

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church  
**Matthew 26:69-75 | Peter's Betrayal**  
Sunday April 19, 2026

**WELCOME:**

- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are in the foyer—please take them home with you.

 **REVIEW:**

Last Sunday, we witnessed a mockery of God's justice.

Not only was the air over Jerusalem heavy, but the whole city was buzzing with rumors about this Jesus of Galilee who rode into the city on a donkey on Monday, and then caused a huge scene at the Temple on Tuesday by throwing out all merchants of the pop-up market.

Wednesday of Passover week, Jesus taught in the Temple all day.

Thursday, Jesus and the Disciples celebrate Passover, and Jesus institutes the first Lord's Supper.

After the Lord's Supper, they all walk to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Then, very early on Friday morning, Judas Iscariot leads the police to arrest Jesus—all the Disciples run for their lives.

Then we witnessed the first of several trials where Jesus was judged guilty of things He did not do and sentenced to death.

Sandwiched in that narrative was Peter following Jesus to the high priest's home, where the trial took place.

Today, Matthew tells us the other side of that story.

As Jesus was being interrogated, mocked, and convicted, Matthew turns our attention to the Chief Disciple—the leader of the Twelve.

Today's passage is about Peter and the lessons we can learn of what not to do.

### INTRODUCTION:

Today, we're going to see a dramatic contrast between Jesus and Peter.

While Jesus stands up to his accusers and denies nothing— Peter cowers before his *Accusers* and denies everything.

Peter discovers who he really is today when he's caught off guard and afraid.

It's a tragic thing to see what we become when our courage melts.

Yet, Peter's failures become a story of hope for us. How so? Let's find out together.

*\*Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.\**

### SCRIPTURE:

**Matthew 26:69**—Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl approached him and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean too."

**Matthew 26:70**—But he denied it in front of everyone: "I don't know what you're talking about."

**Matthew 26:71**—When he had gone out to the gateway, another woman saw him and told those who were there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene!"

**Matthew 26:72**—And again he denied it with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

**Matthew 26:73**—After a little while those standing there approached and said to Peter, “You really are one of them, since even your accent gives you away.”

**Matthew 26:74**—Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath, “I don't know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed,

**Matthew 26:75**—and Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

### **The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith 1.1:**

“The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God's former ways of revealing His will to His people have now ceased.”

### **PRAY:**

*Do not remember the sins of my youth or my acts of rebellion; in keeping with your faithful love, remember me because of your goodness, LORD (Psalm 25:7).*

### **EXEGESIS:**

It's important to remember that several hours earlier, Jesus told the Disciples that they would all betray him.

Peter didn't like that, stood up with utmost boldness and said...

**Matthew 26:33**—“Even if everyone falls away because of you, I will never fall away.”

**Matthew 26:34**—“Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to him, “tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

Peter pushes back even harder against the Son of God...

**Matthew 26:35**—“Even if I have to die with you,” Peter told him, “I will never deny you,” and all the disciples said the same thing.

Fast-forward through the Garden of Gethsemane, where Peter was sleeping and not praying.

During Jesus' arrest, Peter was overreacting instead of obeying.

Then Peter and the rest of the Disciples deserted Jesus, just as had been promised.

But all is not lost—Peter follows Jesus out of love at a distance.

**Matthew 26:69**—Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard.

Peter's heart must be pounding.

Peter is in enemy territory—he's in the High Priest's backyard!

Caiaphas is the archenemy of Jesus—Caiaphas is Elijah's King Ahab or Luke Skywalker's Darthvader!

None of these people in the courtyard were Jesus' friends.

Instead, they were his sworn enemies.

As the prophet Daniel physically stood among the lions, Peter now spiritually stands in a different kind of lion's den.

**Matthew 26:69**—A servant girl approached him and said, “You were with Jesus the Galilean too.”

Peter is minding his own business, trying to see what will happen to Jesus.

We also know John is there, but the other Disciples are nowhere to be found.

Suddenly, a servant girl (slave girl) speaks to Peter.

We don't know the tone of her voice, but it seems like an observation/comment.

It's gentle, so she's also not accosting Peter.

It wasn't a man, soldier, or a religious leader—but a woman, not a mature woman but a girl, not a free girl but a slavegirl.

Matthew highlights her gender and occupation to underline her powerlessness.

She has zero status in society—as low on the social ladder as you can get.

We don't know how old this girl is—but age is not important.

Her social status is — because it emphasizes the severity of Peter's lie.

Think back to last week as Jesus stands fearlessly before Israel's most powerful people—at the exact same time that those men are lying, mocking, and beating Jesus—Peter folds before Israel's least powerful person.

So, as Peter tries to stay invisible... this young girl says...

 **Matthew 26:69**— “You were with Jesus the Galilean too.”

She's using “Galilean” as a put-down because people in the city of Jerusalem considered Galilee backward.

One of the reasons that the Jews didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah was that they confused Jesus' birthplace (Bethlehem)—with Nazareth (where Jesus grew up) and then Galilee (where He currently lived.)

