

Matthew 26:57-75 The Denial of Peter

Today we begin the last sections of Matthew chapter 26, Matthew 26 verses 57 to 75. It begins at about page nine on your study guide. The Passover meal has just concluded. Judas left in the middle of the Passover meal to go and to tell the leaders where Jesus was going to be. Remember Judas sold out on Jesus, and wanted to tell the leaders where they could find Him.

Well, Jesus and the disciples then after the Passover meal left to go to the Mount of Olives. While on their way to the Mount of Olives, Jesus told the disciples that this day Zechariah chapter 13 verse 7 will be fulfilled, that is, **As they strike the shepherd the sheep will scatter.** And in response to that Peter says, "**Though all will be offended in You I will not be offended in You.**" And Jesus says to Peter, "Not only will you be offended in Me but this night you are going to deny Me three times before the rooster crows." Peter boasts again. At about Matthew chapter 26 verse 33 he boasts again. He says, "Even if I have to die for You I will not deny You." So the rest of the disciples they boasted the same thing, "Yeah! it goes for us too. We will die for you too. We will not deny you if we have to die for You."

So they reach the garden and Judas who went to tell the leaders where to find Jesus, Judas comes with the army. Remember last week we talked about how the cohort of Roman soldiers is about six hundred, plus the officers of the Temple, plus the others with them. So there are almost about one thousand people out there to take Jesus. And Judas and the soldiers arrive. And Jesus according to the Gospel of John, Jesus said, "Whom are you seeking?" They said, "Jesus the Nazarene." And Jesus - according to John - said, "I Am." That is the covenant name of God, *I Am*. And they all fell over in the garden. Jesus is showing that He is surrendering. He is not being captured, He is surrendering.

Peter began swinging a sword. As soon as the soldiers got up off the ground, he started swinging a sword and cut off the servant of the high priest's ear. His name was Malchus. Remember he made a commitment, "If I have to die for You, I will not deny You!" So he is taking the sword out and he is whipping them back. It could be that this falling of the troops backward gives Peter more motivation to start fighting. He says to himself, "We got this." With Jesus here and all these soldiers and people lying on the ground, when they start getting up he draws a sword out and begins to swing it around. He cuts off the man's ear. Remember he made a commitment to Jesus.

Jesus told Peter to put up the sword. That *My kingdom is not of this realm*. It is going to be by faith, He is not going to fight. Good lesson for us. It is not about protesting. It is not about fighting. It is all about trusting the Lord and praying for His will to be done. And let the Lord provide His will to be done.

So when the disciples saw that Jesus was going to surrender they all scattered just like Jesus said they were going to do. They would all scatter once the Shepherd was struck. That is not in condemnation, that is just a factual statement. Jesus said, "You are going to scatter when the shepherd is struck." He did not say, *you should not*. He said, *you will*. And Peter, "You will

deny Me before the rooster crows. You will deny Me three times." Not, *you should not do it*, but *you will*. You will deny Me. It is something that is part of the Lord's will.

For today on page 9 of your study guide verses 57 to 68, The Prosecution of Jesus before Caiaphas. Verse 57, **And the ones who had seized Jesus led Him away from the garden to Caiaphas the high priest.** Now John tells us that they took them to Annas first. Annas was the first original high priest of the Jews. Caiaphas was the High priest appointed by the Romans. And so He is being brought away to Caiaphas from Annas the high priest. We are looking at maybe twelve midnight, one o'clock in the morning that all this is taking place.

And so, **They lead Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.** This was an illegal trial. It was formed at night in private. Trials are supposed to be public where everybody can see and hear. No defense offered. In fact, no charges offered. No charges were made against Him. They had to try to bring false witnesses, as we will see in a moment - bring false witnesses to bring against Jesus false testimony, just to even have a trial. They are not after justice. They are out to trap Jesus.

