

Notes for Matthew -Chapter 26 (Page 1 of 8)

Introduction - "Reality Check"

1. Jesus just spent the last two chapters focusing on the events of His second coming.
 - a. Chapter 26 gets back to the reality of the present moment.
 - b. It was important that Jesus gave that two-chapter speech to give the disciples some hope given the horrors they are about to face.
2. Another thing to notice in this chapter is that Jesus is always in charge.
 - a. As one studies the details of these events, notice Jesus is always in control of the situation.
 - b. Others are putting Jesus on trial, but it is really those others who are being judged.
3. Painful events are always more bearable if you know there is an end.
 - a. I am convinced the most painful part for Jesus was not the crucifixion, but the fact he had to be separated from God the Father for the payment of sin.
 - b. In this chapter, Jesus prays three times that "if there is any other way, let it be done". Notice that Jesus accepts the Father's will, as there is no other way.

Verses 1-2: "When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² "As you know, the Passover is two days away--and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

1. "Finished saying all of these things" refers to the 2nd coming speech of Chapters 24 and 25.
2. The "Passover" holiday is discussed a number of times in the bible as a requirement for all Jews to celebrate. The methodology is discussed in Exodus Chapter 12. When you read through that section, you can see how it is prophetic of the Cross:
 - a. The whole lamb must be consumed (See Exodus 12, Verse 3-4).
 - i. This means you must accept Jesus as full payment for sin.
 - b. The lamb must be a year old (i.e., in the prime of its life) without blemish (which refers to defects). This is from Exodus 12:5. Jesus had no sin (See 1st Corinthians 5:21).
 - c. The lamb must be slaughtered (Exodus 12:6).
 - d. None of the bones may be broken (Exodus 12:46). We will read in Chapter 27 that a Roman soldier disobeyed the order to break Jesus' legs to hasten death. In a strange way, this satisfies this prophecy of "no broken bones".
 - e. In the Passover, the blood on the door spared the life of those in the house, who trusted in that blood saving their life. Just as we trust that the shed blood spares for eternity our life.
 - f. One realizes why Jesus "insisted" upon the crucifixion happening on Passover.

Verses 3-5: "Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. ⁵ "But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

1. In John's Gospel, we learn Caiaphas advised the Jewish council "that it would be good if one man died for the people." (John 18:14, NIV) History records that Caiaphas was a corrupt high priest appointed by the Romans. His father in law Annas was the "power behind the throne".
2. John's Gospel records that Jesus first trial was before Annas, and then Jesus was brought to the home of Caiaphas. History further records that both Annas and Caiaphas were corrupt and financially profited off of the animal sacrifices in the Temple.
3. Therefore, Jesus posed a threat to their status quo with his growing popularity.
4. The Jewish leaders didn't want Jesus arrested during the Feast, as they didn't want a riot.
 - a. Getting back to the Romans, the Roman's primary rule was "no riots". They allowed limited freedom, but people would be killed if you rioted against Rome.

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Verses 6-7: "While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper,⁷ a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table."

1. Bethany was a "suburb" of Jerusalem, a short walking distance away.
2. Historically we don't know much about Simon the Leper. He was probably cured by Jesus.
3. From Verse 7-14 we have this story of the woman pouring perfume on Jesus' head.
 - a. In John's account we learn this was Mary of "Mary and Martha and Lazarus" fame. We also learn that she wiped it on Jesus head with her hair. (See John 11:2).
 - b. I see this as a beautiful visual picture of "adoration" of our Lord.

Verses 8-13: "When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. ⁹ "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor." ¹⁰ Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

1. When you read this story, you get the impression that Mary was the only person in the room who "got it" about Jesus death and resurrection. In Verse 12, Jesus says she did this "for my burial".
2. Getting back to Verse 8, I believe the point is nothing is ever wasted spent on Jesus.
 - a. This does not mean we are to "bathe" Jesus with all that we own.
 - b. Following Jesus does mean that all we have now belongs to Him. He may choose to take it all away, but in most cases, he turns and takes what resources you do have and wants you to use them for his Glory.
3. Let's look at Verse 11: "The poor you will always have with you".
 - a. It does not mean to ignore the poor, just to keep idea in perspective.
4. Jesus then says in Verse 11: "but you will not always have me".
 - a. Jesus was referring to himself in the flesh.
 - b. The last verse of Matthew's Gospel says, "I am with you always" (28:20, NIV).
5. The lesson for you and I about Mary "bathing" Jesus is nothing is ever wasted for Jesus sake.
6. Jesus said "And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward." (Matthew 10:42 NIV)

Verses 14-15: Then one of the Twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. ¹⁶ From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

1. One of the great questions of history is why did Judas do this?
 - a. The most logical explanation is that Judas saw Jesus' miracles and thought, "I want to be part of this. Jesus is the Messiah, he is going to overthrow Rome, and set up a new government. I want in on some of that action."
 - b. When Judas figured out that Jesus' kingdom was spiritual and not one of immediate power and glory, he looked for an opportunity to betray him.
2. Notice Judas was "religious". He believed in the Messiah, but was not saved.
3. In the end, Judas was more interested in "saving his skin" than following Jesus.

