE AFTER FAILURE!

As Peter's eyes met the Master's look, he beheld:

- The compassionate Christ;
- The personal Christ;
- The all-knowing Christ;
- The Christ of enduring, unchanging Love;
- The restoring Christ.

He experienced and responded to the healing touch of grace;

GRACE is always there for restoration;

GRACE for a FUTURE AFTER FAILURE!

What a comfort for us too! This same assurance is for us; the Christ in glory prays for us too, that our 'faith will not fail'; grace is always there for restoration to a penitent heart. There is a future after OUR failures.

Peter turned his eyes upon Jesus and kept them there.

"Now to Him Who is able  
to keep you from stumbling,  
and to present you faultless  
before the presence of His glory  
with exceeding joy,  
to God our Saviour,  
who alone is wise,  
be glory and majesty,  
dominion and power,  
both now and forever,  
Amen (Jude 24)

