

John 18:12-27, “Denial and a Rooster”

7.2.23

When I was a kid, I grew up spending a lot of my time during the summers on a chicken farm. That farm also included pigs, cows and even a pony. Part of everyday life during the summers for me and my sister was arriving at my grandparents early in the morning and often being greeted by the smell of breakfast cooking and a rooster announcing it was the start of a new day.

I must tell you those smells and that sound brought comfort to me. The comfort of an amazing breakfast...not a bowl of cereal or a pop tart...the full Monty. Grandma would have bacon and eggs, sausage, ham, tenderloin, biscuits...homemade jelly. Man am I getting hungry. Those were the days. I often remember thinking: It's a good day to be alive! A new day and a rooster announced it.

Now, go back with me some 2000 years, not to a farm, but to this place.



This is a picture of part of a courtyard. A courtyard outside of Caiaphas' house. Remember he was the High Priest of Israel and he got to live in that mansion while he was High Priest. Here's a picture of the church they've built over top of what used to be that home:



It's beautiful. Can you see what's on top of that dome? He's a close-up...



Yep, that's a rooster. And why do you think that is? Do you think it might have something to do with what happened in that courtyard? You would be right! It does! Some 2,000 years ago in that courtyard, morning had also come; and yes, the sound of a rooster had made that fact known, but it was not a good day.

On this morning, for Jesus, breakfast didn't await; but instead, torture and then execution on a Roman cross. What tremendous anguish Jesus would endure on this day...after all...He would soon be bearing the sin of the world. But there was also anguish on this day for Peter. That rooster, bearing tidings of the morning, echoed the crushing reality of three denials...three denials that devastated this overzealous fisherman turned Apostle.

You see, if you're Peter, the sound of that rooster indicated a fulfillment of prophecy. Words Jesus had spoken to Peter only hours earlier. A prophecy made by Jesus in the upper room, indicating the awful fact that Peter would deny Jesus, not once, not twice, but three times before morning. But, church family, as awful as that was...today...on THIS MORNING, we're going to be reminded, that with Jesus, failure is not the end...our past mistakes do not have to define our today or our tomorrow. Because, NOT FOR A MOMENT, WILL HE FORSAKE US. Today we're going to see: "Denial and a Rooster."

Now, before we dig into our passage in John 18, I want to tell you this is a narrative and that's why we can cover so much ground this morning, 16 verses. What we're going to see this morning is a juxtaposition of Jesus' trials and Peter's denials, side-by-side. We're going to bounce back and forth, from one scene to the other, almost like a movie script. But first, **let's do some quick review.**

You'll remember our series title:



"Jesus Betrayed." We saw last week how Jesus was betrayed by Judas, who brought perhaps some 700-800 men to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was in that Garden that Peter pulled a sword and cut a man's ear off. Malchus the High Priest's servant. (His right ear, to be exact.) Of course, Peter meant to kill him, but he'd been fishing all of his life, so he's not a swordsman, therefore he missed. But Jesus fixed the mess and healed Malchus' ear. In fact, if Peter had killed him, I believe Jesus would have raised Malchus from the dead. Otherwise, Peter would have been killed by those soldiers...and likely the rest of the Apostles.

Yet, even witnessing this miracle and having been bowled over by Jesus' proclamation: "I am," even in spite of all these displays of His power, the religious elites were unswerving in their hatred and they Jesus arrested anyway. Now we pick up in our passage:

John 18:12

12 So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews^d arrested Jesus and bound him.

Now, church, they bound Him because they were intimidated by Him. They were scared to death of His power and after falling to the ground at the sound of His name, they just hoped they could Him. Of course, He wasn't going anywhere...this was all part of the plan to give you a shot at heaven. You know, I thought about how Abraham bound his son as Abraham obeyed God and was willing to offer up Isaac on Mt. Moriah.



God was gracious and spared Isaac by providing a ram, and in essence saying, you don't sacrifice your son, Abraham, I'll sacrifice mine.

