

THOSE GOOD INTENTIONS

by Carl McMurray

And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." ... (Mark 14:27-31 ESV)

Most are familiar with the above account and the grief that Peter receives for these statements is common. He declares he would die before denying His friend and yet within a few hours he does the very thing he declare he would not do. He is usually judged without mercy in this account as being just plain weak. After all, he didn't even have to face death as he claimed he would and could. All that he needed to fail was just the accusation of a servant girl who herself might have been pitying the rough treatment she was seeing the Rabbi endure at this point.

This account adds to the commonly held understanding that Peter was full of talk and good intentions, but really had no steel inside. We pity the man who has to live like this, facing his own failure to the point of running out and weeping bitterly at his lack of courage in standing beside his Master. How Peter must have felt, not only that he let down Jesus, but that he let down himself, not being able to keep his own word.

How many of us have had such good intentions about what we would do for the Lord if given the chance? We would speak out, we think, but then we don't. We hear a stirring lesson and determine to study more, attend worship better, exercise control over our tongue or temper, show Christian joy, patience, or kindness more so that our light shines... and then we don't! We turn from him, figuratively and guiltily and we weep inside for our own betrayal. of him and self.

Take heart child of God. Don't forget that Peter was the name given to him by the Lord. His real name was Simon, or Cephas. Jesus called Simon, Peter, or rock. Why do you suppose Jesus called Simon a rock? Because he was weak, unreliable, or petty? Or, might it have been because he knew what Peter really was. Rough edged, crumbling in places, with maybe even a crack or two. But, tradition says Peter DID die for the Lord before he finished his course. He might have broke once, surprised by the questioning of a servant girl, but he was the one chosen by the Holy Spirit to address his Jewish brethren on Pentecost when his fellows were all speaking to the visiting foreigners. Paul was chosen to take the gospel to the Gentiles, but Peter was one chosen to go to the Jews. Do you think he EVER forgot that little servant girl? Peter's strength as a rock was not that he never failed but that he never quit. He kept coming back, just like Jesus prayed he would after he had fallen, that he would strengthen his brethren.

So, what about those good intentions? Brethren keep on having them. Keep looking forward. Keep planning to do better and do great things for the one who has done such great things for us. Don't give up when you fail, and you will, btw. Don't give up, GET UP and keep coming back. You, like Peter, may yet get the opportunity and practice to do for the Lord what you want to do to honor Him and demonstrate your love. If not this time, then the next. God bless your efforts.