

Stories Tales of Transformation

A.J. McInerney

Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 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: 37-38, ESV)

Golf has often been compared to a roller coaster. If there's ever been a roller coaster round, Rory's final round in his bid to win the 2025 Masters is it!

He was bunkered after his opening drive, only to wind up with a double bogey right out of the gate. Bunkered again on two, he managed to squeak out a par.

After magnificent shots on holes three and four, he was back to even par. Just when we thought he had control, he pushed his drive into the trees on five and pulled his drive on seven. Then he lands in yet another bunker on eight.

With a birdie on nine, we can breathe again. After a one-arm swing from the fairway on ten, he birdies ten. Our heart rates are steady.

After making a mess of number 11, he wisely played to the middle of the green on 12, two-putting for a par.

Inexplicably, on number 13, Rory hits a short pitch into Rae's Creek for his third shot and walks off the green with his second double bogey. By then, we are emotionally drained.

What we saw on the 15th was legendary—a seven iron around the trees from 209 yards out, landing close to the hole. After nearly making a birdie on 16, the Irishman delivered again on 17 with another short iron to a few feet.

For those of us struggling to get him across the finish line, we were all but exhausted by the time he hit his gap wedge into the bunker right of 18 and failed to get it "up and down." After that wild ride, Rory eventually won on the first playoff hole against Justin Rose's heroic efforts!

For those who stereotype golf as a way to doze off during the telecast, they clearly don't understand our sport! And for those who portray walking with Christ as a dull life filled with one monotonous season after another, they've clearly never experienced the real thing.

Everyone who calls Jesus Christ "Lord" and strives to live in a manner worthy of his calling faces ups and downs in this life. If there is a poster child that symbolizes the highs and lows of life, it's the Apostle Peter.

Peter, a man bold and courageous, a man who eventually died as a martyr for his faith in Jesus Christ, was a man given to "ups and downs."

Peter was a man willing to leave everything behind and follow Christ, yet he caved in fear, denying any knowledge of Jesus before a young girl.

Earlier, Jesus tells Peter that Satan demanded to "sift you like wheat." Before Peter can respond, Jesus says, "But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail."

Peter, full of bravado, blusters out, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." Then he fails miserably by denying Jesus three times just before hearing the rooster crow (See Luke 22:31-34).

At the end of all our seasons walking with Jesus, we will look back on our many ups and downs and understand why we crossed the finish line—Jesus prays for us.

Prayer: Jesus! Remind us we cannot live this faith life in our own strength. Remind us that grace got us in, and grace will get us across the finish line.

READING: Luke 22: 31- 34; Matthew 16: 13-23; Mark 14: 32-42.

1. If there is any area in your game that you might be overconfident in, what is it? Discuss!

2. After reading these three texts, identify the areas where Peter is overconfident, and explain why!

3. Application: How might Peter's failures encourage us in our walk with Jesus?
