

Matthew 26:75

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Analysis

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice (καὶ ἐμνήσθη ὁ Πέτρος τοῦ ῥήματος Ἰησοῦ εἰρηκότος ὅτι Πρὸ ἀλέκτορος φωνῆσαι τρίς ἀπαρνήση με)—The verb μιμνήσκομαι (mimnēskomai, 'to remember, to recall') shows the cock-crow triggered memory. Peter remembered τοῦ ῥήματος (the word, saying) of Jesus—specifically His prediction of threefold denial. The phrase τρίς ἀπαρνήση με ('three times you will deny Me') exactly described what just occurred. Jesus's words proved true; Peter's confidence proved false. Memory brought conviction—recognizing sin is repentance's first step.

And he went out, and wept bitterly (καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἔξω ἔκλαυσεν πικρῶς)—Peter went out (ἐξέρχομαι, exited) ἔξω (outside), leaving the high priest's courtyard. He ἔκλαυσεν (wept—verb κλαίω, intense weeping, not mere tears) πικρῶς (bitterly, grievously—adverb from πικρός, 'bitter, sharp, severe'). These weren't tears of self-pity but godly sorrow producing repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10). Peter's bitter weeping contrasts with Judas's remorse (27:3-5)—both betrayed Christ; Peter's sorrow led to restoration (John 21:15-19); Judas's led to suicide. The difference: Peter remembered Jesus's words and wept; Judas remembered his wages and despaired.

Historical Context

Peter's weeping occurred around dawn Friday, hours before crucifixion. The cock-crow and Jesus's look (Luke 22:61) shattered Peter's self-confidence, preparing him for restoration. Forty days later, the risen Christ reinstated Peter threefold (John 21:15-19), one affirmation per denial. Peter's failure and restoration became testimony to grace—he later wrote about Christ's sufferings with intimate knowledge, having denied the suffering Savior yet experienced forgiving restoration. His epistles emphasize perseverance through suffering (1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-19), lessons learned through failure.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What's the difference between Judas's remorseful despair and Peter's repentant bitter weeping—and which characterizes your response to sin?
2. How does Peter's restoration after catastrophic failure encourage you to return to Christ after denying Him?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐμνήσθη	τοῦ	Πέτρος	τοῦ	ῥήματος	τοῦ	Ἰησοῦ
And	remembered	which	Peter	which	the word	which	of Jesus
G2532	G3415	G3588	G4074	G3588	G4487	G3588	G2424
εἰρηκότος	αὐτῷ	ὅτι	Πρὶν	ἀλέκτορα	φωνῆσαι	τρίς	
said	unto him	Before	G4250	the cock	crow	thrice	
G2046	G846	G3754		G220	G5455	G5151	
ἀπαρνήση	με·	καὶ	ἐξελθὼν	ἔξω	ἐκλαυσεν	πικρῶς	
thou shalt deny	me	And	and	he went out	wept	bitterly	
G533	G3165	G2532	G1831	G1854	G2799	G4090	

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 26:34 (References Jesus): Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

John 13:38 (References Jesus): Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Galatians 6:1 (Parallel theme): Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.