

Gospel of Matthew
Chapter 26:57-75
“The Rooster’s Crow”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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30 September 2018

The scripture we’ll be looking at today takes place on Friday morning of Passion Week, which means it was just a few days ago that the people were crying “Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” as Jesus rode into the city.

And it was only the previous Sunday that the people of Jerusalem were trying to elect Him as their earthly king and shouting accolades.

But as it goes with people ... now just a few days later they’re rejecting Him. But what’s particularly noteworthy is that despite their fickleness ... Jesus was still willing to step in and be their sacrificial Passover Lamb.

The celebration of Passover was instituted some 1,500 years earlier. The Passover Lamb being killed so that the children of Israel might apply its blood to the doorposts of their homes. And by doing so ... be “passed over”, by the Death Angel that came through the land of Egypt that night.

And Jesus understood that this year ... He was the Passover Lamb.

Back in **Exodus chapter 12**, as the Passover story unfolds, it paints for us an illustration ... a shadow of what was to come through Jesus Christ. He would be the fulfillment of what the Passover was all about. That we might be “passed over” by the Death Angel and that we might enter into eternal life.

Let me read part of that account to you before we jump into this morning’s text. God says to Moses in ...

Exodus 12:3 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. 4 "Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. 5 "Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 "You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.

So, the Passover Lamb was to be taken from the flock on the 10th day, but not killed until the 14th day.

And during those five-days, the lamb was to be watched. It was to be examined very carefully for any imperfections or blemishes.

So it's no coincidence that Jesus rode into town on a Sunday and we'll find that five days later He was offered as a sacrifice.

So far, Jesus has been questioned and thoroughly scrutinized by the religious leaders and the people, but here begins the inspection process by the civil authorities. All happening ... just as the original Passover pictured it.

And it's because of this process and the proclamation made by Pontius Pilate in ...

Luke 23:4 ... "I find no guilt in this man." ...

that Jesus was a qualified Passover Lamb.

He was thoroughly inspected as prescribed by the law ... He was found to be without blemish and was therefore a fully qualified Passover Lamb.

One that could and would cause the Death Angel to "pass over" all those who spiritually apply His blood to their heart.

1st Peter 1:19 ... with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

So, the big picture around the details of this morning's scripture is that we're watching this five-day inspection process of The Passover Lamb unfold.

Verses 57: Only **John's gospel** gives us all the details ... but what we're looking at here is actually the second of the Lord's six trials before His crucifixion. The first was before Annas, the retired Chief Priest which you can read about that in **John chapter 18** at your leisure.

Now, when we get all the way down to **verse 74 of this morning's text ... Matthew** will mention a rooster crowing ... something that would have occurred this time of year about 4am.

That matters, because, as we saw last week ... the Lord's arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane was planned well in advance and therefore ... this council that He's now being led to, must have also been convened in advance.

And all of this violates Jewish law on five counts:

- 1.** First the law stated that all cases that could result in the death penalty had to be tried during daylight hours.
- 2.** It also said that such verdicts had to be rendered during daylight hours.
- 3.** Not to mention that it was forbidden to hold any trials on the eve of a Sabbath or during any of the holy festivals (such as Passover).
- 4.** The law also prescribed that all false witnesses be, themselves, put to death. We'll see that Jesus was condemned, partially on the testimony of false witnesses who were not punished.
- 5.** And lastly the law stated that all capital punishment verdicts had to be posted for one day before they could be carried out.

And all of these violated laws were there to provide the public an opportunity to scrutinize these cases. To help ensure fairness in cases where the outcome was irreversible.

But if you'll recall ...

Matthew 21:46 When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.

Matthew 26:4 ... they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him. 5 But they were saying, "Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people."

So, to avoid the scrutiny they convened this council at night, on the eve of a Sabbath and during the Passover. The people were asleep and would not have expected a trial during this holy season.

But that shouldn't really surprise us because most premeditated sin is planned and carried out in secrecy. Think of Adam and Eve ...

Q. What did they do when they sinned? -- They tried to hide their nakedness behind fig leaves and then they tried to hide themselves from God among the trees.

Verse 58: This is the beginning of a very difficult season for Peter ... and I strongly believe that we see the source of that difficulty in **this verse**. It says that, "He was following Jesus at a distance!"

And that began a cascade of bad decisions, that ultimately led to his despair.

First, he followed Jesus at a distance and then he sits down in the courtyard with the enemy. In fact, **John's gospel** tells us that Peter was warming himself by the fire of the enemy.

Peter was walking the walk of lukewarm Christian. Not so close to Jesus that the world could identify him. Not so close that he'd get a label, but not close enough to be in the shadow of His protection either. That shadow called "God's will".

And certainly ... we can make this mistake just as quickly. We look at where we are and assume that it's because we're in the courtyard of the enemy that we're not close to God, but that's backward.

It's because we're not close to God that we're in the courtyard of the enemy.

We must choose to walk as close to the Lord as we can get. And doing that prevents 90% of the difficult situations we find ourselves in.

Verses 59-61: Mark 14:56 tells us that, although several false witnesses came forward, their testimony couldn't be used because it was inconsistent.

But finally, they find two men who are, at least, saying the same thing ... that they'd heard Jesus say that He would destroy and rebuild the temple.

But this is a misquote and misinterpretation. The Lord made this statement about three years earlier, but He didn't say that He could or would destroy the temple, but rather, that if the temple were destroyed ... He would rebuild it in three days.

