

## The Courage of Christ and the Collapse of Peter (Daniel 7:13-14 and Mark

14:53-72)

22-Mar-2026

### **Daniel 7:13-14**

13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed..

### **Mark 14:53-72**

#### **Jesus Before the Sanhedrin**

<sup>53</sup> They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. <sup>54</sup> Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

<sup>55</sup> The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. <sup>56</sup> Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

<sup>57</sup> Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: <sup>58</sup> “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’” <sup>59</sup> Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

<sup>60</sup> Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” <sup>61</sup> But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

<sup>62</sup> “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

<sup>63</sup> The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. <sup>64</sup> “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death. <sup>65</sup> Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

## Peter Disowns Jesus

<sup>66</sup> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. <sup>67</sup> When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

<sup>68</sup> But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

<sup>69</sup> When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” <sup>70</sup> Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

<sup>71</sup> He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

<sup>72</sup> Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And a sermon **outline**

Please have your **Bibles opened** up at **Mark 14** starting at verse 53.

Let me pray first...

### [Context \(vv53-59\)](#)

The **context** is...

### **[Slide-context]**

We finished up last week where

- Jesus told His disciples they would all fall away
- Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane with three of His disciples – Peter, James and John – who all fell asleep

- Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him three times – despite Peter’s bold declaration that “*Even, if I have to die with you, I will never disown you*” (v31)
- Judas betrayed Jesus and brought the Temple Guard to arrest Jesus
- All the disciples deserted Jesus (v50)

We pick up the story...

**[Slide-Context/Story]**

V53 – Jesus is taken to the home of the high priest

V54 – Peter follows Jesus at a distance – and is in the courtyard of the house of the high priest

V55 – The Jewish Council – the Sanhedrin - meet at the high priest’s house to look for evidence against Jesus to put Him to death

This is a highly illegal meeting – held at a night – in secret – and in haste.

Worst still the trial is dodgy to say the least

V56 – there were many witness who gave false testimony – and their statements didn’t even agree with each other!

Vv57-58 – One witness even reported that Jesus said “I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another not made with hands”.

Jesus didn’t actually say “He” would destroy the temple (John 2:19) – and besides He wasn’t talking about the physical temple in Jerusalem – but the Spiritual temple of His body (John 2:21)

And besides – v59 – even the witnesses’ testimony did not agree!

So basically they have NO evidence of Jesus doing any wrong-doing.

And Jewish Law in Deut 17:6 says “*On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.*” – this trial can’t even get one witness to agree!

But this is a **kangaroo court**

- The outcome is **already decided in advance**
- There’s little or no real or fair examination of evidence
- The accused doesn’t get a fair chance to defend Himself
- And the rules of justice are bypassed and manipulated

But Jesus is not buying into this farcical trial!

Instead we see **the courage of Jesus!**

### The Courage of Jesus (vv60-65)

#### [Slide-Courage of Jesus]

Vv60-61 – The high priest tries to get Jesus to respond to the false witnesses –  
 But **Jesus remains silent**. In doing so, Jesus fulfils a prophesy from Isaiah 53:7 –  
*“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”*

Notice Jesus’ silence shows us we are not obligated to respond to every false claim.

Sometimes engaging in lies:

- gives people unnecessary attention
- drags us into unhelpful conflict

- And distracts us from what really matters

There's wisdom in knowing when to say nothing.

Proverbs 26:4 says "*do not answer a fool according to his folly*"

#### **Application:**

- We don't have to defend ourselves against every rumour
- We don't have to win every argument
- Silence can be strength, not a weakness

But notice Jesus doesn't remain silent altogether

In verse 62, when asked directly "*are you the Messiah?*" - Jesus declares the truth of who He is.

He speaks clearly, even though it will cost Him everything.

So the principle isn't: "*always stay silent*"

It's: "*be silent about lies, but bold about the truth.*"

#### **Application:**

- We should stay quiet when people are just trying to trap or provoke us
- We should speak up when:
  - God's truth is being questioned
  - Our Christian witness matters
  - And when silence would mean denying Jesus
- Like Jesus we can submit to the Father's will at all times and trust in the Father's plan for our lives
- Like Jesus we can speak God's truth without fear

And what a doozey of a reply Jesus gives in v62 – to the question “*are you the Messiah?*” - v62 is definitely the key verse – and so full of truth of who Jesus is – yet at the same time – a reply that gets Jesus the death sentence!