You know it's interesting and not coincidental how the OT offerings made to God were bound to the altar with cords.

Psalm 118:27

27 The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!

Think about it...can you see Jesus being led away, bound... Christ, the final sacrifice, the Lamb of God, who would be bound to the altar of a cross. So, they've bound Him and they're off:



from the Garden of Gethsemane, across the Kidron Valley to Caiaphas' house. Vs 13.

John 18:13-14

¹³ First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

What we see here is the beginning of what are often called: "The six aspects of Jesus' trials." Let me show and overview of His trails. There were three religious trials and three secular/civil trials.

OVERVIEW OF JESUS' TRIALS				
	Trial	Scripture	Judge	Decision
Religious Trials Jewish	First	John 18:12-14	Annas	OK to proceed
	Second	Matt. 26:57-68	Caiaphas	Death sentence; charge of blasphemy
	Third	Matt. 27:1-2	Sanhedrin	Death sentence made legal
Secular Trials Roman	Fourth	John 18:28-38	Pilate	Not guilty
	Fifth	Luke 23:6-12	Herod	Not guilty
	Sixth	John 18:39-19:6	Pilate	Not guilty; turned over to the Jews

There had to be two types of trials because the Jews could not carry out the death penalty under Roman law

First Jesus was taken to Annas, and **second** He was taken to Caiaphas, his son-in-law, **third** he was brought before the full Sanhedrin, that's the Jews Supreme Court, 71 men, **fourth**, He was taken to Pilate, the Roman Governor, **fifth** to King Herod, the puppet King (appointed by Rome) to govern Judea and **sixth**, back to Pilate.

Now you need to know (going back to Annas), he was a **former** High Priest, and just like in America, if you've ever been President, you will always carry that title, even if you aren't in office, like President Obama or President Trump. Annas had formerly been High Priest, and even though he should have served for life, according to Numbers 35, he was deposed and removed by the Romans because he was such a jerk, and the Romans didn't like him.

Interestingly the Romans put Annas' son-in-law, Caiaphas, in his place. Annas still wielded tons of power in the Jewish religious elite community. He was almost like a "godfather" in the mafia, and that's likely why Jesus was taken to him first. You will remember, Jesus had railed on this whole system when He cleansed the Temple on Monday of that week.



Church, Annas and his entire family were corrupt. That whole temple operation became known as the "Bazaars of Annas." They were cheating the people at the money changing tables and Jesus exposed them that and for that...THEY HATED HIM!

So, now we shift scenes...to Peter...and I want to point out something that was prophesied in the OT in Zechariah 13:7...and it's this...when the shepherd is struck, the sheep will scatter. And scatter they did. All the disciples ran out of Gethsemane. Matthew records:

Matthew 26:56

⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

They all fled...but eventually Peter and another disciple make their way to where Jesus is.

John 18:15-16

¹⁵ Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in.

Peter did make his way back to Jesus, BUT WAY BACK! Watch Mark's account (which is Peter's):

Mark 14:54

54 And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire.

Let me show you this general area...(picture from 2007):



I'm not sure what Peter thought he was going to be able to do, right after he had cut a man's ear off, Malchus, that everyone in that courtyard would have known, because it's where Malchus worked as one of Caiaphas' servants. But, give Peter credit...he showed up.

But, who is this "other disciple"? Now, some have argued that the "other disciple" could have been Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. That's certainly a possibility...but, I believe John 20:2 might give us a hint. Mary Magdalene had just seen Jesus after His resurrection and she went to Peter.

John 20:2

2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Now, let me ask you, what have we already learned about the identity of the disciple, "whom Jesus loved?" That would be John. So, the "other disciple" seems to be the Apostle John, the writer of this

Gospel. Remember...this was a not bragging...but, it was how John felt about his relationship to Jesus...he couldn't get over the fact that Jesus loved him.

