

# Explore the Bible: May 9

*Denied • Luke 22:54-6*

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My rooster, Chester, is named after a Gunsmoke television character. He crows early every morning. He notifies the neighborhood there's a new day dawning and should a problem arise in the hen house, the crowing intensifies.

There are moments when Chester crows that I think about Peter denying even knowing Jesus. He faltered in his faith, and so could I.

There are two trials taking place in our focal passage. Jesus is being falsely charged by the Jews. Meanwhile, Peter is facing a personal spiritual trial. He is accused of following Jesus. His denial brings upon him a guilty verdict and a cry asking for forgiveness.

For every believer, Peter is a warning that we're all vulnerable to faltering faith in a moment when we need to stand courageously for Christ.

**Distance (Luke 22:54-55 CSB).** In the wee hours of Friday morning, Jesus has been arrested and led to the high priest's home, belonging to either Annas or Caiaphas. The first trial with the Jews was probably with Annas (John 18:12-13). Next, Jesus went to the official high priest, Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas (Matt. 26:57). Jesus was then sent to the

Sanhedrin at daybreak, where he was found guilty (Luke 22:66-71) (Warren Wiersbe, Be Courageous Commentary).

Meanwhile, the disciples have scattered except for Peter, who is following Jesus at a distance. The Lord predicted Peter's denials (Matt. 26:33-35; Luke 22:31-34). He told the disciples to "watch and pray," warning them to be prepared for Satan's attacks. The disciples were to scatter and meet Jesus in Galilee later (Matt. 26:31).

Instead, we find Peter in the courtyard, sitting with individuals who are waiting to hear the fate of Jesus. Peter wasn't recognized immediately. As to the why, we can only speculate.

It's important to note that Peter loved Jesus. He was called by Jesus, and spent three years learning, observing, and ministering with Jesus. Peter was in His inner circle. Known as being compulsive, Peter dared to stand at the arrest of Jesus in the garden and draw a sword – but now he seems to be controlled by fear, uncertain of what he should do, and wanting to know what was going on with Jesus.

**Denial (Luke 22:56-60a).** Peter is recognized by a female servant. The phrase, "looking closely," gives the impression she is standing next to him, studying him. She announces in an accusing tone, "This man was with him too." Peter replied, "Woman, I don't know Him." The servant was insinuating Peter was indeed a follower of Jesus, but his reply goes beyond mere association to, "I don't even know who Jesus is."

Remember, this is the disciple who told Jesus that He was "God's Messiah" (Luke 9:20) and promised he would go with Jesus to prison and death (22:33). However, as Jesus predicted, Peter's faith waivered (22:34). Fear can bring courage, "the ability to overcome fear and do what is right" (LifeWay), or fear can bring panic and dishonesty to protect

oneself.

Peter's second denial comes when a man identifies him and says, "You're one of them too," perhaps referring to being a part of the disciples. Did Peter enjoy being with Jesus when He was popular? He did! Now Peter is alone in the midst of an accusatory crowd. Fear brought denial once again.

It's easy to identify as a Christian when other believers surround us, but what will you do when you are all alone? Was Peter wiping the sweat off of his brow, thinking he was safe? About an hour later, here comes another man who was a relative of Malchus (John 18:26). This individual keeps insisting, "This man was certainly with Him, since he's also a Galilean."

The phrase, 'keeps insisting,' means this man isn't letting go of this fact. Furthermore, he identifies Peter as a Galilean; his speech or perhaps his mannerisms gave away his identity. This time, Peter replies with a statement that he doesn't even know what the man is talking about!

The writers of Matthew 26:74 and Mark 14:71 tell us that Peter was so upset, he cursed and swore an oath. Each time Peter is accused, his denials escalate.

**Defeat (Luke 22:60b-62).** Then, off at a distance, above the crowd's conversations and while Peter was voicing his words of denial, he hears the rooster crow at precisely the moment Jesus predicted. Only Dr. Luke records this dramatic scene. Jesus is brought through the courtyard, turns, and gives Peter a heart-piercing look. At that moment, Peter remembers what Jesus had said – that he would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.

Jesus leaves to face another trial. Peter "went outside and wept bitterly," the beginning of genuine repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). Peter would become a man who would later be used greatly for God's kingdom purposes.

Don't wait for a rooster to crow before you ask yourself:  
Is my faith faltering or fearless?

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