Let’s look at the verse carefully

V62 – “*I am*” – said Jesus – “*And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven*”

By Jesus saying “*I AM*” – it might not sound like anything important to us. But I AM is God’s Name. Back in the OT – When God spoke to Moses in a burning bush in Exodus 3:13-14

*13 Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”*

*14 God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”*

So what Jesus is claiming here is - He is not only the Son of God – He IS GOD! And He sits at *God’s right hand* – a position of authority. Here Jesus is quoting Psalm 110:1.

When Jesus says you “*will see the Son of Man...coming on the clouds*” – He is quoting from our OT reading from Daniel 7:13-14 where Daniel saw God’s glorious King, the Son of Man, coming on clouds from Heaven – and that of course is Jesus - whom God has given - *authority, glory and sovereign power; so that all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. And His*

*dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

So, what Jesus is saying is you might not believe me – and you can mock me – but I am the everlasting King of Heaven and Earth!

These claims of Jesus are all too much for the high priest – v63 – the high priest tears his clothes – which is often an OT sign of grief, anger and outrage when someone blasphemes.

As far as the high priest and the Sanhedrin members are concerned – by Jesus' claiming to be Divine – claiming to be God – Jesus is blaspheming. Even though – in fact – Jesus is telling the absolute truth!

The punishment for blasphemy is death – so at the end of v64 – *they all condemned Him as worthy of death*

And shockingly this illegal and deceitful trial concludes with Jesus being abused – v65 – they spit on Him – they blindfold Him and punch Him and ask Jesus to prophesy who has hit Him! And the guards also beat Him!

What a terrible way to treat the Son of God!

Some applications for us...

### **[Slide-Application]**

- 1<sup>st</sup> - It never occurred to the Sanhedrin that Jesus might be telling the truth – He truly is the great I AM. The same happens today – many reject Jesus – as being God and as being their Lord and Saviour – because their minds are made up and they won't accept the truth

- 2<sup>nd</sup> - The trial of Jesus was unjust, cruel and unfair – this should encourage us that when we are unfairly treated as Christians – we are in good company – Jesus was persecuted – we can expect to be persecuted too!
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Be encouraged by the fact that - Jesus sits at God's right hand – and He intercedes for us now – see Romans 8:34
- 4<sup>th</sup> - Also be encouraged that by Jesus saying He will come on clouds – we know Jesus is coming back one day (Rev 22:12-13 and Luke 12:40) – we must be ready for His return. He only delays His return *because He does not want anyone to perish, but for everyone to repent* (2 Peter 3:9)

In contrast to Jesus' courage – we have **the collapse of Peter** – vv63-73

### The Collapse of Peter (vv66-73)

#### [Slide-Collapse of Peter]

In these verses we see Peter denies knowing Jesus three times — first with a simple denial to a servant girl (v68), then he denied being one of Jesus' followers (vv69-70) and then denied a third time, more strongly to others, even calling down curses on himself and swearing that he does not know Jesus (v71). When the rooster crows the second time – v72 - Peter remembers Jesus' warning, and he is overwhelmed with grief — breaking down in tears, deeply aware of his failure and the weight of what he has done.

What a contrast between Jesus and Peter

- **Faithfulness versus Failure - Jesus** stands firm, speaks truth, and remains faithful under pressure. **Peter** collapses under pressure and denies even knowing Jesus.
- **Courage versus Fear** – **Jesus** boldly says “I am” whereas **Peter** is afraid of the servant girl and the bystanders’ questions
- **Truth versus Lies** – **Jesus** always tells the truth – **Peter** tells lies to avoid being identified with Jesus
- **Submission versus self-preservation** – **Jesus** submits to the Father’s will. **Peter** denies knowing Jesus to save himself. **Jesus** publicly confesses and **Peter** publicly denies!
- **Vindication versus shame/tears** – **Jesus** is condemned but ultimately vindicated by choosing the path of the Cross whereas Peter is full of shame and weeps!

