

# The Night the Rooster Crowed

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** John 18:12-27  
**Preached on:** Sunday, July 19, 2015

It is always such a great joy to be able to open up the word of God to you and I come before you again with this great responsibility, asking that you will join me by taking your Bibles, turning to John 18 as we continue to examine this amazing Gospel record. We will be looking at verses 12-27 this morning and I've entitled my discourse to you "The Night the Rooster Crowed."

Let me give you the background, once again, so that our minds are all in tune with where we're at in this text. We return again to the garden of Gethsemane where the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is willingly submitting himself to the Jewish and Roman authorities to be arrested and carried away. And I want to remind you that because all Scripture is breathed out by God and as Paul tells us, "it is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness," that even when we come to a passage of Scripture like this that is an historical account, an eye-witness account inspired by the Holy Spirit, know that the Spirit of God intends it for you and for me. It's not something that we read and think, "Well, that's an interesting historical account," but we look beyond that and say, "Spirit of God, help me see the great truths that I can glean from this text that can apply to my life." And unless you approach his word with that kind of solemn perspective, you will not only overlook what God would have you see, you will also forfeit what God would have you enjoy.

So this morning as we examine this text, we will discover some priceless gems of truth just underneath the topsoil of this fascinating event. Truths pertaining to three things, three categories that we will look at. 1. The infinite perfections of Christ. Secondly, we will see the ingenious deceptions of Satan. Then finally, we will look at the ignored precautions of Peter. Now, as we go through the text, we will find a very curious interruption occurs on a repeated basis. We will see how the Spirit of God will be focusing upon what is happening with the Lord Jesus and then suddenly shift to describe what is happening with Peter. Back and forth it will go until the details of all three of Peter's denials have been revealed. And I believe he does this in an effort to demonstrate to us the slippery slope of spiritual pride and overconfidence. Moreover, Peter's dramatic fall combined with the wickedness of the men that come to arrest him vividly demonstrate the character of the sinners for whom Christ died and so against the dark background of sin, the dazzling diamond of the glory of Christ shines all the more brightly.

So what we have here is a large detachment of Roman soldiers accompanying the Jewish religious leaders and their temple police as they follow Judas Iscariot to this secluded, private garden where Jesus has gone with his disciples, a place that he has deliberately chosen that can be easily found so that the arresting force can easily arrest him. So this

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force of men come upon him, at least 600 or so, and the word of God says that they are carrying lanterns and torches and weapons. And knowing all that would befall him, we see the Lord Jesus taking the initiative, going outside of the enclosed olive garden, to offer up his life for all whom the Father had given him. We know from the other Gospels that Judas has now betrayed Jesus with a kiss. In fact, Matthew says that he went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi," and kissed him. Perhaps in the flickering light of the lanterns and the torches Judas was able to see the pink stains of blood mixed with sweat upon Jesus' garments because it was just minutes before that Jesus had asked the Father to, "Remove this cup from me, yet not my will but thine be done." And Luke tells us that at that point an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him and being in agony, he was praying very fervently and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

So it is here that we pick up John's account. Notice beginning in verse 12 of John 18, "So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him." Now, first I would like for us to focus on the infinite perfections of Christ that emerge from this amazing scenario and in order to do this, we must first reflect upon what has just happened. You will recall that just minutes before, Peter has acted rashly and in his own self-interest. He has taken out a concealed weapon, a machaira, translated "sword" which is really just a rather long dagger used for hand-to-hand combat up close, and with this dagger, he has cut off the right ear of the high priest's slave. Then we know that Jesus immediately healed that severed ear and Matthew tells us that Jesus commanded Peter to, "Put your sword back into its place. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way? At that time Jesus said to the multitudes, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.'" Then Matthew tells us that "all the disciples left Him and fled."

I find it interesting, Jesus says to this arresting force that he had...actually he's saying to Peter that he had at his disposal 12 legions of angels and doubtless the rest of the people heard that or many of them that were up close. I was thinking about this. A Roman legion consists of 6,000 soldiers. Now, I realize Jesus is using some hyperbole here and, in fact, it's a low estimate of the angelic force that he has at his command, but 12 legions would be 72,000 angels. Inconceivable, right? I was thinking about 2 Kings 18. You will recall that Sennacherib, leading the Assyrians, came into Judah and they absolutely destroyed the city of Lachish, not too far from Jerusalem, and as they made their way to capture Jerusalem, Hezekiah in 2 Kings 19 cries out to the Lord for help and the Lord sends one

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angel and destroys 185,000 Assyrians. Can you imagine what 72,000 angels could do against 600 or so humans with clubs and swords?

