

Matthew 26:69-75 Simon Peter's Denial of Jesus

Introduction: Jesus had informed the disciples that they would all deny Him before the night was over. Peter stoutly denied that he ever would. Jesus said, "Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice."

Peter was brave to defend Jesus by cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest. But when all the others ran, he ran also.

Then he followed into Jerusalem to the palace of the high priest. John, who was already in, saw him at the door and got him in.

I. The first denial, verses 69-70.

- A. Peter was located "without in the palace" (Matthew) or "beneath in the palace" (Mark). (Jesus was on trial in an elevated area in the center and Simon was in the lower area around it.)
- B. Peter was sitting with temple servants and officers around a fire where he could see what was going on in the trial.
- C. A damsel accused him of being a disciple of Jesus.
(According to John she was the keeper of the door who had let him in.)
- D. Peter denied being a disciple and pretended that he did not know what she was talking about.
(Not "you do not know what you are talking about" but "I do not know . . .")
 - 1. He lied. (He knew very well.)
 - 2. It is always a sin for one to lie.
 - 3. For a Christian to deny being a disciple of Jesus is a big sin.
- E. Mark tells us that the cock crew right at this time. (Apparently Peter heard it, but it did not register in his consciousness at that time. Later he would remember.)

II. The second denial, verses 71-72.

- A. Peter leaves the group at the fire and goes out onto a porch.
 - 1. He wanted to get away from the woman who had accused him and from those who had heard her accusation.
 - 2. He can still see the trail from this location.
- B. Another maid saw him there and accused him of having been with Jesus of Nazareth.
 - 1. Someone has suggested that the first maid may have told this one.
 - 2. She does not speak directly to Peter, but to others about him.
(More officers and servants.)
 - 3. Luke indicates that one of the men joined with her in the accusation.
- C. Peter again denied being a disciple of Jesus, verse 72.
 - 1. This time he took an oath that he was telling the truth.
 - 2. He said, "I do not know the man."
 - 3. He is getting pretty much up-tight by this time.
 - 4. He lied, but he is scared.
(A man who is scared will do just about whatever he has to to protect himself.)

III. The third denial, verse 73-74a.

- A. After a while ("about an hour" - Luke) some of the men standing nearby approached Peter and accused him of being one of the disciples of Jesus, verse 73.
- B. Matthew said that they could tell by his speech that he was a Galilean. (He could not deny this, but did want them to think that he was one of the many Galileans not associated with the Jesus who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. Yes, but what brings him out at this hour of the night to witness the trial.)

- C. John says that one of the men turned out to be kin to the servant of the high priest, the man whose ear Peter had cut off.
 - 1. He said to Peter, "Didn't I see you in the garden?"
 - 2. That just about scared Peter to death.
- D. Again he denied the accusation.
 - 1. He began to swear and call down curses from heaven upon himself if he were not telling the truth, verse 74.
 - 2. He again denied knowing Jesus, verse 74.
 - 3. He was desperate.

IV. Peter's repentance, verses 74b-75.

- A. Immediately after this third denial, the cock crew for the second time.
 - 1. This time the sound did not just fade into the background.
 - 2. This time it came in loud and clear.
 - 3. This time it called something to his memory.
- B. Peter remembered the words of Jesus, verse 75.
 - 1. He remembered that Jesus had predicted that he would betray Him.
 - 2. Luke tells us that right at this moment Jesus turned and looked right straight at Peter.
- C. Peter went out into the darkness and wept bitterly
 - 1. Listen. It was not when Peter vowed to remain loyal to Christ that he became a great Christian.
 - 2. It was not when he expressed a willingness to die for Jesus that he became great.
 - 3. It was not when he drew his sword to defend Jesus that he became a great soldier for the Lord.
 - 4. Rather it was when he saw himself as sinful and weak that he made a start in becoming one of the mightiest warriors for Christ that the world has ever known.

Conclusion: Christian friend, how do you see yourself? You will never amount to anything in the cause of Christ if you see yourself as capable, loyal, worthy of esteem, worthy to be trusted. Only when you see yourself as nothing will you be mighty in the Lord.

Lost sinner friend, how do you see yourself?

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