### Application

But we’re not like Peter are we?

(pause)

Sadly we can be just like Peter!

### **[Slide-Application]**

We can fail to stand up for Jesus – we can compromise – we can stay silent about Jesus

Especially when we are afraid:

- Afraid of being rejected by friends, family or work colleagues
- Afraid of ridicule for believing in Jesus

- Afraid of getting into a conflict if we mention Jesus
- Afraid of standing up for our faith because of the consequences – we might lose our job – we might lose a friend or a family member
- Afraid to share our faith – in case we can't explain the Bible well enough!

### [Slide-Practical Ways]

There are some **practical ways we can remain faithful under pressure**:

- **Keep praying** — ask God to strengthen us and guard us from temptation
- **Stay in God's Word** — regularly read it and reflect on it and follow it!
- **Watch our environment** — be mindful of what we surround ourselves with and what we take in
- **Don't tolerate small compromises** — little steps away from God often lead to bigger ones
- **Rely on the Holy Spirit** — not our own strength, but His power at work in us
- **Stay connected to other believers** — encouragement and accountability are vital so we remain faithful

### The Courage of Peter?

To finish up then...

### [Slide-Courage of Peter]

Perhaps we're being a bit unfair on Peter.

Up to this point, Peter's apostolic career has been marked by reckless, wholehearted courage.

Peter is the one who stepped out of the boat in Matthew 14 and walked on water towards Jesus.

Peter is the one who confessed to Jesus, “*You are the Christ*” — which earned Peter the title “*the Rock*”

Peter is the one who drew his sword in John 18 and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest — when Jesus was arrested!

And after that? Common sense would say: lie low. Keep out of sight.

But not Peter!

The last place anyone would expect him to be is in the courtyard of the high priest following Jesus from a distance — and yet that’s exactly where he goes.

All the other disciples have fled.

But Peter is trying to keep his word. Even if everyone else falls away, he will stand by Jesus.

And yet human nature is a strange thing.

We can be brave in the big moments — drawing swords, making bold declarations —

and then crumble in the small moments — standing by a fire, warming our hands, and then becoming undone by a simple question:

“Weren’t you with Jesus?”

And yes — Peter denies Jesus.

But here’s what’s striking: he doesn’t run away after the first denial.

Most of us would have legged it at the first sign of danger. But not Peter.

Last week, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus had told Peter:

***“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”***

That’s Peter.

And if we’re honest — that’s us.

It’s easy to sit comfortably in our pews or armchairs and criticize Peter.

But the truth is, many of us wouldn’t even have made it into the courtyard. We would have been too afraid.

Everyone has a breaking point.

Peter reached his there in the courtyard — but most of us would have reached our breaking point much earlier.

And there’s one more thing to notice.

Who told Mark, the writer of this Gospel, about Peter’s denial?

Peter himself!

Peter was willing for this failure to be written down — and remembered — and preached.

Why?

Because it became part of his testimony.

He’s able to say: “Yes - I failed Jesus! I denied Him. I let Him down...”

But guess what? Jesus loved me. He restored me. He forgave me.”

You can almost hear Peter telling this story over and over again!

We can learn from Peter’s testimony about His failure!

And that’s the beauty of our own testimony and witness as a Christian.

We don’t hide our failures — we bring them into the light and say:

“This is what I was... but look at what Jesus has done for me.”

The world doesn’t work like that.

One failure — and you’re out.

One mistake — and you’re defined by it.

But Jesus says...

**“Whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”** (Gospel of John 6:37)

That’s the difference.

The world writes you off.

Jesus receives you and loves you and restores you!

The world remembers your failure.

Jesus removes your sin as far as the east is from the west!

The world shuts the door.

Jesus opens His arms — even to those who denied Him.

Let's pray...

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the faithfulness of Your Son, Jesus, who stood firm even when all else failed. Forgive us for the times we deny or follow Jesus at a distance. Strengthen our hearts to trust and obey You, and help us to rely on Your grace when we fall. Restore us, guide us, and keep us faithful to the end. In Jesus' name, Amen.*