

Daily Bible Study

“Courageous Perjury”

Mark 14:66-72

February 10 – 16, 2013

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –This week we return to our studies in Mark and take as our text **Mark 14:66-72**. We are looking at a very familiar story here which we have entitled *“Courageous Perjury”*. This is the story of Peter and his three denials of Jesus. So much has been said about Peter and his obvious failure this night but Lord willing we will see that there is more here for us to learn than the simple fact that as Jesus had predicted, Peter denied Him. We all have heard in person or at least have seen in a movie or show the famous words given to a witness in a court of law before they are about to give testimony. The words are: “Do you solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” Sworn testimony is evidence given by a witness who has made a commitment to tell the truth. This oath is given to remind witnesses that they are guilty of perjury if they do not speak the truth; perjury being the willful giving of false testimony under oath. Peter was in fact guilty of perjury in this text but we would also be wise to learn from the courage turned cowardice of this perjurer. **Mark 14:66-72**: *“Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.” 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. And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, “This is one of them.” 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.” Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” 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.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: *God, teach, admonish, exhort & encourage me as I study this Scripture.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 14:66-67**: *“Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.”* Before we venture to far into this text and hash out the three failures of this man Peter, I want us to pause, see, and hopefully understand the wonderful facts that are made evident from these two verses. You need to look back to **verse 54** in order to get a feel for the courage that was demonstrated here by Peter in our text. **Verse 54**

says, *“But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.”* Often this story is told in such a way as to really hammer Peter for his failure. What is often overlooked is that up to the very end of Jesus earthly life before crucifixion Peter has been a man of undying love and somewhat reckless courage. This is the man who got out of the boat to walk on water and the man who also drew his sword in the garden as a man prepared to defend Jesus by taking on an entire cohort of soldiers and mob of people by himself. He in fact cut off the right ear of Malchus which makes it even more incredible that after fleeing he would again show himself *into the courtyard of the high priest*. But lo and behold this is exactly where we find him. They all had initially fled (**Mark 14:50**) but Peter was keeping his word to this point and he was going to stay with Jesus (**Mark 14:27-31**). What I also find real cool is not merely the fact that Peter has the guts to be there but that he was recognized as one who had been *with Jesus of Nazareth*. I understand that his accent and appearance were the recognizable characteristics but make no mistake, this sinful man was learning as he walked with Jesus and would later on as Scripture declares be recognized for his courage and likeness to Jesus in **Acts 4:13** which read, *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”* Wow. That’s a compliment brothers and sisters. Suffice to say, what do people say about you and recognize in you when you are among them?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Jesus, help me see and learn from this story and the actions of Peter. May I be courageous to follow you and live in such a way that I would be recognized as Your child.*

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 14:68-70a**: *“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. And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, “This is one of them.” But he denied it again.”* Before we continue on I need to remind us of something we saw yesterday. Peter was recognized in the **Acts 4:13** passage because he was like Jesus. He was bold and wise because Jesus was bold and wise and was the source of Peter’s courage and wisdom. Peter was not anything special in and of himself. This was all a work and reflection of Jesus and His majestic glory and power and perfection. As we will now see there is a human sinfulness to Peter that won’t let him go until he reaches heaven and final glorification. Let’s now look at the sinful human nature emerge. The servant girl labels Peter; *“You also were with Jesus of Nazareth”*. But although he is courageous to a degree he is also sinful and *denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.* How quickly we see feet of clay on our hero. In **Acts 4** the people perceived and realized (understood) he had been with Jesus and here Peter says he doesn’t even understand what she’s talking about. Do you see how quickly we go down without close contact and faith in Jesus? Peter moves away quite

possibly for a safer position and it is here that we are told *a rooster crowed*. There is seemingly no response on Peter's part to the crowing of the rooster perhaps because he is engrossed now in saving face and covering himself and is out of tune if you will with Jesus and His plight. Some see Peter's moving as an attempt to get out of the place altogether but if in fact that was his goal I personally believe he could have gotten out; yet although we find him failing and denying Jesus...he stays. After yet another moment of recognition Peter again denies Jesus. We now have two denials and it still does not appear to have fully registered with Peter. He still stays there; somewhat close to Christ. Courageous? Perhaps. Calloused by sin? Most definitely.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Jesus, I thank You that although may fall and sin You have given me true faith and it is You that keeps holding me and not letting me go. I am, as Peter would later write, "...kept by the power of God through faith." Help me to keep my eyes, mind, and heart fixed on You and give me strength to stand strong in moments of temptation.*

