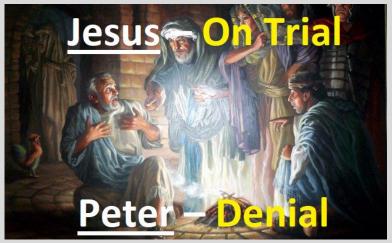
Text: Mark 14:53-72 NAU (New American Standard, 1995 Version)



Wednesday, March 24 at 11:00 & 7:00 Sixth Wednesday in Lent – 2021

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Last Wednesday – as Jesus was being arrested, Peter was initially courageous, but eventually ran scared! Why? He allowed his potential level of discomfort to become GREATER THAN his goal of following Jesus. We have something similar today as Peter, still being controlled by fear, denies even knowing Jesus.

- 1. Peter was Curious, but Not Courageous: 53 They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. 54 Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the fire. // It was nighttime; as Jesus was led away, Peter had followed at a safe distance. Jesus was now inside undergoing His first of five trials, while Peter was outside with a fire as the only source of light.
- Jesus was Considered Guilty, but there was No Proof:
 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept

trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, and they were not finding any. ⁵⁶ For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent. ⁵⁷ Some stood up and *began* to give false testimony against Him, saying, ⁵⁸ "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'" ⁵⁹ Not even in this respect was their testimony consistent. // In our nation, *a person is innocent until proven guilty*. For Jesus, they considered Him guilty – *even though He was innocent*. The OT law requires two witnesses to be able to put someone to death (Deut. 17:6), *but there were not two FALSE witnesses who agreed with each other*.

3. Right Question, Right Answer: 60 The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saving, "Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" 61 But He kept silent and did not answer. Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" 62 And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and **COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."** // Isaiah, 700 years earlier, had written these words about the Suffering Servant, who is the Messiah: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth" (53:7 NAU). So, to the false charges, Jesus was silent. However, when the right question was asked, "Are You the Christ...?" Jesus said, "I am..." Those Jewish leaders should have ▶put the trial on hold, ▶compared Jesus with the OT prophecies, and *realized He is the Messiah. Thank God we know and believe! Today, many are consumed by this world; let us pray for them to hear, repent, and believe!

4. Total Rejection of Jesus: ⁶³ Tearing his clothes [an expression of grief], ¹ the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴ You have heard the blasphemy ["the speech that is against the nature and power of God" (BW, Friberg)]; how does it seem to you?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. ⁶⁵ Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face. // Since their false witnesses did not work, they used Jesus' statement of TRUTH to say that He condemned Himself. Jesus made Himself fully known, but sadly they fully rejected Him [9]! Then, God's Son, the Messiah was extremely mistreated [9]!

5. Peter was Still being Controlled by Fear:

- a. First denial: ⁶⁶ As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Nazarene." ⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, "I neither know [have knowledge of] nor understand [comprehend] what you are talking about." // Peter, the great leader of the disciples was brought down by a lowly servant girl. When she challenged Peter's relationship with Jesus, his only way to escape arrest and worse thinking about his severing of the ear was to lie: "I have no information about that man, nor do I get what you are saying."
- b. <u>Second denial</u>: And he went out onto the porch [trying to get away], and a rooster crowed [indicating it was about 3 AM]. ⁶⁹ The servant-girl [the same one from earlier] saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders,

¹ For examples, see Genesis 37:34; Joshua 7:6; 2 Samuel 1:11; 3:31; Esther 4:1

- "This is one of them!" ⁷⁰ But again he denied it. // The girl had no ability to lay hands on Peter, so she tried to move the bystanders to action! However, Peter denied in such a way that no action was taken!
- c. Third denial: And after a little while ["about an hour" (Luke 22:59 NAU)] the bystanders [one of which was related to Malchus (John 18:26)] were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean too." [That was the strongest accusation that Peter received!] 71 But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about!" 72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to weep. // Peter basically said, "If I am not telling the truth, let me be eternally condemned!" Peter – who had ♦witnessed Jesus' miracles, *confessed Him to be the Christ, and *saw Him transfigured – gave a strong denial! But then, to call Peter to repentance, *the rooster crowed a second time, *Peter remembered, and *Peter was sorrowful!

Conclusion:

- Truth If we deny Jesus, He will deny us (Matt. 10:33)!
- Relevance Peter controlled by fear; us the same!
- Inspiration When we stay close to Jesus and focus on Him, we will be <u>fearless</u> and <u>courageous</u> followers!

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, since we have life now and forever through You, help us to live for You with peace and courage!

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