So her tone and word choice are a tad sarcastic.

How does Peter respond?

**Matthew 26:70**—But he denied it in front of everyone: “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

Peter overreacts by raising his voice and lies!

Peter’s lie should encourage us—it shows us how his love for Jesus was real, but weak.

**Matthew 26:70**—But he denied it in front of everyone:

The Greek verb for “deny” means “disown.”

Peter immediately starts to play dumb and acts like he has no clue what she’s talking about.

He’s scared, and everything changes when his personal safety is threatened.

The first words out of his mouth are not a correction—“Oh no, it’s not Jesus the Galilean—it’s Jesus the Christ or Jesus the Son of Man” who is the Lamb of God to offer you salvation!

Peter has a bad case of the normals at the moment because the only salvation he can think of is saving his own skin.

BTW, everybody knew about *Jesus the Galilean*.

He is the talk of the entire Passover.

At this moment, Peter reminds us of the OT prophet Elijah.

Elijah kills 850 false prophets in the most dramatic fashion ever.

But once he found out that one wicked woman named Jezebel vowed to get him, he ran for his life!

### **KEYPOINT 1:**

*Being caught off guard reveals our true character.*

It's pretty ironic that an hour or so after Peter draws a weapon and tries to cut off a soldier's head, he now cowers in fear in front of a slave girl!

Jesus told Peter that this would happen—and it did.

Peter is like many of us today—we think we know the Bible well, and are active in the church, or in the community serving the Lord, we think we've got this Christian thing all figured out.

Peter doesn't have the Holy Spirit to guide, lead, and convict him—yet he thinks he's spiritually complete.

The moment we think we've arrived—and that we're God's gift to His church—that's when we become the most vulnerable of all.

**Matthew 26:71**—*When he had gone out to the gateway,*

Peter's fight, freeze, or flight instinct kicks in.


Like many people, when we get pushed and pressed into a situation we don't want to be in, we try to get away.

So Peter moves closer to the entrance—which means he is moving farther away from Jesus.

Isn't it interesting how what happens to us spiritually reflects where we are physically?

If we're mad at the world, spouse, boss, or upset with Jesus—how quickly do I want to pray, read Scripture, or go to church?

If my heart is far from God, so is my mind and body.

 **Matthew 26:71**—another woman saw him and told those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene!”

Have you ever noticed that when you don't handle an event, situation, or relationship rightly, God tends to bring the same issue back around again and again until you get it right?

We tend to act like the Israelites circling around Mount Sinai for 40 years, rarely repenting but always complaining about other people.

In Luke's Gospel, another man joins in the accusation, “*You're one of them too.*” (Luke 22:58).

 **Matthew 26:72**—And again he denied it

Peter had already lied once; it's easier to lie a second time.

Scripture calls that a trespass—to overstep a boundary—to go somewhere we have no right being.

When you see a sign that says “No Trespassing,” it means you have no legal right to be there.

But what's the first thing you want to do? Trespass!

Sin has a way to do that to us.

Sin darkens our eyes, dulls our senses, and hardens our hearts.

But the hardening is only a part of the process.

Sin is not a cycle but a spiral.

When we lie, we don't end up in the same spot as before—we take a step down.

Sin is like a spiral staircase, so with each lie, we move further and further away from Jesus.

The further away we get from Jesus, the trespasses become more serious and turn into transgressions—which is a willful decision to overstep.

**Matthew 26:72**—*And again he denied it with an oath:*

Jesus tells us not to do this—we are not to make needless promises. (Matt. 5:33–37).

In fact, the only people making oaths in Matthew's Gospel are bad guys: King Herod (14:7), the scribes and Pharisees (23:16–22), and Caiaphas (26:63).

Peter's saying, "*I swear on my mother's grave*" or "*I swear to God I'm telling the truth.*"

In other words, Peter petitions God the Father to witness his lie about God the Son!

So we see the spiral of sin—the first time Peter lied, it was out of fear.

The sad thing is that he didn't even need to acknowledge or answer the servant girl—he could have just walked away.

But the second time he lied, he doubled down.

Peter has two strikes against him.

He's dug himself a hole, and he has no intention of repenting.

**Matthew 26:73**—*After a little while ...*

Notice how God's providence is relentless—"After a little while..."

**Matthew 26:73**—*After a little while those standing there approached*

We see the Lord's relentlessness in using people to get Peter's attention. *To repent?  
Turn Around.*

**Matthew 26:73**—"You really are one of them,

Look how confident they are: "You really are!"

They are certain that Peter is a Disciple of Jesus. How so?

**Matthew 26:73**—*since even your accent gives you away."*

Maybe it was one word or his whole denial, but his speech gives him away.

All of Jesus' Disciples were from Galilee except one—Judas Iscariot.

They all had the same regional dialect—and the city slickers in Jerusalem didn't like it because they're better and more sophisticated than the Galileans.

It's like someone from the deep south visits New York City and says, "Howdy Ya'll!"

Or someone from Britain moves to Texas—it's hard to blend in.

The same thing happens spiritually—when we become a Believer, our speech gives us away.

