

Easter Week Epilogues - Thursday

Please read Luke 22:54-62 (below) and then pray, asking God to help us to return to him so that he can give us a fresh start through our Saviour, Jesus.

Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!"

Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

You can watch a video by Peter as he reflects on what we've just been reading – you'll find it at www.facebook.com/muckamorepc

Or here's his thoughts 'on paper'...

It's easy to have regrets, isn't it? We can often look back on events and situations thinking to ourselves "if only..." - if only I hadn't said that; if only I'd acted sooner; if only I'd told the truth; if only I hadn't run away... Well, Peter felt those same regrets and more on the night he denied Jesus. He'd been the one who'd protested his undying devotion to Jesus. He'd been the one who'd struck out with a sword and cut off the guard's ear. And yet he was also the one who'd said "I don't know him" three times; the one who'd runaway from Jesus at the very moment he needed him most. And that look – that look said it all – there was no escaping the awfulness of his actions.

Of course, Peter probably tried to excuse his behaviour – if only Jesus hadn't been so outspoken; if only he'd taken a softer line with the religious leaders; if only he'd allowed Peter and the other disciples to defend him against the soldiers; if only he'd answered the charges brought against him and spoken up for himself... but he didn't.

It was just as the prophet Isaiah had said: "He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth".

But that didn't ease Peter's conscience one little bit. He'd failed Jesus; he'd let him down big time. How could he ever face him again? Would he even get the opportunity to face him again – if this mob got its way, chances are, he never would! If only he could relive those last few hours again, things would be different.

So many people like Peter these days; hankering after the "if onlys". And as we get older, there seems to be more and more "if onlys" along the way.

When we're young we just take things as they come; we make the best of what we have; we go for the things we want; we chase our dreams; we follow our rainbows.

But everything has a cost; there's a price to be paid for everything; and sometimes we don't realise how much we've handed over until later in life when we find ourselves reflecting on things and how we come to be where we are.

For many people, it's as if they've had a sword in their hands cutting off the people and things that in previous days were nearest and dearest to them. And then the regrets begin to well up - if only we hadn't said those things; if only we'd acted sooner; if only we'd admitted the truth; if only we'd stayed where we were. If only we hadn't turned our backs on Jesus and the way of life our parents taught us to follow. If only we hadn't lived as if Jesus didn't exist or didn't matter. If only we could live our lives all over again.

Is there a way back for us? Of course there is – and Easter tells us how – “There's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin; there's a door that is open and you may go in; at Calvary's tree is where you begin - when you come as a sinner to Jesus”.

Jesus looks at us the way he did at Peter - not in condemnation but in love; willing us to return to him so that he can give us a fresh start; a second chance & a new beginning. What a Saviour!