

## History's Hindrances

What was going through Peter's mind when he wrote, "*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer*" (1 Peter 4:7).

The shock of an entire system of government that had existed since Moses, crumbling to the ground, was sobering (Colossians 2:14). Perhaps, the chilly reception that he correctly expected from Jewish Christians might have weighed on him (Galatians 4:16). And, did he recall an incident in his past?

Perhaps, still burning in his memory was a dark night when, after praying, the Savior "*came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour?'*" (Mark 14:32, 37, ESV). How would Peter ever live that down? This was the continuation of a string of disappointments that could have haunted Peter all his life, from the "Get thee behind me, Satan" incident (Matthew 16:23) to the "I do not know the man" stumble (Matthew 26:72). Yet, in his first epistle to persecuted Christians, Peter would issue a warning almost identical to the one he had struggled to obey, and did so with the full expectation that his audience would heeding his warning.

We must bounce back! It is incredible that God would place in the hands of humans the fix for failure (2 Corinthians 4:7). In His providential wisdom, God forgives, emboldens and empowers through His divine Word so that we might bring a hope of Heaven to fellow failures, in spite of our frailties.

Peter is a prime example of perseverance amidst imperfection. So much history could be thrown in our face. No one looks back on their personal life without some regret and, some of us, with deep, specific regret. Nevertheless, as Peter here exemplifies, our sins do not justify apathy, timidity, or cowardice. We can know the truth (John 8:32) even though we do not live it perfectly (Romans 3:23). Further, we can speak the truth to our neighbors even if we have erred; being a sinner is no excuse for withholding Heaven from those who would benefit from the illumination of that Divine light we hold in hearts scarred by life's wounds.

Peter was flawed; we are flawed. The truth, however, remains the truth. If we do not rise above our history to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), who will? Who can?

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