We can try to talk like the world, but you won't fit in.

You can try to blend in by laughing at dirty jokes or even being suggestive with innuendoes, but people will notice that something is not right.

**Matthew 26:74**—Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath,

Peter had three chances to come clean—and rather than being honest, he kept digging himself into a hole.

As the accusations became more specific, Peter's denials became more extreme.

That's another sign of sin—we know we've been deceived when we believe our own lies.

Peter essentially was pronouncing a curse (Greek: anathema) not on himself now, but on his accusers.

Peter has lied, made an oath, and now proclaims a curse.

Lastly, notice how Peter's anger and oaths do not stop their questions.

*Relentless in purifying Peter.*

**Matthew 26:74**—"I don't know the man!"

Isn't it interesting how when we're caught in a lie, we start to get loud—as if that will convince anybody of anything.

All anger does is show the other person how guilty we are.

At this point, Peter hit rock bottom.

If this thing wasn't so tragic, it would be downright silly — A Galilean man saying that he doesn't know Jesus is like saying people in England have never heard of the Beatles.

Jesus is bigger than the Beatles in Galilee—Jesus is the rock star in Jerusalem.  
Everyone knows Jesus!

† **Matthew 26:74**—Immediately a rooster crowed,

Now, at this moment, let's remember that all of this drama is happening at the same exact time Jesus is being tried. → w/ Peter

The religious leaders have convicted and abused Jesus, and it seems that they are now walking Jesus through the courtyard where Peter is, because Luke's Gospel says this:

† **Luke 22:60**— But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

† **Luke 22:61**—Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter.

Their eyes met.

Peter saw his Lord standing there with His hands bound and His bloody face covered with spit and bruises.

He may have seen the soldiers beating Jesus, mocking him.

This moment had to be the worst moment of Peter's life.

But it's a moment we can all learn from.

It wasn't until Peter looked at Jesus' face that he remembered.

We don't get to see Jesus' face today—but we do get to read what He said.

We do have His Spirit—and when God speaks to you through His Word, and you're convicted, take notice and immediately repent.

Don't be like Peter and find yourself unnecessarily in a similiar situation.

† **Matthew 26:75**—*and Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken, Peter remembered*—this is the last time we read Peter's name in Matthew's Gospel.

† **Matthew 26:75**—*“Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”*

What I find interesting is that, according to first-century city ordinances, no roosters or hens were allowed in Jerusalem (Yes to doves and pigeons).

Priests felt that they would make a mess and defile the holy city.

And Peter hears a rooster crow in the very heart of the city—a short walk to the Temple.

Jesus predicted it would happen, and it did happen—a rooster crowed.

There are times in our lives that serve as permanent reminders of how far the Lord has brought us.

How do you think Peter responded every time he heard a rooster crow from this point forward?

This crowing rooster reveals how far he had fallen.

For us, the reminder could be a certain song, smell, word, accent, or part of town that serves as a reminder of the darkest days of our own lives.

Let me encourage you: when you are reminded of past sins, the Lord isn't reminding you to shame you, but instead to remind you of how far He's brought you.

It's a reminder to worship.

He not only saved us from judgment, but also from ourselves.

**Matthew 26:75**—And he went outside...

*the liar*

Peter has escaped, but at what cost?

The school of hard knocks always leaves a degree of emotional and spiritual scrapes, scars, and bruises.

We see that here—we are not designed for disobedience or to live apart from God and His people.

**Matthew 26:75**—*wept bitterly.*

Are Peter's tears proof of repentance?

Or is he upset that he got caught in his own lies?

As we'll soon see, these are tears of repentance.

The Greek adverb is *pikrōs*, which means pain and agony. — *it's real*

We don't know where he went or how long he stayed there, but one thing is for sure—this is a moment he'll never forget.

The Spirit pierced Peter's heart, and he finally repented.

Because of Peter's repentance—the rooster's crow has now been redeemed.

*the crow*

It not only shows how far Peter had fallen, but more importantly, how much the Lord had forgiven.



**REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

1. How does Peter's growing intensity (denial → oath → cursing and swearing) illustrate that sin is a *spiral* and not just a one-time "slip"?
2. The sermon said, "*Being caught off guard reveals our true character.*" Where do you tend to be caught off guard—at home, work, traffic, online, with money, etc.? What usually "comes out" of you in those moments?
3. Where have you seen this "spiral" of sin in your own life? What started it, and what deepened it?
4. Why is it dangerous to think of sin as a *cycle*, instead of a *downward spiral* that takes us further from Christ?
5. What are some "rooster crows" in your life? (Reminders God has used to show you how far you were falling and to call you back to Him?)
6. How should we respond when the Holy Spirit "turns and looks at us" through Scripture and convicts us of specific sin?
7. Think of an area where you feel like you have "blown it" with God or with others. How does Peter's restoration push back against the lie that you are beyond God's use?
8. The sermon said, "*The Lord will take your mess and turn it into a ministry.*" Where have you already seen God do that in your life, or where do you hope He will do that?

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