

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE ROOSTER ALWAYS CROWS AT SUNRISE

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.
(*Luke 22:60-62*)

One of the most heartbreaking and yet instructive moments in all of the Bible occurs at this point in the gospel narrative. Peter, a man who the LORD himself called Cephas (i.e. a stone), a man who had declared (and meant every word) his willingness to die for his MASTER and who would later do exactly that, a man who the LORD endued with great spiritual insight (see Mat.16:17) found himself confronted squarely with his sin and unfaithfulness. One of the reasons (apart from faith) that we believe the Bible is the GOD-breathed word is because it is always so truthful and without any pretense in its presentation of the people of GOD (or as someone has said, "warts and all"). Normally in man's writings the heroes and main characters are always presented in a larger than life manner and their frailties and failures are seldom mentioned let alone described in detail. Such is not the case with the Holy Scriptures. King David is one of the central and beloved characters in the Bible as well as in Jewish tradition. He is one who is described as a "man after GOD's own heart", the one who is used as typical of the Kingship of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Yet King David's flaws and his terrible sin with Bathsheba (adultery and murder) are put on display for all the world to see with no attempt to present mitigating circumstances, situational ethics, or other excuses so commonly used today to lessen the extent of mans sinful acts. As we consider David and Peter we are confronted with these truths:

Even though we belong to the LORD we have both the propensity and ability to fall into sin. Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:" (Romans 7:18) Now there are a lot of well meaning people in our day who think that by putting the ten-commandments in public places that the desire of men to walk contrary to that law will somehow be altered. Now while we are certainly not opposed to the Word of GOD being published anywhere and everywhere, we are convinced that the sinful nature of man is not changed by the law nor will his love for unrighteousness be diminished by greater exposure to it. When we are born again, we are indeed given a new heart(new man) which has a delight in the righteousness of the LORD, but we are then locked in a death struggle with the flesh(old man) who still exercises himself from time to time. (see Rom.7:14-25) Both David and Peter were instructed and knowledgeable of the will (law) of the LORD, and had a heart to follow HIS way, yet both of them were overcome by the weakness of the flesh and thereby demonstrate the exact reason the law cannot produce righteousness. (see Rom.6:20;8:3)

The LORD is faithful to uncover sin in HIS people. While the flesh may wound us and we be under its siren spell for a season, the LORD will not allow HIS people to be destroyed by it. HE will convict and convince those that belong to HIM (i.e.; HIS sheep) of their sin. (see Num.32:23) Just as the prodigal son came to himself (awoke to his true condition) so the LORD will deliver HIS own from the hog pen. Though reprobates may go on in their wickedness unhindered, enjoying themselves to the last, those upon whom the LORD has set HIS love (i.e.; HIS elect people) shall indeed be arrested and rescued from the path of destruction. Their pet sins and secret desires will be brought to light. Perhaps not into the light of others but surely into the light of HIS fatherly gaze.(see Prov.3:12; Rev:3:19;Tit.1:15,16;Rom.1:28-32)

The uncovering of that sin in the elect always produces repentance. The LORD does not often use the terror of HIS law nor the fear of impending doom to bring HIS children here. (see Rom.2:4, Eph.2:4-7; Tit.3:4-6) In Peter's case it was HIS sorrowing look and the crowing of the cock. In David's it was the faithful voice of the prophet saying "thou art the man". The result of HIS exposure of their sin produces more than fleshly sorrow.(see II Cor.7:10) For HE gives his children a tender heart (conscience) that they might understand that the awfulness of their sin is primarily that they have sinned against HIM who loves them with an everlasting love, and not that they have broken some law which demands punishment. Sorrow for causing displeasure to the LORD is as natural in the children of GOD as self satisfaction is in the children of the wicked.

Once repentance has accomplished its work, the LORD restores HIS people. GOD does not bring sorrow to HIS children in order to punish them but that they may be fitted for the application of HIS mercy. (see Heb.12:5-11) HE told Mary to be sure and include Peter when she told the disciples of HIS resurrection. (see Mk. 16:7) HE then singled out Peter and brought him to confess his love to HIM and gave him great responsibility to feed the flock of GOD. (see Jn.21:15-18) David's sin was great yet the LORD restored him and used him for HIS glory. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray GOD your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Faithful is HE that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thess 5:23-24)

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