And we know, of course, that this was prophecy that had nothing to do with the physical temple but rather with the resurrection of His body three days after crucifixion.

Verses 62-64: Jesus was before the official Sanhedrin Council, a 71-member high court, and He was considered "sworn-in" before that court so, when the High Priest said to Him "**I adjure You**", it was a command.

The New King James renders it ... "**I put You under oath by the living God....**" So, Caiaphas is counting on Jesus' adherence to **Leviticus 5:1** ...

**'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter -- if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.
NKJV**

Jesus, as the Sinless Lamb of God, had to answer Him. But even in His response He's not vengeful ... just honest.

1st Peter 2:20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and

suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. 21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously

What an example ...

- He was reviled, and His response was to say to Judas “I’ll give you another chance friend.”
- He was falsely accused and He healed the ear of Malchus.
- He was nailed to a criminal’s cross and said, “Father forgive them.”

Verse 65-68: He tear his robes ... not because he suddenly realized that he’d wronged God or because it dawned on him that the answer to the prayers of the Jewish nation was standing before him.

They had a man standing before them in whom they could find no guilt, but who they wanted to put to death. They heard Him saying ... “I am the messiah ... I am God!”

Q. But they wouldn’t stop and think it through?

Q. But why? Why wouldn’t they genuinely ask themselves if this could be the promised Messiah? – Basically ... because this God didn’t look like the God that they’d created in their own minds.

Their God wasn’t like this man. And they only wanted a God that was small enough to fit their mold. So, this one had to go. He didn’t fit. He was hanging out of their mold on every side.

So they begin abusing Him.

Mark’s account helps us understand what the Lord really endured ...

Mark 14:65 Some began to spit at Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him with their fists, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in the face.

They were making sport of God Himself ... The Sinless Lamb who was and is, man’s only hope.

The Lord’s in the courtyard ... sleep deprived, hungry and now bound and blindfolded. And the soldiers are taking turns hitting Him and then taunting Him to prophecy whose fist it was that struck Him that time.

Q. And do you realize that Jesus knew the answer every time? -- “WACK” ... that was (_____). I love him so much. “WACK” ... that was (_____)’s hand. She’s the one I’m going to the cross for. And on and on and on...

Isaiah 52:14 ... His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men.

It’s too easy to dismiss this as a fairytale or a nursery rhyme. But this is reality.

Verse 69-74: Remember what Jesus told Peter back in the Garden of Gethsemane ...

Matthew 26:41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation ..."

So, like us ... Peter was warned.

And based upon that, we have to admit that he didn’t “stumble” into this sin. He didn’t accidentally fall into it. In the same way that we don’t.

There’s always a trail that can be followed to sin and we don’t “accidentally” wind up on that path. We knowingly step onto it and we knowingly put one foot in front of the other all the way down that trail ... until we knowingly choose to make a U-turn and head back to Jesus.

You might also remember what Jesus said to Peter in a separate conversation recorded in ...

Luke 22:31 "... Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Not words you necessarily wanna hear!

Q. But why did Satan want Peter so badly? – Primarily because Peter was zealous with a capital Z! And that’s an attribute that paints a target on your chest for Satan’s fiery darts.

And Jesus tells Peter, “I’ve prayed that your faith will be sufficient for the challenge.”

He didn’t pray that Peter wouldn’t face the challenge, but that his faith would be strong.

That means that Peter still had to stand at that crossroads and choose.

And this time, Peter’s choice was wrong! But notice this ... Jesus knew he would he was going to make the wrong choice.

He says to Peter ... **“When [not if] ... you have turned again, strengthen your brothers”**.

And Peter ultimately fulfilled that commandment.

Verse 75:

Luke 22:61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times."

And **“Peter wept bitterly”**! The Greek tells us that this was the type of noise one would make if a sword were thrust into their chest ... it’s anguish.

Q. It caused me to question ... when’s the last time I wept bitterly over letting the Lord down? How about you? –

What Peter did, didn’t affect the outcome of the Lord’s trials or even His life. We have no reason to believe that a single believer, other than Peter himself even knew of his failure. But the Lord knew ... and Peter wept bitterly!

Conclusion:

Q. How many of us, like Peter, have had a time away from the Lord? A time walking down the trail of sin?

Jesus told Peter, **“When [not if] ... you have turned again, strengthen your brothers”**.

Advice that holds as true for us as it did Peter. Paul asks in ...

Romans 2:4 ... do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

If you’ve spent time away from the Lord ... then you’re the one that God wants to use to **“strengthen your brothers”**. Again, consider what Paul said, **“Do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience?”**

When God welcomed you back ... He did so with a calling.

Q. Have you taken His kindness lightly or have you fulfilled His desire for you?

Or maybe you’re still away. Maybe you’re still on that pathway ... going the wrong direction. If that’s you ... the Lord says the same thing to you that He did to Peter **“come on back”**. The Lord holds no grudges, but He is holding the door open!

Tradition says that until the day Peter was crucified he was mocked by the people. That as he would enter a town there would be those who would recognize him as Peter, the failure. And they would mock him by crowing like a rooster as he walked by.

And that's what man does. But after the Lord's resurrection He chatted with Peter in **John 21**. First, He said in **verse ...**

16 "...Shepherd My sheep... and then again in verse 17 "...Tend My sheep."

And remember ... Peter's the one we read about in **Acts chapter 2**, when he led 3,000 souls to the Lord with one Spirit-led message.

Surely the Lord is capable of accomplishing His purposes through any one of us failures.