BTW, I also read something interesting in John MacArthur's Commentary about John possibly being known to the High Priest. But I get it! You say, "How in the world would that have happened since John was just a fisherman from Galilee." Well, MacArthur postulates since John's mother was Salome and Salome was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary was related to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, whose father was Zechariah, and Zechariah was a priest, well then, Zechariah would served stints in the Temple... and that could have been the family connection that made John "known to the High Priest."

Again, this is all conjecture...but, I believe is plausible. So, Peter got in to the courtyard of Caiaphas because of this "other disciple's connection," once again proving... "it's not necessarily what you know, but who you know." You may ask, "Where did John go?" We're not told, but he was definitely no longer with Peter. Perhaps because of his connection, he was allowed inside the house? We simply don't know. Verse 17.

John 18:17

17 The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

Church, see the screens...



This statute is positioned in that courtyard which depicts this scene. It says, in Latin, "I do not know him." And church, this was Peter telling a SERVANT GIRL he didn't know Jesus...not a soldier or Annas or Caiaphas. Peter was denying Jesus to a servant girl.

Sad. Peter was in full "self-preservation mode." He was covering his tracks and man, oh man, do we do that today. Instead of admitting when we're wrong, we often double down and try to cover our tracks...we make sure to save face at all costs...we cannot and will not be seen in a negative light...so, we wilt...we shrink...we don't own up, stand up and speak up...NO. I DON'T KNOW HIM!

And that's how it goes. Temptation/Confrontation they come when we're not expecting it, and it catches us off guard. So, if we haven't already made up our minds to stand, when the critical moment comes...we usually can't seem to find our courage...we wilt. And that's how it goes today. So many Christians cow-tow to the culture and are afraid to say that a man cannot be a woman. That's science. XX versus XY chromosomes. But, they don't want to talk about science when it goes against their perverted agenda, now do they. But, will you?

I've come to understand that the "T" in LGBTQ stands for "Tyranny." You must agree with my little game about who I say I am and if you don't and you don't say the correct pronoun...you'll pay. That's tyranny, folks. And that's why so many are wilting, warming at the fire of the WOKE culture. Church, listen, life begins at conception (Jeremiah 1:4, I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb). Marriage is between one man and one woman for life, (Jesus said, "For a man will leave his father and mother and cleave/stick to his wife" Matt. 19:4). Living together outside of marriage is a sin, according to 1 Thessalonians 4 and on and on I could go. The point is...will you stand for Jesus and His words, or will they need to make a statue for us?



Believe me...I've wilted. We all have. But, by the power of God, His word and His Spirit...not anymore. I've played it all out in my mind...by the power of God's mercy, I'll be ready! Well, it's now very deep into the night, which is important for us to know, because Jewish trials were not allowed to be held at night or in secret. But this shows what a kangaroo court this has all become. The Jews had a sort of Banana Republic for a judicial system (very similar, BTW, to what our judicial system had turned into today in America). We now have a two-tiered justice system. Let me show you the injustice of what was done to Jesus. Watch the screens:

Under Jewish Law:

- No trial was to be held at night
- No trial was to be held during feast time
- Each member of the Sanhedrin was to vote individually
- The accused is to be given counsel or representation
- If cases of the death penalty, a full day/night must pass before the sentence was carried out

All of these laws were violated! it's a Kangaroo Court and Annas was asking questions...

John 18:19-21

¹⁹ The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.²⁰ Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said."

Church, what we see here by Annas is an “impression of legality.” Him asking questions, like in a court, by a judge. He asked about Jesus’ disciples and His teaching, and yet, Jesus shot back with His own questions... “Why do you ask me this? I’ve NOT done my teaching in secret.” Like all of this mess is being done in secret. In essence Jesus is saying... “You’re a bunch of hypocrites!”

Church, why were they doing this at night? They were scared of the people and Jesus’ popularity. So, Jesus exposes Annas...and for that He gets whacked!

John 18:22

²² When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?”