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Verse 17: "On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

1. Remember the Passover holiday coincided with the 8-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.
2. Notice Jesus the disciples did not forget the Jewish laws. Jesus didn't say, "These customs don't matter any more, because I'm starting a new religion."
 - a. I personally take the view that Jewish-Christians are still to honor the Jewish holidays in remembrance of God's relationship with the Nation of Israel.
 - b. These holidays are for Jewish-Christians to remember God's promises to them as well as prophetic about Jesus. Gentile believers are not required to keep these holidays (Acts 15).

Verses 18-19: "He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.' " ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover."

1. Mark and Luke's Gospel mention that they will recognize this man because he is carrying a jug of water. Carrying a jug of water was "woman's work" and they would recognize him in a crowd.

Verses 20-22: "When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." ²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

1. This part had to be hard for the disciples to accept. It was a shock to them that anyone in their group would betray Jesus.
2. It is hard for me to understand why anyone would turn away from following Jesus.
 - a. Once you comprehend the eternal joy of salvation, one you have that peace in your heart that all of your sins are forgiven, why anyone would want to turn from that?
 - b. Judas represents those who were never saved in the first place. But these verses remind us that not everyone sitting in the church pews around us are willing to pay that price.
3. Notice that every disciple stopped and asked "is it I?"
 - a. Even though we are not guilty of betrayal, the fact that we are not perfect makes us examine our lives and see if somehow, we are doing things that are not pleasing to God.

Verses 23-25: "Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." ²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

1. Judas, repeated the same line as everyone else so that he wouldn't be suspected as the guilt party.
 - a. Notice that the other disciples said, "Surely not I, Lord" in Verse 22.
 - b. Judas says "Surely not I, Rabbi (teacher)" in Verse 25.
 - i. One gets in trouble when Jesus "just" becomes your teacher and not your Lord!
2. What you have to understand is that the Jewish leaders didn't want Jesus betrayed during the Passover season when all of the big crowds were around.
 - a. By Jesus telling Judas "I know what you are doing", Judas then has to betray him quickly before the other disciples kill him.
 - b. We read in John's account that Judas left the room right after this (John 13:30).
3. Jesus says in Verse 24 of Judas, "It is better for him if he had not been born."
 - a. Before the world was created God the Father knew of Judas betrayal.
 - b. My point is Judas cannot stand on judgment day & say, "It wasn't my fault, and I was pre-destined to fulfill this role in history. I played my part, so I'm not guilty".
 - c. God holds us accountable for actions even though he knows the results ahead of time.

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Verses 26-29: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." ²⁷ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

1. This set of scriptures, and a handful of others is the basis of Christian "communion".
2. Notice that Jesus commands us to "eat his body and drink his blood".
3. It is a classical debate in Christianity over how literal to take these verses.
 - a. The Roman Catholics believe that when you take communion, it literally (miraculously) becomes the body and blood of Christ. This is called "transubstantiation". Their argument is Jesus said, "This is my body and this is my blood".
 - b. Most Protestants take this verse spiritually. We argue "Jesus was holding up bread when he said this, not grabbing the skin off his forearm." Further Jesus also said, "I am the door" (John 10:7, 10:9) or "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). Jesus is not a door, nor a plant vine.
4. What we know most about the ritual of communion comes from Paul.
 - a. Paul says we are to do this regularly to remember Jesus' death. (1 Cor. 11:26).
 - b. We are not to do this in "an unworthy manner" (1 Cor. 11:26-28), which means we take it seriously and examine ourselves of sins to be confessed prior to the action.
5. In Verse 28, Jesus calls the Passover wine, "my blood of the covenant".
 - a. The word covenant means contract. To paraphrase, God is making a contract saying, "If you believe Jesus blood was "spilled" for your sins and live your life by that fact, all of your sins, past, present and future are forgiven and you get to spend eternity in heaven."
 - b. This is a "new covenant" through Jesus blood is similar to the "old covenant" way through animal sacrifices. Those animal sacrifices are prophetic of what Jesus did on the cross.
6. In Verse 29, Jesus says he won't drink of this again until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom"
 - a. In heaven, there will be a "wedding banquet" between Jesus and Christians:
 - b. Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." (Revelation 19:9, NIV)

Verse 30: "When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

1. Part of the Jewish ritual of Passover is to sing hymns. They were probably Psalms.
2. Commentators have speculated for centuries about which Psalm(s) was being sung. If the Gospel writers revealed that particular hymn, we as Christians would think that that Psalm is "more special than the others". I believe the bible is silent on that issue on purpose.

