

²⁷ "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' ²⁸ But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." ²⁹ Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will not." ³⁰ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times." ³¹ But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.

The Christian faith is not about bold promises of heroic service. In fact, the Christian faith is not about our words or abilities at all. The words of the Christian faith are incarnate in Jesus Christ, as is all the Christian does. No matter how sincere we are at the moment, we are frail human beings and can never guarantee how we will react under all circumstances. I find that the only thing more embarrassing than hearing someone make a boastful promise is to catch myself doing the same.

Beyond that, we see from this episode that the one who makes a boast often misses the point entirely. Here Jesus predicts that they will "fall away," and then goes on to talk about the ultimate remedy for our falling away, his resurrection. Yet, under Peter's leadership, all the disciples miss that point by denying that they will disown Jesus. The disciples miss the opportunity to grasp the message of hope that would sustain them through the coming darkness by defending the supposed virility of their allegiance.

Every time you are tempted to look down on those silly disciples, find the closest mirror and take a good long look at yourself. Each time you think that you can handle a situation or relationship on your own; you are making a baseless boast and missing an opportunity to experience God's grace in your life. To know God and his grace in our lives we need to stop talking about our selves and start listening fully to him.

Lord Jesus, in my enthusiasm I often try to get out ahead of you and declare what I will do. Gently remind me that I really cannot do anything good on my own, but only with your help and according to your will. Help me not to miss the lessons you would have me learn because I am telling you what I am going to do. Amen.