

((For Good Friday Class Worship Service))

The Courtyard Scene - Ann Weems

Over and over again

we sit in our courtyards
our mouths speaking what our hearts are full of ...

WE DO NOT KNOW HIM.
DONOTDONOTDONOT
KNOWHIMKNOWHIMKNOWHIM echoes loudly
emphatically
filling time and space
heaven and earth;

and yet

the saddest part is
when the cock crows
we don't have the ears to hear

TOHEARTOHEARTOHEAR

At least Peter had the ears to hear
and the heart to weep.

A reading from Mark, chapter 14 verses 71 and 72- this is the Common English Bible translation:

71 But he cursed and swore, "I don't know this man you're talking about." 72 At that very moment, a rooster crowed a second time. Peter remembered what Jesus told him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down, sobbing.

(This is the Word of the Lord) (thanks be to God)

Peter has denied Jesus three times. There were three entire moments that Peter could have chosen differently in what to say to the people asking questions. But instead, three times, Peter said he didn't know who Jesus was, there was no connection between them, cursing and swearing.

Maybe you've been in this moment of your life. You know you know something- but you also know that no one else is allowed to find out that you are connected to the situation. I can deny things with the best of them. My childhood is full of stories of me explaining that I didn't do something.

My mother's frustration is simply one symptom of that. She tells a story of me when I was about 5 years old. And I actually remember doing the thing she was blaming me of. I had written, in sharpie, on the wall. But I knew I would get in trouble, so instead of just drawing something or writing my name, I wrote my brother's name. THOMAS. Giant letters. Right at the height of my hands. My mother asked me if I wrote on the wall. I explained that I didn't know who had written on the wall, but it was probably my brother since it was his name. She asked me a couple more times if I was *sure* it was my brother. I politely told her, every time, of course, it was him- it was his name on the wall. My mother looked at me. Nodded, I thought I was free to go. Then she told me I was lying. And calmly explained that my brother was only 3 years old... He couldn't even spell his name.

Trust me, I broke down and sobbed. Just like we see Peter doing at this moment of our text. And maybe you were a good kid, maybe you didn't lie to the adults in your life about who wrote what on which wall. But I know each of us here has felt the immense shame that Peter feels at this moment. Three times, three people asked Peter to tell the truth. All he had to do was say, yes- I know Jesus, he is my teacher and my friend, my mentor. Instead, Peter cursed, denied, and said he didn't know the man who was giving up so much for him.

There is no peace in this passage. There is no resurrection in this passage. This passage is hurt, and pain. It says, "Peter remembered what Jesus told him, 'Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.' And he broke down, sobbing." Peter knows what he did. And he was called out for it before the actual denial ever happened.

To be called out in this way must have been intense at best. I'm not surprised he sobbed. Peter realized what had happened. I wonder if Peter was realizing that if this

event had come true, that could mean that all the other events that Jesus had spoken could come true. Judas has already betrayed Jesus, Peter just denied him. What would it mean for the disciples if the rest of Jesus' words were to come into reality? (O Lord, have mercy)