

## **Connecting Minds**

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

### The Gospel of John

Chapter 18:17-18, 25-27

**"Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?' He said 'I am not.' Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself... Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore, they said to him, 'You are not also one of His disciples are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not.' 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?' Peter then denied again, and immediately a rooster crowed."**

Peter has made his first denial of knowing Jesus. A servant girl has asked him a simple, innocent sounding question and he has denied being a disciple of Jesus. Verse 18 is a strong verse of warning to us. Here we see the servants and officers standing around a fire of coals that they have made, warming themselves. In relation to Jesus these servants and officers are quite possibly the men who had been out in the garden arresting Jesus. They were the enemies of Jesus. Even if they were not a part of the soldiers that night they were still a part of the High Priest's court.

And now we are told that Peter is "with them" - "Peter stood with them and warmed himself..." The influence of the wicked is now taking a grip on Peter. These servants and officers had just arrested Christ. They care nothing for Jesus. They are simply trying to warm themselves. "Look after your own creature comforts" is their thought while Christ is about to die for sinners.

And Peter remains "with them." Peter is warming himself, trying to blend in with these thoughtless soldiers who have just arrested His Lord. Peter's reward for staying with these wicked men is his second temptation to deny knowing Jesus - "You are not also one of His disciples are you..." (verse 25)? Peter again says "I am not." Matthew Henry writes "It was his great weakness, nay, it was his great wickedness, to yield to the temptation, and to say, 'I am not one of his

disciples', as one ashamed of that which was his honour, and afraid of suffering for it, which would have been yet more his honour."<sup>1</sup>

Peter is in a bad place. But look at how he managed to get to this position. One, he did not take seriously the words of Christ - "You will deny Me three times..." He thought he was strong. He would rather die than deny Christ... remember when he said that? Two, by not fleeing from temptation - he is "with them..." He has already been tempted once by being near these soldiers, yet he stays there. And three, by not being near Jesus. Peter is in middle ground. He should either be away from Jerusalem, far from the temptation. Or he should be next to his Lord. The worst place to be is near to temptation and far from the Lord.

The third question put to Peter is by a relative of Malchus. This is the most dangerous of all, for what would have been going through Peter's mind as he heard the question was this: "This man knows. He has seen me in the garden. He saw me with the sword." The longer we stay near temptations the more dangerous they become and the closer we come to being found out. And so "Peter then denied again..." The saddest word in this verse is the word "again".

"And immediately a rooster crowed..." Nothing else seemed to be getting through to Peter. He had denied Christ once, then twice, but still he remained in the most compromising of places. But this finally gets through to Peter. It is the look and the remembrance of the words of Christ (Luke 22:60-62). This is what convicted him, caused repentance and brought sorrow. Nothing else would do it but the remembrance of Christ.

Peter was questioned three times about whether he knew Jesus. Lest we miss this, here is some "good" in all these questions. It shows that Peter at least was noticed as being different. His association with Christ wasn't so well hidden that nobody questioned him.

## TableTalk

Read 2 Corinthians 6:11-15. "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers..." The warning to not allow intimacy with unbelievers to move us away from Christ. How have you followed in Peter's path recently?

---

<sup>1</sup>Matthew Henry's Commentary, vol. 5, Matthew Henry, pg. 954