THURSDAY – **Mark 14:70b-71:** “*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.” Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!”*” It is only getting more difficult for Peter as time moves along. At first it was merely the servant girl who recognized and engaged him but we now see that many others are getting into the act of questioning Peter. If we look at the synoptic gospels as well as John's account we find that there were indeed many people engaged with Simon Peter. People not only are recognizing his looks but also his speech and accent as *a Galilean*. Incredibly we read in **John 18:26**, “*One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?”*” Now the heat is really turned up as a relative of the man whose ear he cut off thinks he recognizes him. We know that by personality Peter is a bit high strung and excitable. One can only imagine what is going on in his mind and his heart rate at this moment. I still see here a glimmer of the perseverance of God's people as Peter still remains at the scene although he is sinning, calloused, and confused. The energy reaches a climax and Peter begins *to curse and swear, “I do not know this Man of whom you speak!* As Peter again denies Jesus *he began to curse and swear...* He may have just put an exclamation point on his denial with profanity but most scholars see in this verse that Peter was swearing he did not know Jesus and was calling down curses on himself if he was not telling the truth. This Greek word *anathematizō* means curse, to put under a curse, to devote to destruction. We see it used in **Acts 23:12, 14, and 21** where men had made an oath (curse) they would not eat until they had killed the Apostle Paul. It was a way of emphasizing the truth of a statement by calling down the judgment of God on oneself if you were not telling the truth (...so help you God). Peter, in the strongest cultural way perjured himself before God. Jesus is in the court being accused of blasphemy while the real blasphemer, for who Jesus died was out in the courtyard. Interesting also is the comparison to Judas; Peter denied Jesus repeatedly and emphatically yet as mentioned before,

unlike Judas, Peter truly loved Jesus from the heart and desired to obey his Lord although he in fact was a sinful, guilty man. He truly did *know this Man of whom you speak* but most importantly, the man Jesus loved him, knew him, saved him, prayed for him and forgave him.

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, thank You that in Jesus I'm known, loved, saved, prayed for, and forgiven. Although I still sin more often than I should, You are faithful and You bring me back to Yourself through loving discipline and correction. Help me obey You more faithfully.*

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – **Mark 14:72:** “*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.*” We closed yesterday's prayer speaking about Jesus bringing us back to Himself when we sin and we now see this very thing taking place in our text. Notice that after the *rooster crowed a second time* Peter remembers, the text says he *called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him*. Luke drives this home with an incredible footnote to the story in **Luke 22:60-61**, “*But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.*” Jesus brings him back as promised (**Luke 22:32**) with the first work of pointing him to his sin before a Holy God. As Peter begins to contemplate what he has done, he was sick to tears. Maybe he recalls Jesus frightening words in **Mark 8:38**. You and I can keep the guilt of our sin “under control” by surrounding ourselves with business and people throughout the day but then when we lay our heads on the pillow at night, and lay there alone with God we experience the weight and guilt of our sin in a very strong, crushing and breaking manner. Here Peter experiences that God given conviction and weeps. As we close the lesson, remember Peter did in fact fall here. And although we could speak to his failure being from “following Jesus at a distance” rather than staying near His side which we must do if we are to stand in temptation, make no mistake that Peter fell to a temptation which would have come only to a man of genuine faith and courage. Many of us could criticize his following at a distance but we must ask ourselves would we have even followed at all? Yes he sinned but he was also in the battle in order to be wounded by the enemy. We are thankful for the lesson God can teach us even in the light of Peter's sin. Finally, remember that Mark's source for the gospel is most likely Peter himself and therefore Peter here tells the story of his own denial for all to hear. What humility and beauty as he basically says, “That is what I did to Jesus”. Peter then throughout his life and epistles points us to the real hero reminding us that this amazing Jesus never stopped loving him or any of us his children. He reminds us to *cast our care on Jesus because He cares for us* (**1 Peter 5:7**).

Suggestion for Prayer: *Jesus, what can I say except, Thank You! I praise Your unfailing love that will not let me go & thank You for forgiveness of sin through Your sacrifice on the cross.*