Now here on that fateful night, though a massive host of angelic beings were at our Lord's beck and call, he did not call upon them for help, nor would he have even needed to. He could have merely willed it and they would have been incinerated. Instead, he merely speaks his name whereupon the entire force, all of his enemies fall to the ground on their backs, an unimaginable demonstration of his power. Nevertheless, blinded by sin and Satan, they ignore their conscience and they assimilate the irrational mission of the mob and they continue to pursue Jesus and yet Jesus refuses any help. It's amazing to me. He continues to condescend in his state of humiliation and allows himself to be arrested and bound and taken away captive and here we see our Savior in his dignity and grace and wisdom, quietly submitting to the mob, knowing full well the torture that awaits him. Why would he do this? Because, dear friends, there is nothing more important to our Lord Jesus than doing his Father's will which is to give his life as a ransom for many.

Now, I want you to notice verse 12, John says they arrested Jesus and bound him. We see this pictured in the life of Joseph who was perhaps the most comprehensive type of the Lord Jesus Christ in all of Scripture. In fact, the psalmist tells us in Psalm 105:17, "Joseph was sold as a slave. They afflicted his feet with fetters, He himself was laid in irons." Here we see the superior antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, being bound hand and foot with chains as was the custom of that day. Is this not also pictured in the story of Abraham and Isaac? In Genesis 22:9, we read that Abraham took his son and he bound him and then he laid him on the altar on top of the wood. The psalmist tells us of this very picture in Psalm 118:27, "The LORD is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar." And isn't it fascinating that though our Lord and Savior was bound and led away as a sheep to the slaughter, his binding led to our freedom from the penalty and the tyranny of sin and from the bondage of Satan's kingdom of darkness. I'm reminded of what the Apostle Paul spoke of in Ephesians 4:7. There he describes the grace of Christ as a gift to us and he says that when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives. So as our Lord is led away as a captive, he is ultimately leading us away as captives of his grace.

So here we see the Son of God willfully submitting himself to this indignity and now consistent with God's ancient law to his covenant people Israel that required sacrificial lambs to be led to the high priest for inspection before they are sacrificed, here we see the spotless Lamb of God being led first to the man the Jews still considered their high priest, a man by the name of Annas. And here we begin to add to our perspective. Not only are we beholding the infinite perfections of Christ but secondly in the midst of all this, we are seeing the ingenious deceptions of Satan and we see this in how the father of lies has

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worked in the past and how he is working now in this occasion as he is orchestrating these crafty schemes. In order to understand this, let me give you a brief history lesson. Although they take Jesus first to Annas, the Romans had previously removed him from office and in his place they had elevated a man by the name of Caiaphas who was, shall we say, their current choice for high priest. But since the Jews resented Roman interference and any of their political religious dealings and because the appointment of the high priest was for life, they still considered Annas as their high priest along with Caiaphas who the Jews acknowledged in a more civic way.

Now, Annas was a crook. He profited greatly from his unscrupulous dealings with Jews that came to worship. He had a deal worked out with the money changers who worked in the outer court of the temple to basically cheat foreign Jewish worshipers when they exchanged their currency into Jewish money that alone could be used to pay the temple tax. This was a den of thieves that he basically supervised, one that had been twice cleansed by the Lord Jesus. Isn't it interesting then, verse 13, "they lead Jesus to Annas first." This is Satan's appointed servant and I'm sure that Annas had a special hatred for Jesus for a number of reasons and certainly he gloated now in his capture. John says that "he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year." Now, like his father-in-law, Annas, Caiaphas who remained in office from A.D. 18 to A.D. 36, was also a greedy and a cunning villain who hated Jesus. I find it interesting that all wolves in sheep's clothing who prey upon their flocks despise Christ for the same reasons.

Verse 14, "Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people." Now, this was an event that John recorded earlier in chapter 11. There we read in verse 49 that Caiaphas said, "It is expedient for you that one man die for the people. Let the whole nation not perish." So John is mentioning this again to remind the reader that from a human perspective, calling for Jesus' death is really politically expedient but like every crooked, self-serving politician, Caiaphas is spinning the truth for his own advantage. You see, he is using the language of sacrifice in the context of saving the nation which, by the way, was a common thing for them to do. If there was ever any kind of insurrectionist, the Jews would give them over to the Romans in order to prevent the Romans from doing great damage to the people as a whole. So this made his murderous plot seem all the more noble, "After all, if we sacrifice Jesus, then the nation lives." Who wouldn't be for that, right? So his death would protect the Jewish nation from Roman reprisal. Now, all of this sounds so noble but you must understand: Caiaphas and the rest of the guys had no concern for the nation. All that mattered to them was their own position of power which Jesus threatened.

