



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:** <sup>53</sup> They led Jesus away to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. <sup>54</sup> 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*.
2. **Jesus was Considered Guilty, but there was No Proof:** <sup>55</sup> 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.<sup>56</sup> For many were giving false testimony against Him, but their testimony was not consistent.<sup>57</sup> Some stood up and *began* to give false testimony against Him, saying,<sup>58</sup> “We heard Him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.’”<sup>59</sup> **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:**<sup>60</sup> **The high priest stood up and came forward and questioned Jesus, saying, “Do You not answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?”**<sup>61</sup> **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?”**<sup>62</sup> **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:** <sup>63</sup> Tearing his clothes [*an expression of grief*],<sup>1</sup> **the high priest said, “What further need do we have of witnesses? <sup>64</sup> 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.** <sup>65</sup> **Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!”** **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* 😞! Then, God’s Son, the Messiah *was extremely mistreated* 😞!**

5. **Peter was Still being Controlled by Fear:**

- a. First denial: <sup>66</sup> **As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, <sup>67</sup> and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.” <sup>68</sup> 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. Second denial: **And he went out onto the porch** [*trying to get away*], **and a rooster crowed** [*indicating it was about 3 AM*]. <sup>69</sup> **The servant-girl** [*the same one from earlier*] **saw him, and began once more to say to the bystanders,**

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

**“This is *one of them!*”** <sup>70</sup> **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!*] <sup>71</sup> **But he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this man you are talking about!”** <sup>72</sup> **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 fearless and courageous 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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