Right here was the first blow leveled against Jesus, and how appropriate that it came at the hand (pun) of a Jew, not a Roman...a reminder that Jesus, born a Jew, came to His own and His own received Him not. Something else to note: “struck with his hand,” in the Greek means: the guy hit Jesus in the face with an open hand. That, BTW, is a fulfillment of Micah 5:1, “They shall strike him on the cheek.” **Oh, how Annas hated Jesus.** And the thing is: when you call out a fool’s hypocrisy, you have to **expect retaliation.** But watch how Jesus calmly responds. Verse 23.

John 18:23

²³ Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?”

Jesus is like, “Okay, I’m fine with getting whacked, but what did I do wrong?” And that’s okay...it’s okay to stand up for ourselves. Yes, He came before His shearers dumb... He let them arrest Him...but, He was not going to let hypocrisy and injustice reign in His presence. Here Jesus teaches us it’s okay to stand up and speak up for yourself when what’s being done to you or me is unjust.

He’s calling out this vigilante justice, and apparently this struck a chord with Annas, and somewhere inside of his demented brain, Annas got afraid and must have thought, “Hmm...I’m not the current High Priest, so I better pass Him off to my son-in-law Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, which is the LEGAL THING to do.”

John 18:24

²⁴ Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

By now it has to be after midnight, and again, even this trial, before Caiaphas, is absolutely illegal, but, (as recorded in the other Gospels), they try to make it look better by pulling together some false witnesses, (paid off I’m sure), accusing Jesus of blasphemy and that He was trying to overthrow the Romans and Caesar. All lies! And then, the scene switches back to Peter. Morning is coming...

John 18:25

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.”

Denial # 2. The question asked of Peter anticipated a negative answer and that’s what Peter gave: No way, “I am not!” I’m not one of his disciples. He flat-out lied. Verse 26.

John 18:26

²⁶ One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?”

Now it gets personal. A family member of Malchus (who was obviously in the Garden of Gethsemane too, also likely a servant) said, "Hey...you were there in the Garden with Jesus!" I want you to see how bad this really was. We see it John Mark's gospel, which is really Peter's account:

Mark 14:71

⁷¹ But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak."

Can you imagine? He's saying, "May I be cursed..." in other words... "may my soul be damned forever if I know this man." Goodness! How quickly we can fall. From just a few hours earlier and his platitudes of how he would die for Jesus...to now denying that He even knew Him...calling down curses on his soul! **And then it happened...**

Amazing, isn't it? Jesus was in control of THAT rooster AT THAT very moment...proving; yet again, Jesus is no ordinary man. He's God in the flesh who has all authority.

As we begin to close, **I want to show you something from Luke's Gospel** that's astounding. At the very moment the rooster crowed, Jesus was brought out from his illegal inquisition with Annas to be taken to Caiaphas, at the moment Peter was making his third denial...

Luke 22:60-62

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

Church, what was that "look" that Jesus gave Peter? He looked at him? (BTW, do you think Jesus' face was swollen from the slap?) Was the look, a look of: "I told you? You're an idiot. A failure." I don't think so. That would be out of character for Jesus. No, I believe Jesus looked at him with kindness, compassion and love...a look that said: THIS IS NOT THE END.

And it wouldn't be. They'll end up on the seashore of Galilee after the resurrection and guess what Jesus had fixed for His disciples that morning: breakfast...perhaps with a rooster crowing in the background. And what would Jesus do? He would restore Peter...three times saying: "Do you love me...feed my sheep." Jesus restored Peter. The Psalmist proclaims: "Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning."

Who preached the first sermon on the day of Pentecost? Peter. Listen, we've all made mistakes...blown it...big time...but just as Jesus was not finished Peter, He's not finished with you...even when we make a colossal mess. He takes us back! Not for a moment will He forsake us.

Yes, Jesus and the Apostles would sit down to breakfast...rooster, likely crowing in the background

But after this day, for Peter, a rooster crowing, would be a reminder, not of denial, but of love. And that's what Jesus can do with our pain, our failures, our mess. He can take it, break it and restore us.