So they lead Jesus to Annas first. I find it fascinating that the road that they traveled to the house of the high priest on the east side of Jerusalem required that they pass through

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the sheep gate. If you ever go to Jerusalem, you will make this journey and you will see that it is still there. And this was the gate that sacrificial animals would pass as they went to slaughter and here we have the final Lamb to be sacrificed for sin making that same journey. Beloved, here we behold the superiority of Jesus over all of his enemies and his perfect submission to his Father's will. Here we see his love for all whom the Father had given him. Here we see the infinite perfections of Christ even in the midst of Satan's ingenious deceptions.

Now, you must understand that from the very start the Jewish leaders knew that they were going to kill Jesus so their legal deliberations were all a farce. The judge had pronounced the verdict before the trial had even begun and Jesus knew it. The hearing that was about to take place was illegal on at least 2 counts: 1. Criminal trials were not to be held at night; and secondly, trials in capital cases could only be held at the temple and only in public. But to the self-righteous, self-promoting religious leaders, it was all justified. "After all, we're trying to save the nation, right? So this is legal. This is appropriate. This is just." My friends, this is a very dangerous thing and a lesson that we need to learn. This is one of Satan's great strategies to deceive us, to somehow make sin look necessary; to make it look right; to make it look loving; to make it look noble. I'm reminded of what we read earlier in Isaiah 5:20 when God said to Judah, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness." So here we see satanically influenced men putting a religious and political stamp of approval on Satan's diabolical lies in an effort to somehow gain the approval of Rome and gain the approval of the Jewish masses.

Now, here is something else that we need to be aware of. It's a fascinating to see how Satan uses sin. You see, one sinner alone is reasonably manageable but many hundreds of sinners in a group, suddenly we see their wickedness compounded exponentially. If you study mob psychology, you will learn that members of a crowd will tend to ignore their conscience and do things that they would normally not do as an individual, things that might be immoral or illegal. You see, a mob is able to assimilate irrational goals into a collective mass and in turn that mob takes on its own identity. It becomes its own organism, if you will, and suddenly the group, not the individual, is the one committing the acts of violence or insanity, allowing individuals to defer the blame upon something other than themselves. You see, sinners love a mob because it gives them permission to ignore what's left of their conscience and unleash all their pent up wickedness upon some common scapegoat, whatever it might be, whether it's real or perceived. Folks, this is what the enemy is doing here in a very subtle way. You see, he has already done it with the mob that has gone after Jesus and have been flattened to their back by the word of his name and yet still they pursue him, but now they are preparing to galvanize the Jewish people into a mob that will call for his death.

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Now, we will see more of these infinite perfections of Christ and ingenious deceptions of Satan as we go along but notice the first great shift in the narrative and here we begin to see the ignored precautions of Peter. Now, bear in mind that earlier that night Jesus had warned Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat and that he would, or actually he earlier in his life he had warned him of that and he had warned him that night that he would deny him 3 times and therefore he has warned him that, "You need to watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." But like so many times with us, Peter did not take the word of the Lord seriously and this will be really the cause of much of his undoing. And how many times will you sit in this place and hear the word of the Lord and not take it seriously? You are thinking about other things or you hear it and it kind of goes in one ear and out the other and you continue right down the same road that will lead you to misery. Well, this is what was going on with Peter. He had heard these things from the Lord but he really saw no need to apply it to his life. His flesh was strong in terms of his confidence in his own spiritual prowess. But unfortunately, that pride left him vulnerable to his own flesh and the ingenious temptations that Satan had waiting for him.

Verse 15, "Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple." As a footnote, this is probably a reference to John who is identified later in chapter 20, verse 2, as the disciple whom Jesus loved. John goes on to say, "Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest." So evidently John had gone to the place where Jesus was and had gone in there with him and we know from some extra-biblical literature that John's father had a large fishing business and according to the apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews, the Apostle John delivered fish to the high priest's house so evidently this is how they knew each other. Verse 16, "but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in."

