

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for February 25, 2018

Peter Denies Christ
Mark 14:66-72

I. Denial to the servant (14:66-68)

66 And 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 the Nazarene, Jesus." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean."

66 And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came,

- “And as Peter was below in the courtyard”
 - Jesus’ trial before the Sanhedrin was upstairs in the palace of Caiaphas
 - Peter was allowed into the courtyard of this palace
 - Peter had to gain entrance through another disciple (John?) who let him into the courtyard
 - John 18:15-16 “¹⁵ Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in.”
- “One of the servant girls of the high priest came,”
 - Servant girl of the high priest approaches Peter
 - Who is this servant girl?
 - She probably was not a part of the arresting party that had just seen Peter in Gethsemane
 - She probably had seen Jesus and the disciples over the course of the last week in Jerusalem and the temple precincts
 - What did she do? What were her responsibilities?
 - She could have been a female slave or maid in the household of Caiaphas, the high priest
 - Or perhaps she was the same servant girl identified in John 18:16-17 as the “gate keeper”

67 and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.”

- “And seeing Peter warming himself,”

- The servant girl recognized Peter by the fire
- She spoke to Peter while he was warming himself by the fire
- “She looked at him and said, ‘You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.’”
 - Notice the double emphasis on observing Peter (“seeing Peter... she looked at him”)
 - She got a better look and got the confidence to address Peter
 - She identifies Jesus as the Nazarene
 - This was a contemptuous, scornful, disdainful and insulting remark
 - Judean Jews viewed themselves more highly than Galilean Jews

68 But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.” And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed.

- “But he denied it,”
 - This is the first of Peter’s denials
- “Saying, ‘I neither know nor understand what you mean.’”
 - This is Peter’s attempt to go above and beyond in denying Christ
 - Almost playing dumb about the occasion and what was taking place upstairs
- Peter was accused of being with Jesus, the Nazarene who was being tried upstairs by the Sanhedrin
- This was not an easy time to profess allegiance to Christ
 - It would mean ridicule and suffering along with whatever Christ was about to experience
- We don’t face the same circumstances or suffering as Peter but we still shrink back from professing our allegiance to Christ
 - Peter was scared about what might happen to him
 - We’re scared about what someone might think about us!

II. Denial to the spectators (14:69-70)

69 And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. 69 And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” 70 But again he denied it.

- “And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed.”
 - Peter walked away from the fire and the servant girl temporarily to escape the embarrassing exchange
 - He went into the “gateway” or archway leading to the street path
 - This location probably got him away from the light of the fire as well
 - The first crow of the rooster took place after this first denial

69 And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.”

- “And the servant girl saw him”
 - This appears to be the same servant girl
 - Matthew 26:71 “another servant girl”
 - Luke 22:58 “And a little later someone else (man)”
 - “Since Matthew mentions ‘another maid’ (26:71) and Luke mentions ‘another [man]’ (22:58), it is clear that several joined in challenging Peter this time.”¹
- “And began again to say to the bystanders,”
 - Now the servant girl spoke to bystanders concerning Peter
 - She incited the help of others in identifying Peter as a disciple of Christ
 - Bystanders more than likely included the people that helped arrest Jesus in Gethsemane earlier
- ““This man is one of them.””
 - Her statement identifies Peter as one of “them”
 - The “them” must be a reference to the ones who were with Jesus when they arrested Him—the disciples
 - Disciples were viewed as guilty for having associated with Christ
 - Thus, this was life-threatening for Peter
 - This is why the disciples met behind closed doors after Jesus was buried because they were scared of the Jews

70 But again he denied it...

- “But again he denied it.”
 - This was the second denial of Christ by Peter
- Peter was now faced with identifying with the disciples of Jesus
- This only escalated the accusations being made toward him
- This would likely result in his immediate arrest and trial as well
- Understanding the dire circumstances, Peter denied the claim of being a disciple
- We face nothing of the sort in our own lives
- At the same time, we face our own dilemma
 - We need to be careful and clear about who we identify with
 - We don’t identify with a political party
 - We don’t identify with counterfeit Christians

¹ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 436.

