

The West End Herald

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS

by Dr. Richard D. Phillips

Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me?
Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till
you have denied me three times. John 13:38

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During Jesus' farewell discourse, He told the disciples that He would soon leave them. Because of this, Jesus urged, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another" (Jn. 13:34). That is the kind of biblical teaching that is not hard to understand, but is seldom valued. Simon Peter returned to the mysterious issue of his departure: "Lord, where are you going?" (Jn. 13:36). Speculation about the future was just so much more exciting than quietly living an obedient life of love!

Peter's interruption occurred during Jesus' teaching to the disciples about how they should live after His death and departure from earth. Peter was not ready to accept that the disciples could not follow Him immediately. "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you" (Jn. 13:37), Peter blurted out. Where Jesus was going and what Jesus was doing were far more important than what Peter would do for Jesus. It was to make this point clear to Peter that Jesus replied with a statement that was simultaneously a prophecy, a rebuke, and a ministry. "Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times'" (Jn. 13:38).



PETER'S "SUDDEN" FALL

What were the steps that led to Peter's denial of Christ? First was Peter's ignorance of what lay before our Lord, despite repeated explanations of the necessity of His death! It was not Peter who would lay down his life for Jesus, but Jesus who would lay down his life for Peter.

Peter also revealed an astonishing ignorance of his sin-corrupted nature! This ignorance of spiritual

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weakness is not restricted to Peter. Christians think they can toy and dabble with forbidden pleasures, and then are dismayed when they are overwhelmed in moral catastrophe.

All that Peter would be asked to do that evening is admit that he was a follower of Christ, yet even that proved far more than his strength could perform. No wonder that Jesus taught us daily to pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Mt. 6:13).

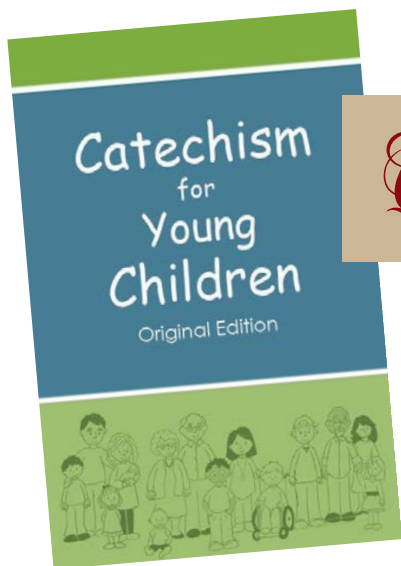
A second contributor to Peter’s “sudden” fall was his overconfidence. Mark tells us that Peter not only claimed that he would die for Jesus, but also emphasized how much more faithful he would be than the others: “Even though they all fall away, I will not,” he boasted (Mk. 14:29). Jesus knew what Satan would think of Peter’s pompous self-confidence. Satan would overcome the fisherman not at his weakest point but at his strongest, the matter of Peter’s courage, thus proving Peter’s need for divine grace.

Third, Peter’s fall resulted from his neglect of spiritual resources. Later that evening in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus advised, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Lk. 22:40). Yet when the Lord returned from his own prayers he found Peter and the others not praying but sleeping.



FALLEN BUT NOT FORSAKEN

We should be heartened by the fact that while Peter would fall he would not be forsaken. Peter will be restored, first, because of Christ’s declaration. Jesus told him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward” (Jn. 13:36). The same promise



Question 73:

What are the ten commandments sometimes called?

Answer:

The Decalogue.

And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. Exodus 34:28

The name *Decalogue* literally means “ten words.” These ten commandments were written on two stone tablets by the finger of God (Deuteronomy 9:10). Now, if God is a spirit and does not have a body like men (Catechism #9), why does the Bible say God has a finger? Sometimes we say that a teddy bear is sleepy and needs to take a nap with you. We don’t really believe that a teddy bear gets tired, and we know that God does not have a finger, but these are ways of relating things to us in a personal way. We know what it is like to be tired, and we know how a finger works. Using “human language,” we can try to understand what our God is like. We don’t know how the words appeared on the tablets, but thinking about a finger writing the words helps us understand in a small way what our awesome God is like. ♦



at the corner of

River & Rhett

Choral Evening Service

Sunday, March 24

Thank you to Rev. Jeffrey Early, Mr. Verlyn Smoker, Mr. John Gentry, Chancel Choir, and orchestra for the wonderful evening of Scripture and music, preaching, praying, and singing! ♦





1 Ford Duncan Jr., Kevin Fitzgerald, Ryan Horn,
Joseph Maralit, Will McDaniel, Josiah Scott

2 Melton Duncan, Clara Gearhart

3 Carole Fitzgerald, Leah McGuirt

5 Avery Johnson

6 Audrey Burman, Joe Earle, Bob Margenau,
Jennifer Superdock

This Week

MORNING SERMON

Dr. Richard D. Phillips

INSIDE THE EMPTY TOMB

John 20:1–10

EVENING SERMON

Rev. Brendon J. Branigin

RESURRECTED AND REIGNING FOR YOU

Ephesians 1:16–23

Sunday, March 31

- 7:00 A.M. Sunrise Service (*Parking Lot*)
- 8:00 A.M. Breakfast (*Gymnasium*)
- 8:55 A.M. Children's Chapel (*Sanctuary*)
- 9:00 A.M. Sunday School
- 10:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 5:30 P.M. Season of Prayer (*Chapel*)
- 6:00 P.M. EVENING WORSHIP

Tuesday, April 2

- 10:00 A.M. WIC Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)

