

JOHN 18

John 18:24–27

18:24 *Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the chief priest. Jesus was still tied up.*

After this unsuccessful interview in which Jesus challenged the questioning procedure by Annas, Jesus was sent, still bound, to high priest Caiaphas. The other gospels give detailed information about the trial before the Sanhedrin, the group of which Caiaphas was the highest court officer (*Matthew 26:57–66; Mark 14:53–64; Luke 22:66–71*).

18:25 *Simon Peter continued to stand and warm himself by the fire. Some men asked him, "Aren't you, too, one of his disciples?" Peter denied it by saying, "No, I'm not!"*

The narrative returns to Peter, who had been brought into the courtyard of Annas's home at the invitation of John. The young servant girl thought that she recognized Peter as one of the disciples, but he firmly denied such an observation. Then, while Jesus was being

interviewed by Annas, Peter had joined some of the squad that had arrested Jesus and stood around the charcoal fire to keep warm on this cold night. This was a risky position for Peter, since these men might be able to identify him more surely than the servant girl did. Those that stood by the fire did not speak accusingly to Peter, but they did ask if he was one of Jesus' disciples. Again, the answer came quickly, "I'm not!"

18:26 *One of the chief priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked him, "Didn't I see you with Jesus in the garden?"*

Another servant of the high priest, a relative of Malchus, was also present. Apparently, he was a part of the group that was dispatched to arrest Jesus. If he had been in the front lines that night, he would surely have recognized Peter. How could one forget the face of the man that had cut off the ear of his relative? Apparently this man had been positioned further back with less of a view. As this man looked at Peter, he asked the penetrating question, "Didn't I see you with Jesus in the garden?" Here was one final opportunity for Peter to confess his Lord.

18:27 *Peter again denied it, and just then a rooster crowed.*

Peter could not escape the image of his Lord's arrest. He feared for his life unable to see beyond his own immediate need for protection. Believing he was in danger of an outcome similar to his master, Peter again denied that he knew Jesus. Then came the dreaded sound—the crowing of the rooster! Peter then had to deal with an even greater fear—the fear that he had lost himself. Having sworn allegiance to Jesus even to death, he now had denied the one to Whom he had made such an unswerving promise: ³⁷Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, why can't I follow you now? I'll give my life for you.'
³⁸Jesus replied, 'Will you give your life for me? I can guarantee this

truth: No rooster will crow until you say three times that you don't know me" (*John 13:37–38*).

Notes/Applications

When we look at ourselves in the mirror of our souls, whom do we find? Is that Peter I see? Within the space of a few short hours, Peter had changed his tune. He had completely reversed his opinion, a perfect example of the way most of us are.

Filled with the excitement of a good sermon or a challenging Bible study, we venture forth filled with a passionate resolve to serve our Lord in the world's arena, unafraid of opposition, ridicule, or hostility. We see ourselves in the role of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, boldly declaring the truth of Jesus Christ. We would walk in the footsteps of Paul, fearlessly singing hymns in the Philippian jail, just after being whipped for our faith.

Then we go home, have a quick lunch, settle in, lay down a little authority on the kids, have a lively debate with our spouse, and generally sink into the normal patterns of our daily lives. By Monday morning, we head to work, half mad at the world that demands so much effort to survive. We go through the rest of our week, grumbling about our spouses, our children, our boss, our job, our coworkers, and, yes, even our church. Too much is demanded of us. We are tired of the battle that is required just to exist. We do not even remember our resolve to serve our Lord. Our Sunday commitment is gone.

Oh, yes, we see Peter in that mirror! We, too, have made our promises and then broken them. We, too, have sworn our allegiance to Him and then served the god of fear that rules our human existence. We, too, have pledged our undying faith and then squandered such empty promises with our faithlessness.

Sadly, many of us lack the one thing that Peter did have when he realized what he had done—remorse: "*Peter remembered what Jesus had said: 'Before a rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know me.' Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly*" (*Matthew 26:75*). In that

one remorseful outpouring of a broken spirit, Peter humbled himself again. More importantly, he was again reconciled to his Lord.

May the Lord grant us a heart that acknowledges our shortcomings, denials, and hypocrisies. May the Lord grant us hearts that will grieve and eyes that will shed the bitter tears of our remorse. May the Lord grant us His boundless mercy and reconcile our relationship to Him.