Verse 58, **And Peter was following Him from a distance even to the courtyard of the high priest. And after having entered inside, he was sitting with the officers to see the end.** Peter made a commitment. They see them lead Jesus away. So he had a desire to see what was going to happen. But he follows at a far distance and enters in to see what is going to happen to Jesus, to see the end. **And the chief priests and the elders and the whole Sanhedrin was seeking false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death.** Psalm 27 verse 12 prophesies that they would bring false witnesses to testify of against Christ. So that they might find something to put Him to death. These were false witnesses.

Verse 60, **And they did not find any** (false witnesses). **Even many false witnesses had come forward, they did not find any.** Deuteronomy chapter 19 verse 15 establishes in Jewish law that there must be at least two or three witnesses for everything to be established. So they bring them. **But at last, two false witnesses had come forward.** In Mark chapter 15 verse 56 Mark states that even their testimonies were inconsistent - they did not line up. Still have not found two witnesses, but they used these two as a last resort.

These witnesses said, **This One said I am able to destroy the temple of God, and through three days to build it up.** He is making reference to what is recorded by Jesus in John chapter 2 (verse 19) except He did not necessarily say it the way they presented it. ***Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.*** But He was not talking about the building but about His physical body. He was talking about His resurrection. So He says - that is why Mark chapter 14 verse 56 tells us that their testimony was inconsistent. **And having stood up, the high priest said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What do these witness against You?" But Jesus was keeping silent,** verse 63. Imperfect tense verb means He was in continuous mode of keeping silent and not responding to anything that the people were saying. In fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 53 verse 7 - that He would stand before them, **He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth.**

And having responded the high priest said to Him, verse 63, "I charge You under oath according to the living God in order that You should tell us if You yourself are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus says to him, "You yourself have said." In other words, you said it. "Nevertheless, I say to you, from this time you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right of power," that is in fulfillment of Psalm 110 verse 1. "You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right of power, and coming upon the clouds of heaven, that is in fulfillment of Daniel chapter 7 verse 13. Then the high priest tore his garments, saying, "He blasphemed! Why still do we have need of witness? Behold, now you heard His blasphemy. What does it seem to you?" And the ones having answered said, "He is guilty of death."

Notice they said He is guilty of death, because Leviticus chapter 24 verse 16 says that if you blaspheme the name of God your sentence is death. So they say He is guilty of death. He used the very things that pertain to God for himself, making Himself God, and using God's name in vain according to them.

Then they spat in His face, and they beat Him, and slapped Him, saying, "Prophecy to us Christ, who is the one having struck You?" Luke chapter 22 verse 64 tells us that they blindfolded Him and came by and struck Him, slapped Him, spit in His face and then adjured Him to say who it was that did it, in mockery to Him. Throughout this ordeal I Peter chapter 2 verse 23 says, **While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats; but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.**

Then the Performance of Peter verses 69 to 75. **Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard,** verse 69. In John chapter 18 verse 18 it tells us that there were coals of fire burning in the courtyard and people were standing around warming themselves. That is very important. There are two coals of fire mentioned in Scripture. One where Peter is around now, where he will deny the Lord three times just like Jesus said he would. But also in John chapter 21 at verse 9 it tells us there were coals of fire when Jesus restored Peter back.

So Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. **And one girl, - young girl, a slave girl - came near to him saying, "And you yourself were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied before all saying, "I do not know what you are saying." And when he went out to the porch, another saw him and says to the ones there, "And this one was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied with an oath, he says, "I take an oath, I do not know the man."**

And after a little while - Luke chapter 22 verse 59 tells us that it was about an hour. **After a little while, having come near, the ones who had been standing by said to Peter, "Truly you yourself are from them, for even your speech makes you manifest (or evident)." Your speech gives you away. Your dialect, your accent. You are Galilean. You are one of His followers. Then Peter began to curse and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately a rooster crowed.**

Two strong words here for *to curse* in Greek, it means to call down death from God out of heaven if I'm lying. To call down a curse upon yourself. And secondly, to swear on an oath,

so again he takes an oath. He says, "I do not know the Man. Never heard Him." And immediately a rooster crowed.