Verses 31-32: "Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' ³² But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.""

1. Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7 and says it is about this particular point in history.
2. Notice Jesus is trying to reassure the disciples that despite the fact they will run away, Jesus then says in effect, "everything will be fine after I have risen".

Verses 33: "Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will. ""

1. Notice that Jesus just said in Verse 31 "that all (the disciples) will fall away".
2. Peter is basically telling Jesus here, "No Lord, you are wrong!"
3. That is the danger of pride. Pride is doing your will and not God's will at any one moment of your life. Even if your will "sounds logical", it causes you to falter if it is not God's will.

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Verse 34: "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

1. Jesus specifically gives a sign for Peter to recognize when this is going to happen.
2. Despite Peter's failure coming up, Peter is "saved". I don't believe you can lose that salvation as long as you continue to believe in Jesus' payment for sins. Peter never did that despite his denial.

Verse 35: "But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same."

1. Notice that all of the other disciples gave the same thought as Peter.
2. They were all "disobeying" or disbelieving what Jesus just told them.

Verses 36-38: "Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

1. The word "Gethsemane" literally means "oil-press". There is a "pun" in that the place where Jesus was "betrayed to be crushed" is the place where olives are picked to be crushed.
2. Notice Jesus calls Peter, James and John (2 sons of Zebedee) to "sit with him while he prays".
3. He did not call for these 3 to pray themselves, just to be with Jesus as he prayed.

Verse 39: "Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

1. Jesus is essentially saying here, "Father, if there is any other way for people to get into heaven other than me go to the cross, let it be so."
 - a. That is done for our benefit as well. It is so we understand there is no other way to heaven.
2. Notice Jesus ends this prayer, with "Yet not as I will, but as you will". That is another item for us to model. The idea of accepting God's will even if we don't like it.
 - a. I have often found that God doesn't fully change a situation unless we are willfully ready to accept the situation "as is". At that point of complete surrender that we have peace with God.

Verses 40-41: "Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

1. We all know that Peter denied Jesus three times. Did you ever notice that Peter "fell asleep" three times in this section? I believe those two facts are meant to be connected.

Verses 42-44: "He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing."

1. Notice that Jesus prayer of Verse 42 is identical to that of Verse 39. This is teaching that repetitive prayer is acceptable. Also notice the prayer is short and to the point.
2. Notice that after three times, Jesus stopped this prayer and accepted God's will.
 - a. I don't believe this means to pray exactly three times for something, no more no less.
 - b. It simply means a repeated prayer is acceptable, and we eventually want to get to a point where if God is saying "no" to our prayers, that we accept it.

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Verses 45-46: "Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer! ""

1. Jesus found the three disciples asleep after each of the prayers. That failure to pray prevented the spiritual strength to be with Jesus during the next series of events.
2. Notice that none of this is a shock to Jesus. He is well aware of Judas arrival at this time
3. When Jesus says, "Rise, let us go!", I believe Jesus was looking out for his disciples. It was not God's will for them to be arrested and crucified at this point.

Verses 47-49: "While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." ⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him."

1. It is comical to think that an army with swords and clubs is more powerful than Jesus.
2. Judas' signal to the arresting officers was for him to kiss Jesus. This way, the others would know which one was Jesus among the disciples.
 - a. I believe physically Jesus was "nothing special". If Jesus stood out, the kiss-part would not be necessary. I believe Jesus' looks were nothing special compared to other disciples.
3. Ever stop to think why God used "Judas" to betray Jesus?
 - a. I suspect one of the reasons is to support the story that Jesus is God.
 - b. If you and I were to make-up a story about Jesus, we would have "a villain", say a Pharisee betray Jesus, not one of the disciples.
 - c. The fact that this story is so improbable supports the evidence of accuracy.

Verse 50: "Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him."

1. Jesus didn't raise a fuss. In John's Gospel, Jesus said that he is the one they are looking for.

Verse 51: "With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. "

1. In John 18:10, we learn that it was Peter who drew the sword.
2. It is comical for Peter to think, "Come on Jesus, we can lick these guys, let's fight". ☺
3. In Luke 22:51, we learn that Jesus healed the ear of this soldier.
 - a. The last recorded miracle in the bible, chronologically (other than the resurrection) is Jesus "undoing" the damage caused by one of his disciples!

Verses 52-54: "'Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

1. Let's talk about "all who draw the sword will die by the sword."
 - a. Jesus is not calling for pacifism in all situations in life. Jesus is saying in effect, "Peter, if I wanted to fight with swords, I could call down thousands of angels and wipe these guys out. This is about accepting God's will of my arrest at this point in time."
 - b. Jesus reminds his disciples that He is in control of the situation.
2. Jesus mentions "the scriptures being fulfilled".
 - a. Jesus is reminding them and us, "Hey folks, this is all going according to plan".