Then notice what happens, verse 17, "Then the slave-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.'" Matthew records it this way, "Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, 'You too were with Jesus the Galilean.'" Remember, Galilean was a term of derision, a condescending epithet, often used by the Judeans, especially those in Jerusalem, to mock the ignorant and the lack of civility of the people from Galilee. So this catches Peter off-guard and I might add that that's what Satan always does with temptation. Matthew adds that Peter responded to the first slave girl, "I don't know what you are talking about." The other Gospels render similar yet somewhat different accounts of what she said indicating that there is more than just one interchange here and several things were going on. No doubt others are intrigued with who this man is. They are

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hearing all that is going on here. Luke says that Peter answered her saying, "Woman, I do not know him." Mark says, "As Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came, and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, 'You also were with Jesus the Nazarene.' But he denied it, saying, 'I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.'" You see, already Satan has him off-guard, right? Peter should at that point have paused and said, "Lord, help me." But his overconfidence had gotten the best of him.

So back to verse 18 of John 18, "Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself." Isn't it ironic, and John's Gospel is full of irony, here we have one who had minutes before stood with Jesus now standing with the enemies of Jesus. Once again, we see the ingenious way Satan deceives us. Think about it: whenever the enemy sees a sheep without a shepherd wandering alone, he will quickly provide a sense of safety and a sense of belonging in the company of those who hate Christ. Said differently: you leave the protective, appropriately protective environment of the fold of your church and you begin to wander out on your own, it's just a matter of time that the enemy will provide for you a place where you feel like you belong. Where you feel comfortable. And those people will lead you down a path of misery.

Well, Peter's world is unraveling now. He's confused. He's afraid. He's ruled by his failing flesh and his arrogant bluster and bravado is really of no use to him now. He is learning the hard way what Jesus said earlier that, "Without me, you can do nothing." Oh, what a hard lesson that is for him to learn and for us to learn but this is precisely the state of helplessness and shame that the Lord knew would come upon him. This was a fiery trial that he would use to temper the steel of Peter's faith.

Verse 19, "The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching." Now, he is wanting to know about the disciples to see if, you know, "Are you plotting something against Rome here?" He wants to know about his teaching to see where that teaching contradicts the Jewish teachers. You see, if he could prove that somehow Jesus was leading an insurrection against Rome, he knew the Romans would come in and take him out. Moreover, if he could prove that Jesus' doctrine was heretical from the Jewish perspective, then he knew that the Jews would join him and turn against Jesus.

Now, all of this was clearly a violation of Jewish law that protected the accused from having to testify against himself. This would be tantamount to our fifth amendment. You know, you hear people pleading the fifth in the Constitution. But these men cared nothing

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about the law. I find it interesting that these fastidious keepers of the law who were so careful to make sure they wouldn't violate any part of the law and added all kinds of things to the law but somehow convinced themselves and others as to how righteous they were, well, my when it comes to obeying the will of God embodied in the law in the context of being threatened with their own agenda, it doesn't mean anything at that point. It meant nothing to them. The law meant nothing to them where it stood in the way of their own personal agenda.

Well, knowing the law in verse 20, "Jesus answered him, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret.'" In other words, "I don't have anything to hide." Verse 21, "Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said." This is a kind way of saying, "You know exactly what I teach. This is why you have threatened to expel from the synagogue anyone that embraces what I teach so stop the pretending. Bring forth witnesses according to the law and stop violating the law by trying to get me to incriminate myself."

Verse 22, "When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, 'Is that the way You answer the high priest?'" I find it interesting, this is always the tactic of those who lose an argument based on its merit. You know how it works: when bested, attack your opponent personally, physically if possible. We see this all the time in our political arena. Of course, to strike a prisoner that is bound who has not yet even been formally accused of a crime, that is highly illegal but they don't care about the law. This is all part of Satan's ingenious plan. Again, to appeal to the fleshly desires of evil men with temptations that cause them to act wickedly but temptations that make it look like what they are doing is really good and not evil. After all, they're going to save the nation, right? They're going to honor God by getting rid of this blasphemer. Then also they are trying to tempt Jesus to retaliate in anger, given the egregious nature of how the law is being violated.

But friends, won't you notice again the infinite perfections of Christ in his glorious character. He remains fully in charge. His superiority maintained by his submission and his restraint and with calm dignity and gentle charity, notice what he says in verse 23, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?" I fear my response would have not been so charitable. The other Gospels indicate there was much more going on here and we have reason to believe from the Gospel accounts that Peter and John could witness much of this. Matthew records that one false witness and, by the way, they had paid off the witnesses, these false witnesses. It was a rigged court from the beginning. One of them gets up and says, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" Matthew records that the high priest

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after hearing this stands up and says, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against You?" But Jesus remained silent.