Verse 75, **And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, having said to him that before a rooster crows, three times you will deny Me. And having gone out, he wept bitterly.** Peter was humbled and broken. He was ashamed of himself, not very pleased with himself. He could not live up to the oath that he gave the Lord, the commitment that he gave the Lord. But even though the Lord said what he was going to do, he contradicted the Lord. He said, "No, that is not going to happen. I will prove it to you." And he turned around and did otherwise.

So here and in John chapter 18 verse 18 it says that there were coals of fire at this location. Around this fire Peter would deny three times. Over the other fire in John chapter 21 verse 9, he would be restored as Jesus would say to him - which was the first time that he and Jesus spoke after this incident we are studying right here. He did not speak to Peter. After this moment when Peter went out and wept bitterly over his failure and his humility, he did not have Jesus speak to him again until later. After His resurrection in John chapter 21 when Jesus made some fish on the shore and the disciples were out fishing, and Jesus called the disciples to come in. And when they came in that is when Jesus addressed Peter.

You might turn to page 13 in your study guide, we have the three verses that have do with Peter's restoration in John chapter 21. Page 13. This is after the resurrection. **Therefore when they finished breakfast, Jesus says to Simon Peter,** this is the first time since he went out and wept bitterly, **"Simon son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"** The word *love* is the word **ἀγάπε** (agapē), the highest form of love. **Do you love me more than these?** Meaning He is pointing to the disciples because remember Peter said, "Though all will be offended in You, I will not. These guys might do it, but not me." **Peter says to Him, "Yes Lord; you know that I love You."** That word *love* is the word **φιλέω** (phileō), a friendship love. You know that I love you. **Jesus says to him, "Feed My lambs."** You see, He is in the process of restoring him.

You follow this through in verse 16. **Jesus said to him again a second time, "Simon son of Jonah, do you love Me?"** Again, using the word **ἀγάπε** (agapē), the highest form of love. But not saying *more than these*. He is just one on one with Peter. Peter do you **ἀγάπε** (agapē) Me? **Peter says to Him, "Yes Lord; you know that I love You."** And again, he uses the word **φιλέω** (phileō) for friendship love. **You know that I φιλέω (phileō) You. Jesus says to him, "Shepherd My sheep."**

Verse 17, **He says to him the third time, "Simon son of Jonah do you love Me?"** Interesting Jesus uses the word **φιλέω** (phileō) here. He changes. He does not use the word **ἀγάπε** (agapē), He uses the word **φιλέω** (phileō), which means affection. He is now challenging even Peter's confession that he has an affection of friendship for Jesus. **Do you love Me? Peter was grieved because He said to Him a third time, "Do you love Me?"** He was grieved that Jesus even challenged him with the lesser love word, **φιλέω** (phileō). **And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things."** That is the correct answer for everything. Lord, you know everything. Whatever He asks me, whatever He puts in my lap, *Lord, You know.* **"You know that I love You," φιλέω (phileō). Jesus says to him, "Feed My sheep."**

And Peter is restored. Three denials around the fire and three times the Lord ministered to Peter restoring him back to the faith. Peter did not know who he was. The Lord can only use broken vessels. The Lord can only use people who already know within their own heart and minds that they are weak and without Christ. They can do nothing, not one thing, that is the person God can use. Not the person who put confidence in themselves, but trusts in Christ for everything. He failed himself in his own opinion of himself. He did not disappoint Jesus. Not one word of discouragement from Jesus. Just factual statements. It was His will that Peter go through this hard time with Jesus in the garden, and at Caiaphas's palace; so that it would bring out and expose to Peter who Peter is. And realize it is not self- confidence, it is trust in Christ. He did not disappoint Jesus because Jesus already knew it. But when Jesus restored him - Peter denied him three times, Jesus used three questions to restore him back.

Peter learned I Corinthians chapter 10 verse 12, **Let him who thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he should fall.** If you think you can stand on your own, you think you got it made, "I got this." **Let him who thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he should fall.** It is the lowly position. It is the humble position. It is the position of realizing one's need for Christ. One's need to trust Him in every situation.

Next week we will begin chapter 27. Let's close with prayer.