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Verses 55-56: "At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled."

1. Jesus is saying in effect, "You (arresting officers) look ridiculous here trying to arrest me. I was teaching every day and never hurt anyone. Do you think I'm going to raise a fuss now that you're here to arrest me?"
2. The soldiers and chief priests thought they were arresting Jesus to put him on trial. Jesus is in control of the situation and is putting them on trial with their actions.

Verses 57-58: "Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. ⁵⁸ But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome."

1. The disciples never "got it" about the resurrection. Here was Peter, standing outside the trial thinking, "Well, I've hung around Jesus for three years, I might as well watch the end."
2. Peter's mistake here was "following Jesus at a distance". We commit our greatest sins when we too "follow Jesus at a distance" as opposed to being close to Him.

Verses 59-61: "The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰ But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward ⁶¹ and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

1. Roman law forbade the Jews from killing anyone for a crime. Therefore, they needed evidence they could take to the Roman court system. The Romans, like the Jews, needed two witnesses in agreement. A bunch of false witnesses came forward, but none could agree.
2. Verse 61 says that two agreed that Jesus said he would destroy the Temple. While their words were correct, that was not Jesus intent. They mislead the group with their false accusation.
 - a. One of the 10 commandments is to "not bear false witness" (Exodus 20:16). The idea behind this command means to not say anything misleading where someone can interpret your words as a false accusation.

Verse 62-63a: "Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" ⁶³ But Jesus remained silent."

1. "Jesus remained silent": Everything about this trial was illegal and Jesus was not about to condone it by defending himself. Some bible commentators do a detailed study how every aspect of these trials violated either Jewish laws or customs.
2. In life, sometimes there are accusations that are so bad, you don't want to make the accusations "respectable" by responding to them.

Verse 63b: "The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

1. The high priest then, (I'm guessing) out of frustration, asked Jesus, "under oath" to say whether or not he was the Messiah. Jewish law required Jesus to respond under this oath. (Leviticus 5:1).
2. Today, Orthodox Jews reject the claim that Jesus is the Messiah because they believe the Messiah will be a man and not "God". Yet, they accused Jesus of "blasphemy". Yet in that day, they understood the Messiah to be the Son of God.

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Verse 64: "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

1. This is one of the few times I can recall where Jesus bluntly stated he was the Messiah.
2. Here is the interesting part, Jesus was telling this crowd, who did not believe in him, that they would see the Son of Man sitting at God the Father's right and hand and his coming.
 - a. Personally, I believe when the "Great White Throne Judgment" occurs (after the 1,000 years) is when these condemned people are going to see Jesus coming.

Verses 65-66: Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶ What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

1. I can't help thinking of the old joke of, "You will be given a fair trial, and then shot".
2. They couldn't get the witnesses to agree, so they "assumed" he was committing blasphemy by claiming to be God."

Verses 67-68: "Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?""

1. Visualize being hit in the face while blindfolded. You can sense the hatred they had of Jesus at this point. In the next lesson, we'll discuss why of why Jesus had to suffer so much.

Verses 69-75: "Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. ⁷¹ Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷² He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" ⁷³ After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away." ⁷⁴ Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵ Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly."

1. This is the famous story of Peter's three denials of Jesus.
 - a. The first time, Peter lied and said he didn't know Jesus. (Verse 70).
 - b. The second time, Peter took an oak saying it wasn't true. (Verse 72).
 - c. The third time, Peter cursed, and swore and yelled he didn't know Jesus (Verse 74).
2. Remember that this is "shoot-first-ask-questions later" Peter! He was known for boldness!
 - a. Peter was the guy who swung the sword in the Garden a few hours back.
 - b. Yet he was too scared to tell the truth to a little girl.
 - c. Peter failed in his "strong suit" of being bold. We need to be grateful and dependent upon God for all areas of our life.
3. By the way, notice this is not an unforgivable sin. Peter had a bad day. ☺ He had to suffer for his consequences, but it never cost Peter his eternal salvation.
4. Isn't it interesting to notice that after Peter's denial is when he remembered Jesus' words about the cock crowing?
 - a. We do the same thing. It is usually when we are knee-deep in sin that the words of the bible ring true and realize, "oh oh, I'm going down the wrong path".
 - b. Personally, I think Peter was forgiven the moment he went into tears.
 - c. This is because Peter did not walk away from Jesus forever, but realized Jesus is Lord and Peter disobeyed Jesus requested to pray with him the night before. That lack of prayer gave Peter the lack-of-strength to be a witness for Jesus.