- Seeker-sensitive Christians or Radical Westboro Baptist
- We need to clearly and consistently identify with those who have confessed their sin to find an eternal remedy in Jesus Christ

III. Denial with swearing (14:71)

And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” 71 But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”

70 [But again he denied it.] And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

- “And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter,”
 - “a little while” is about an hour according to Luke 22:59 “And after an interval of about an hour...”
 - Now the “bystanders” speak to Peter
- “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”
 - The bystanders were following up on the same thing that the servant girl had suspicions about
 - They confidently accuse Peter of being a disciple with their word, “certainly”
 - The explanation for their certainty comes because they identify Peter as a Galilean
 - Matthew 26:73 “After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, ‘Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.’”
 - “Frequently used as a derisive label by people in Jerusalem toward their northern neighbors. It strongly suggested that natives of Galilee were deemed unsophisticated and uneducated (cf. Acts 4:13).”²
 - “The Galileans are often mentioned in the Talmud because of their dialect (e.g. TB ‘*Erubin* 53b; *Megillah* 24b). They were unable to distinguish between the several guttural sounds that are so important an element in Semitic languages. Peter’s speech showed him to be a Galilean and his presence among the Judeans in the courtyard invited the deduction that he was a follower of the heretic Galilean, Jesus of Nazareth.”³
 - “According to John, a relative of Malchus provided further circumstantial evidence by recalling that he had seen Peter in the garden with Jesus”⁴

² John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1498.

³ Lane, 542.

⁴ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 436.

- John 18:26 “One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, ‘Did I not see you in the garden with him?’”

71 But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”

- “But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear”
 - Peter increased his response of denial by cursing and swearing
 - Translations
 - NKJV, NASB - “Then he began to curse and swear”
 - NET - “Then he began to curse, and he swore with an oath”
 - NIV - “He began to call down curses, and he swore to them”
 - What does it mean that he invoked a curse on himself?
 - “Peter is willing to take a curse upon himself rather than be associated with Jesus. His curse probably took the common formula, ‘May such-and-such happen to me if I am speaking falsely.’”⁵
 - “To curse, ‘to anathematize,’ means to place oneself or another under a curse. Peter was calling down the curse of God upon himself if he were not telling the truth. Such conditional curses were well known to the Jews (cf. Acts 23:12, 14, 21).”⁶
 - “The statement that he began to invoke a curse is intentionally left without an object in the Greek text to denote both that he cursed himself if he is lying and those present if they insist on asserting that he is a disciple.”⁷
 - What does it mean that he was swearing?
 - “Normally people curse something or someone, but neither is specifically mentioned here. Since it is unlikely that Peter is cursing himself, Mark, perhaps to avoid unnecessary affront or embarrassment, has omitted what the context would naturally suggest. In a final, desperate attempt to avoid association with Jesus, Peter possibly begins to curse Jesus.”⁸
 - “The second verb, ‘swear,’ refers not to saying profanities or curses but to swearing an oath that what one is saying is true.”⁹

⁵ John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Mk 14:71.

⁶ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 436–437.

⁷ Lane, 542-43.

⁸ D. A. Carson, “The Gospels and Acts,” in NIV Zondervan Study Bible: 2054.

⁹ Stein, 692.

- “To swear means ‘to take an oath’ for confirmation, as is done in court. The verb is used of God in Acts 2:30 to confirm that He will fulfill His promise.”¹⁰
- “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”
 - This is the third of Peter’s denials
 - Peter again states that he does not know the man who is presumably Jesus, the Nazarene
 - His statement is his attempt to sound convincing in his denial of Christ, “of whom you speak.”
 - “While invoking the witness of God to the truthfulness of his claim, Peter combined a breach of promise, conscious falsehood, and personal disloyalty to Jesus in this third denial.”¹¹
- When push came to shove, Peter did whatever was necessary to separate himself from Jesus
- Peter did whatever was necessary to save his own skin
- Peter crossed several lines by lying and giving false oaths
- We don’t face the pressure of physical death
- However, given the right circumstances we are prone to be silent about our faith

IV. Devastated sobbing (14:72)

72 And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

- “And immediately the rooster crowed a second time.”
 - This second crow was the fulfillment of Jesus’ words to Peter
 - Mark 14:26-31
 - This give us an estimate of the time of night? 3 am?
- “And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him,”
 - This second crowing of the rooster sparked the words of Jesus in Peter’s mind
 - Luke 22:61 “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord,”
- ““Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.””
 - This denial came from Mark 14:26-31
 - These words replayed in Peter’s mind

¹⁰ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 436–437.

¹¹ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 437.

- Why does Mark restate the words?
 - Vivid gut-wrenching aspect of this story from Peter's perspective
- “And he broke down and wept.”
 - This moment broke Peter
 - He wept and grieved that he had failed to live up to the bold loyalty he had recently pronounced
- “The fact that it is intimately tied to the account of Jesus before the Sanhedrin emphasizes the integrity of Jesus and his confession and the faithlessness of his disciple who refused to acknowledge his Lord.”¹²

¹² Lane, 543.