Matthew goes on to say, "And the high priest said to Him, 'I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said so but I tell you from now on, you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his robes and said, 'He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy, what is your judgment?' They answered, 'He deserves death.'" Do you see how the mob is beginning to work? "Then they spit in His face and struck Him and some slapped Him saying, 'Prophesied to us, You Christ. Who is it that struck?'" Luke tells us that they blindfolded Jesus as they did this.

Well, in order to save face and realizing that he had really done everything he could with Jesus and at some level Jesus was making a fool of him and knowing that legally Caiaphas was the only one that could bring formal charges against Jesus before Pilate, we see in verse 24 that, "Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest." Now, will you notice again how the Spirit of God abruptly shifts our attention back to Peter in verse 25. "Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, 'You are not also one of His disciples, are you?' He denied it, and said, 'I am not.'" Matthew says, "Another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.'" And Luke says that, "Others joined in saying, 'You are one of them too.'" Matthew tells us, "And again he denied it with an oath." This time he uses an oath. In other words a declaration of truth made in the presence of God. "God is my witness," so to speak. And what did he say? "I do not know the man." Folks, there is a lesson to be learned here. This is how Satan likes to destroy us. Like a boxer who sees a cut over the right eyebrow, that's where he will focus his blows. So too the enemy of our souls will see our weaknesses and that's where he will focus his attack upon us.

Peter is now gaining momentum on that slippery slope of sin. His arrogant self-reliance has been his undoing. His confidence was in his inflated ego, not in the Lord. His strength was in his flesh, not in the Lord himself. So now he is without resources. His courage is gone. He is scared. He is angry. He is trapped. He is desperate. And beloved, please understand: when pride reigns within our heart and we find our world falling apart, there will be one thing only on our mind and that will be self-preservation, not suffering for Christ. Peter was learning the hard way what Jesus had told him earlier that, "Without Me, you can do nothing." He was learning the hard way that the cost of discipleship is far too high for those in love with themselves.

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So with his Lord apparently helpless in the hands of his captors, Peter is now fearing his own life. He has a desire to be with the Lord yet he's too scared to publicly confess him so he denies his relationship with Jesus, reinforces it with an oath. Folks, may I point out something else that is so frightening and so indicative of how the enemy works in our life? Isn't it interesting, who would have thought that young women would be used to bring down such a man's man? But a good trapper will always set his trap where his prey will least suspect it. How easy it is for something so small to topple something so mighty. In both cases, mere slave girls are used to utterly unnerve this proud disciple who once walked on water. Even as a microscopic organism can cause a strong man to collapse in debilitating weakness, so too the smallest and most unlikely source of temptation can bring down the mightiest saint. Never forget that.

Luke helps us understand that about an hour passes. In verse 26, John picks up the narrative, "One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?'" Now, you must understand, while being one of Jesus' disciples was not yet illegal, it was illegal to draw out a dagger and cut off the right ear of the slave of the high priest and so Satan is turning up the heat now. I mean, it's one thing to be a follower of Jesus, it's another thing, you know, attempted murder? This is a big deal. Matthew adds, "A little while later, the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you too are one of them; for even the way you talk gives you away.'" You see, he had a Galilean accent which would be similar to the differing dialects that we have here in the United States. Those of you from the Northeast sound very different than those of us that live here in the South and so you have a similar type of thing going on here.

So, you see, Peter is unable to escape here. He is trapped. There is relentless finger-pointing in this courtyard. But remember, Jesus had predicted that he would deny him 3 times. We have had 2 episodes and we have this final one now. "'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?'" Verse 27, "Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed." Mark indicates that Peter went out onto the porch, the servant girl saw him and began once more to say to the bystanders, "This is one of them." But again he denied it and after a little while the bystanders were again saying to Peter, "Surely you are one of them for you are a Galilean too." But he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about." Mark says, "Immediately a rooster crowed a second time and Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, 'Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.' And he began to weep."

