**Peter Denies Christ**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 14:63-72**

**Wednesday Evening**

**October 16, 2019**

**Mark 14:63-72**

**63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be worthy of death.**

Saints, tearing one’s clothing was an ancient expression of deep sorrow (see Genesis 44:13).

**Leviticus 10:6**

“Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not mourn-do not let your hair hang loose as a sign of your mourning, and do not tear your clothes. If you do, God will strike you dead too, and his wrath will come upon all the people of Israel. But the rest of the people of Israel may lament the death of Nadab and Abihu, and mourn because of the terrible fire the Lord has sent.”

**Leviticus 21:10**

"The High Priest-anointed with the special anointing oil and wearing the special garments-must not let his hair hang loose in mourning, nor tear his clothing, 11 nor be in the presence of any dead person-not even his father or mother.

The law forbade a priest from tearing his garments over personal grief, but it was appropriate in an instance when blasphemy had been spoken in his presence.

Saint s, blasphemy was the sin of claiming to be God or of attacking God’s authority and majesty in any way. Caiaphas tore his clothing to signify his horror at the audacity of the claims of this mere teacher from Nazareth.

These religious leaders thought that Jesus was leading the people astray and bringing dishonor to God’s holy name. For any other human being, this claim would have been blasphemy; in this case, the claim was true.

Blasphemy was punishable by death. “Why do we need other witnesses?” asked Caiaphas without expecting any answer.

**Leviticus 24:15**

“And tell the people of Israel that anyone who curses his God must pay the penalty: he must die. All the congregation shall stone him; this law applies to the foreigner as well as to the Israelite who blasphemes the name of Jehovah. He must die.”

Jesus had incriminated himself. Caiaphas asked for their verdict. The Jewish leaders had the evidence they wanted, so they all condemned him to death.

**65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.**

Saints, next some of the members of the council acted in a most brutish way. Jesus was blindfolded, and they took turns hitting him and then asking him to tell who it was that hit him. When they finished with Jesus, the guards came and also beat Jesus. Yet even this had been prophesied in Scripture (Isaiah 52:14).

**Isaiah 52:14**

“Yet many shall be amazed when they see him-yes, even far-off foreign nations and their kings; they shall stand dumbfounded, speechless in his presence. For they shall see and understand what they had not been told before. They shall see my Servant beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know it was a person standing there. So shall he cleanse many nations.”

Jesus suffered great pain, humiliation, and brutality to take away our sin. Few of us get repeated opportunities, as Peter did, to profess or reject our allegiance to Christ. More often, our first denial of Jesus would keep away any further inquiries.

**Matthew 20:19**

“and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."

**Luke 18:33**

“and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again."

**Matthew 27:26**

“Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.”

But it is not our identification with Peter’s weakness that helps us most. Rather, what happened later becomes our source of hope. Peter’s repentance and the Lord’s restoration of him give us confidence that God can handle our failures.

**66 Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.**

Saints, this servant girl was actually guarding the gate to the inner courtyard (John 18:16).

**John 18:16-17**

16 But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. 17 Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

She had seen Peter enter. Jesus’ trial had been held in an upper story of the high priest’s palace; thus, Peter was below in the courtyard. When the girl saw Peter’s face more clearly in the light of the fire, she looked at him closely and recognized him as one who had been with Jesus (that is, one of Jesus’ disciples).

Saints, a common problem when reading the Scriptures is that many translators were ignorant of the Hebrew idioms, phrases, concepts and culture of the first century.

This is illustrated by a common misconception found in

**Matthew 26:34**

“that this very night, before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times.”

We know that Jesus was arrested in the garden and brought to the elders and Peter was in the courtyard of the High Priest. So Peter denies the Lord and immediately the cock crowed. He remembered what the Lord had said previously and wept bitterly.

**The word “Gever” in Hebrew can mean “Man” or “Rooster”**

and the

**Greek word used here is “Alektor” which means a Rooster**

Saints, it was erroneously decided by the translators to use “rooster” here but there is a problem. Roosters and chickens were not allowed in the city of Jerusalem while the Temple stood.

Roosters and chickens are dirty and can find their way in and out of almost anything. As a result, there was a ruling that they were not allowed in the city for fear they would find their way into the Temple and the Holy of Holies. So

**How can this verse be rectified?**

The cock in this passage was not a rooster, but a man called

**“The Temple Crier”**

and it was his job to announce the morning

**Tamid Service in the Temple**

by giving a three-fold cry for the priests to prepare for the service, for the Levites to go to their posts and for the

**Ma’amad (the standing men) to come for Worship**

Ignorance of the Temple practices by translators has caused a problem in understanding this verse. This “rooster” was actually a man and this has been confirmed by many historians and commentators such as Josephus;

As Jesus was being led out of the courtyard very early in the morning on that Passover, the Temple Crier’s voice was heard by Jesus and Peter, telling the people that the sacrifice was getting ready to be offered.

We know from archeology that priestly housing was very near to the southwestern wall of the Temple. There are some who think they have found the very house where Jesus’s hearing took place, and the very courtyard has been found.

**69 And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them." 70 But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it." 71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"**

Saints, once again Peter was put to the test. Another servant girl (Matthew 26:71) saw him.

**Matthew 26:71**

“And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

She didn’t question him; she began telling the others around that Peter was indeed one of them, meaning one of Jesus’ disciples. But he denied it again. This was Peter’s second denial.

About an hour passed (Luke 22:59) and some other bystanders also recognized Peter by his Galilean accent (Matthew 26:73).

**Luke 22:59**

“Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

**Matthew 26:72-75**

73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." 74 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Saints, Peter’s dialect was closer to Syrian speech than to that of the Judean servants in that Jerusalem courtyard. While Peter may have hoped to seem a natural part of the group by joining in the conversation, instead he revealed, by his speech, that he did not belong there.

Once again Peter lied, this time more vehemently. So Peter decided to make the strongest denial he could think of by denying with an oath, “I swear by God, I don’t know this man.” This was the third denial (14:30).

**72 And a second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.**

Saints, immediately upon Peter’s final words, the rooster crowed the second time. When Peter heard the rooster crowing and then saw Jesus look down at him from the upper story where the trial was being held (Luke 22:61), Jesus’ previous words flashed through his mind. Peter had indeed denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.

**Luke 22:60-62**

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Peter broke down and cried, not only because he realized that he had denied his Lord, the Messiah, but also because he had turned away from a very dear friend. Unable to stand up for his Lord for even twelve hours, he had failed as a disciple and as a friend.

Fortunately, the story does not end there. Peter’s tears were of true sorrow and repentance. Peter reaffirmed his love for Jesus, and Jesus forgave him (see 16:7; John 21:15-19). From this humiliating experience, Peter learned much that would help him later when he became leader of the young church.

**John 21:15-18**

15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**