Wednesday, April 3

- 5:00 P.M. Pastoral Care Committee (*Office Work Room*)
- 5:15 P.M. WIC Council (*Conference Room*)
- 5:30 P.M. FAMILY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SUPPER (*Gym*)
- 6:00 P.M. Christian Education Committee (*Office Work Room*)
- 6:15 P.M. Hope Choir (K4–K5); Covenant Choir (Grades 1–6); Youth Choir (Grades 7–12)
- 6:45 P.M. Missions Moment (*Gym*)
- 7:00 P.M. CAT Kids (Ages 3–Grade 4); Covenant Kids (Grades 5–8)
- 7:00 P.M. Jr. & Sr. High Bible Studies
- 7:00 P.M. Adult Prayer Meeting & Bible Study (*Gym*)

Thursday, April 4

- 9:30 A.M. Precepts Bible Study (*Conference Room*)

Friday, April 5

- 9:00 A.M. Raising Up Mothers (*Fellowship Hall*)
- 12:00 P.M. Men's Luncheon/Bible Study (*Gym*)
- 1:30 P.M. Mission to Main

Upcoming Events

spcgreenville.org/calendar

March 31	Easter Sunrise Service (at SPC parking lot)
April 7	New Member Reception and Luncheon
April 13	Sharing Your Faith Workshop (rescheduled from 3/16)
April 14	Baptism Sunday
April 21	The Lord's Supper in the Evening Service

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is given to everyone who truly believes on Jesus Christ: though you fall you will certainly be restored both to faithfulness and to heaven. For Jesus has promised of all who come to Him in faith: “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (Jn. 10:28; cf. Jn. 6:39-40).

Second, Luke’s Gospel explains Peter’s restoration after his denials of Jesus by virtue of Jesus’ prayer for Peter’s repentance and restoration. “Simon, Simon, behold,” he said, “Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail” (Lk. 22:31-32). Satan may be able to overcome Peter’s courage but he could not defeat Jesus’ prayer. So it is for all who belong to Jesus through faith. Paul states: “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us” (Rom. 8:34). Jesus’ ministry for every believer continues even now, safeguarding in heavenly prayer those whom he purchased on earth with his own blood.

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Third, Jesus' warning to Peter included a provision that was intended to provoke his repentance. When Peter had denied Jesus for the third time, "immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed" (Lk. 22:60). At that moment, Jesus turned and looked at his disciple. "And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord... and he went out and wept bitterly" (Lk. 22:61-62). Christians may trust that Jesus has made provision for the repentance and restoration of any of His people who fall into temptation, so that we can face the future with hope.



WITNESSES OF THE SAVIOR

Knowing that Jesus will be faithful to us no matter how waywardly we may stray, a Christian's privilege is to do the very thing that Peter failed to do. We are to be witnesses for Jesus in the world. Peter was asked: "You are one of his disciples, are you not?" Our privilege is to answer, "Yes, I am," and then to tell all who will hear about the grace and glory of Jesus Christ. ♦

— Samuel Rutherford —



Believe God's love and power more than you believe your own feelings and experiences. Your rock is Christ, and it is not the rock that ebbs and flows but the sea.

Announcements



Death of a Church Member

Spencer Player died in Christ on Monday, March 25.
A Memorial Service will be held on Monday, April 1, at 11:00 A.M.
in the Sanctuary with Visitation following the service.

Men's Bible Study

On Monday, April 1, there will be no Men's Bible Study.

New Member Reception and Luncheon

The church family and visitors are cordially invited to a luncheon honoring our new members. (New members will be introduced to the congregation at the 11:00 A.M. Worship Service.)

- Date:** Sunday, April 7, 2024
Time: Following the 11:00 A.M. Worship Service
Place: Gymnasium
Food: Meat and drinks will be provided.
Church members are asked to bring generous portions of sides and desserts.



Service Opportunity

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is in need of some men to help with moving the seminary library to the Commons for the upcoming renovations. Responsible teens can also help out. Help will be needed on the following dates:

March 30—Saturday, 8 A.M.–1 P.M., lunch provided.

Need 10–12 people to disassemble and reassemble Main Stacks shelves

April 6—Saturday, 8 A.M.–1 P.M., lunch provided.

Need 10–12 people to disassemble and reassemble Main Stacks shelves

April 13—Saturday, 8 A.M.–1 P.M., lunch provided.

Need 10–12 people to disassemble and reassemble Main Stacks shelves

Individuals willing to help at other times during the week (retirees, etc.) can contact Andy Wortman directly at awortman@gpts.edu.

Graduates!

If someone in your family is graduating from high school, technical school, college, or university, please contact the church office so we can prepare for our Graduation Banquet on Wednesday, May 8.

Special Adult Sunday School

On Sunday, April 7, Gethin Jones, our missionary in Lille, France, will be speaking to the adults during the Sunday School hour. All adult classes will meet in the Sanctuary at 10:00 A.M.

Sharing Your Faith Workshop

Youth and Adults are encouraged to attend this Evangelism Explosion Workshop on Saturday, April 13, taught by Evangelist David Todd. Light snacks will be provided as you learn practical ways to share the precious truths of the Gospel with those around you. The workshop will be held in the Fellowship Hall from 9:00 A.M.–12:30 P.M. Please contact Rev. Branigin (bbranigin@spcgreenville.org) for more information or to sign up.

Afflictions are light when compared with what we really deserve. They are light when compared with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. But perhaps their real lightness is best seen by comparing them with the weight of glory which is awaiting us.

—Arthur W. Pink