My friends, perhaps the most poignant, heartrending moment in this whole drama is what Luke records in his Gospel. You see, by now it's about 3 o'clock in the morning. Jesus is being led away in shackles while Peter is making his third denial saying, "Man, I do not

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# The Night the Rooster Crowed

By David Harrell

**Bible Text:** John 18:12-27  
**Preached on:** Sunday, July 19, 2015

know what you are talking about." And Luke says, "And immediately while he was still speaking, a cock crowed." This was that second time. Then Luke tells us something that is almost overwhelming to conceive. Luke says that as Jesus is being led away in shackles across the courtyard, as Peter makes his final denial, Luke says, "The Lord turned and looked at Peter." Can you imagine that? What would that have been like? Folks, the Lord always sees, doesn't he? The Lord is intimately involved in all of our ways. I'm sure that was a look Peter never forgot. For Jesus it was a look of penetrating holiness, of divine omniscience but also a look of love for one who had violated that love. A look of deep pain and sorrow and yet one of compassion, of long-suffering as he looked upon one that he loved, one that he was about to give his life for. I'm sure Peter's eyes betrayed a look of utter shock mixed with shame and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." Isn't it sad how often we remember when it's too late? But isn't it good that by God's grace we remember?

Well, there are great lessons to be learned from this night that the rooster crowed. Let me just summarize some of the things that you can look for very quickly because our time is gone. I believe the Holy Spirit will help us understand 5 very crucial stages of temptation and sin that we need to be aware of. As with Peter, our proclivity to acquiesce to temptation often begins with 1. Spiritual pride. My friend, none of us are as mature as we think we are so take heed lest you fall.

And when you are filled with spiritual pride, you will tend to 2. Create man-centered theology. Remember, Peter and the others believed what they wanted to believe about the Messiah and the kingdom. Although Jesus had clearly prepared the disciples for his departure, for his suffering and death, they chose instead to construct their own doctrine that would meet their needs, that would satisfy their pleasures, that would accomplish their lives' dreams and ambitions. They had no place for a suffering Messiah. Naturally, their doctrine therefore did not include any understanding of self-denial, any need for God to help in times of unimaginable temptation. There was no place in their theology for taking up a cross and following Jesus.

This leads to the third stage of temptation and sin and that is prayerlessness. This is what happened with Peter. He was too self-absorbed and too self-confident to see any need to commune with the Lord, his God. After all, why do we need to pray when we are so confident of our own spirituality? So naturally he disregarded the Lord's earlier admonition to keep watching and praying that, "You may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." What is it that the Lord asks us to pray? "Lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil."

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Well, this leads to the fourth stage of it all and that is an unteachable heart. You remember Peter arrogantly challenged the Lord's prediction that he would deny him 3 times before the light of dawn. He ignored the Lord's warning about how, "Without me you can do nothing." He ignored his call to humility, the need to watch and pray and so forth and like Peter, so often we think we know more than the Lord and so we have an unteachable heart.

Finally, this leads to the fifth stage and that is impetuous acts of defiance, what I like to call knee-jerk sin. Peter merely responds in his flesh.

But isn't it wonderful to know that the story didn't end there? We see that Peter goes out and he wept bitterly and by God's grace those bitter tears of repentance led to forgiveness, to restoration. Beloved, may I remind you that because of God's grace, though our faith may be severely tested in ways that we perhaps could never even imagine, it will never fail. Not because of us but because of his grace. So the deep blades of failure had broken into the hard ground of his pride and in those furrows, the seed of humility was sown. And what a happy ending, right? Because Peter confessed his sin and truly repented, we see his pride going away and he finds this humility in his heart. Peter went on to lead the disciples and remained steadfast in the Lord's love. He served faithfully for 40 years knowing all along that one day he would be crucified as the Lord had promised.

Beloved, I hope that we can all see ourselves in Peter's place here and learn well those lessons from the night the rooster crowed. Wherever there is spiritual pride, dear friend, you must see it and repent of it. Wherever there is spiritual pride, there is going to be some man-centered theology that you have concocted or you have bought into from someone else, some twisted, exaggerated doctrine that somehow helps you justify your own thinking. You need to call it for what it is and repent of it. You see, doctrinal error is like a broken compass, it will lead you to a place where you do not want to go. And if all of that is there, you're not going to have a passion for prayer. You're going to be unteachable and you will become known for foolish, selfish and impetuous acts of defiance against the word and the will of the most high God. So may I encourage you to examine your heart for your good and for God's glory, amen?

Let's pray together.

*Father, we commit all of this to you, praying that you will do with your word as only what you can do. I pray that those within the sound of my voice will not harden their hearts to it, that by your grace their hearts will be softened that they might apply these things and enjoy the wonderful blessings of walking in obedience with you. I ask in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.*

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We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at [otcr.org](http://otcr.org).

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