

What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object? This is a classic philosophical paradox meant to show that there are some dilemmas that cannot be resolved. However, the paradox is flawed since if there exists an irresistible force then no object is immovable.

In our passage today an irresistible force collides with an immovable object. My hope is that today you will take comfort from the fact that all of the seemingly irresistible forces in the world that strike fear into the hearts of ordinary citizens will be seen for what they are – temporary nuisances that will pass away like all other forces in the world.

The immovable object is the rock of our salvation. Jesus is concealed in Daniel 2 when King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream about a statue representing a succession of powerful nations, Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Greek and Roman empires. All these world powers were crushed by a rock.

“You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Dan. 2:34-35

Jesus was faithful to the Father because He denied Himself.

The response of the ambitious is irrational.

The opinions of those who refuse to follow Christ are rarely consistent.

Jesus remained silent when asked about the opinions of others.

Jesus responded directly to the direct question about His true identity.

He quoted Ps. 110:1 and Dan. 7:13.

This is the first time He directly claims to be the Messiah.

They will see Him in the post-resurrection judgment.

Irony: They are judging the One who will ultimately judge them.

Story of Judge who was treated rudely by driver – later appeared before him.

Jesus' blasphemy (this is another occasion where He claims unequivocally to be God) was punishable by death, particularly by stoning. They struck Him and demanded that He prophesy as to who did it. This was a messianic test. The temple guards then followed the example of their superiors.

Peter was unfaithful to Jesus because he didn't deny himself.

The response of the ambivalent is irritation (irreverence).

God's will that Jesus live a painful life and die a painful death. The OT said Jesus would be rejected by evil people. He was the rejected cornerstone. Ps. 35 – pain of betrayal from a close friend. The would hate me without cause.

God chose Judas to volunteer to betray Jesus.
God chose Peter to volunteer to deny Jesus.

Wherever the story of Jesus' arrest is told, the story of Peter and the rooster is sure to be told as well. We love this story because we understand it and because we can see ourselves in it. Few Bible stories speak to us as this one does.

How could Peter deny Jesus? Several reasons:

1. He talked when he should have listened. "I won't deny you." He didn't appreciate his own weakness. He had an inaccurate awareness of himself. 14:26-31
2. He slept when he should have prayed. He didn't heed the warnings of Jesus. Three times Jesus said, "Be alert." Three times the disciples fell asleep. 14:32-45
3. He followed Jesus from a safe distance. 14:54. He was all-in for Jesus until the others were all-out. He wanted to be close enough to Jesus to see what was going to happen but not so close that he would suffer the same fate.
4. He warmed himself at the wrong fire.

Only Luke records that, "The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." Lk. 22:61.

By this time Jesus' face is black and blue, his eyes almost swollen shut, his cheeks bruised and covered with spittle. A trace of blood trickles from his lips. Even though it is in the dead of night, Peter can see him perfectly in the firelight. And Jesus can see him.

Follow Jesus with humility. Your faith will not fail but your courage will. God allowed Peter to travel where he never wanted to go to make him the man he always wanted to be.

This story is for those who are weak and confused.

This story is for those who have failed miserably...or succeeded more miserably.

This story is for those who are coming back to Jesus. You know those tears.

How do we know this story? The only way we could know about this is from Peter himself. Once restored, he could never stop talking about the grace and goodness of the Savior in response to his own failure.

"Every Christian then who has a right understanding of his or her nature understands that we live in a very dangerous place. Not just the world around us, not just the current culture that threatens us, but we live as new creations in a very dangerous, personal situation, for we are contained within our own fallenness. Therein lies the spiritual struggle." MacArthur

Three times Peter denies the Lord.
Three times Jesus asks, "Do you love me?"

There is a lot of fear in our country today. There are good reasons to be concerned. But along with our national insecurity there seems to be a growing despair among church people that the foundations are being destroyed. Life is not what it used to be. Christianity is being pushed out of the public square and Christians are looked at with a growing hostility. Jesus is not welcome on college campuses and Christian professors are under intense pressure to conform to the secular establishment. This wave of anti-religious sentiment sometimes feels like an irresistible force. But let's never forget that our feet have been set upon a rock and that rock is Christ.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10:1-4

"Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: Whoever believes will not be in haste (NET Bible, "will not panic").'" Is. 28:16

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit." Eph. 2:19-22

"For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,' and 'A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.'" 1 Pe. 2:6-8

Ps. 118:8, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."

Peter denies Jesus three times:
"I don't know what you're talking about."
"I am not one of His followers."
"I don't even know the man."

When the rooster crowed a second time Peter remembered Jesus' words just a few short hours earlier. "You will deny Me." He began to weep. As Peter was denying Jesus the third time Luke tells us that "Jesus turned and looked at him." (Lk. 22:61). Sinclair Ferguson says, "That look was to be his salvation, for he saw in those eyes not condemnation but compassion. That was the turning point in his life... Now, in this most

painful and memorable of ways, Peter saw himself as he really was, repented, and was remade into the great apostle.” (commentary on Mark, p. 252)

5. 14:72, “And Peter remembered...and he began to weep.”

“This hidden memory will pull the rope that will ring the bell of Peter’s conscience.”
Hendricksen

Two of Jesus’ closest friends failed Him in big ways. Judas betrayed Jesus and Peter denied Him. Both of these men wept over their actions. The difference is that one of them recovered and the other did not. The difference is Peter kept following Jesus, even in the wake of his failure. He repented, trusted Christ for forgiveness and received a full pardon. He found grace in his time of need. Judas, on the other hand, filled with regret ran to the religious authorities to try and make amends but his pleas were met with deaf ears. He ran to the wrong ears.