



The Gospel of Mark

A Living Word Independent Bible Study



The Gospel of Mark
Part 39
Mark 14:66-72

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(NIV)

INTRODUCTION

We are now in our fifth and final session covering the long 14th chapter of Mark's Gospel.

The familiar scenes in this chapter include:

The Anointing of Jesus (lesson 35)

The Lord's Supper (lesson 36)

The Prediction of Peter's Denial (lesson 36)

The Garden of Gethsemane (lesson 37)

The Arrest of Jesus (lesson 38)

Jesus' Jewish Trial (lesson 38)

Peter's Denial (this lesson)

At the beginning of the last session, we saw Peter's narrative begin with the introductory verse:

Mark 14:54 – "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."

The events of the Jewish trial are thus drawn as taking place while Peter sits at the fire ... and now, Mark returns to Peter's narrative.

Mark 14:66 (NIV)

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by.

“Peter was below in the courtyard”

This takes the scene back to verse 54 (see the previous slide).

Most middle to upper class houses had outdoor courtyards.

Caiaphas’ house was probably large and impressive. Archaeology has revealed some very impressive mansions!

Some courtyards nearly surrounded houses, and were always accessible to the street.

“one of the servant girls”

Such homes would be well-staffed by servants.

Notice here – Jesus is inside, before the high priest – the most powerful Jew in Israel

Meanwhile, Peter is outside, before a female servant – a woman with no power whatsoever.

Mark 14:67 (NIV)

When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

“Peter warming himself”

These words also take us back to what was happening in verse 54.

“that Nazarene, Jesus”

While not a threat, per se, the statement intimidates Peter.

The priests MIGHT decide to round up Jesus’ closest followers, perhaps as witnesses for the interrogation.

We do not have any indication of how she recognized Peter.

Mark 14:68 (NIV)

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

“But he denied it”

This is a categorical denial: “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” That is, “Drop it!”

But this actually incriminates Peter further! Why would he be there, in the middle of the night?

If he was with the crowd who arrested Jesus, he’d know what was going on and say so.

His response of denial only arouses more curiosity.

Denial of Jesus is condemned throughout the New Testament:

2 Timothy 2:12 – “If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he also will disown us.”

2 Peter 2:1 – “They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.”

1 John 2:23 – “No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”

Jude 4 – “They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

“into the entryway”

He is trying to escape the woman but losing the fire’s warmth.

Some ancient texts also have, “And the rooster crowed.”

Mark 14:69 (NIV)

When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.”

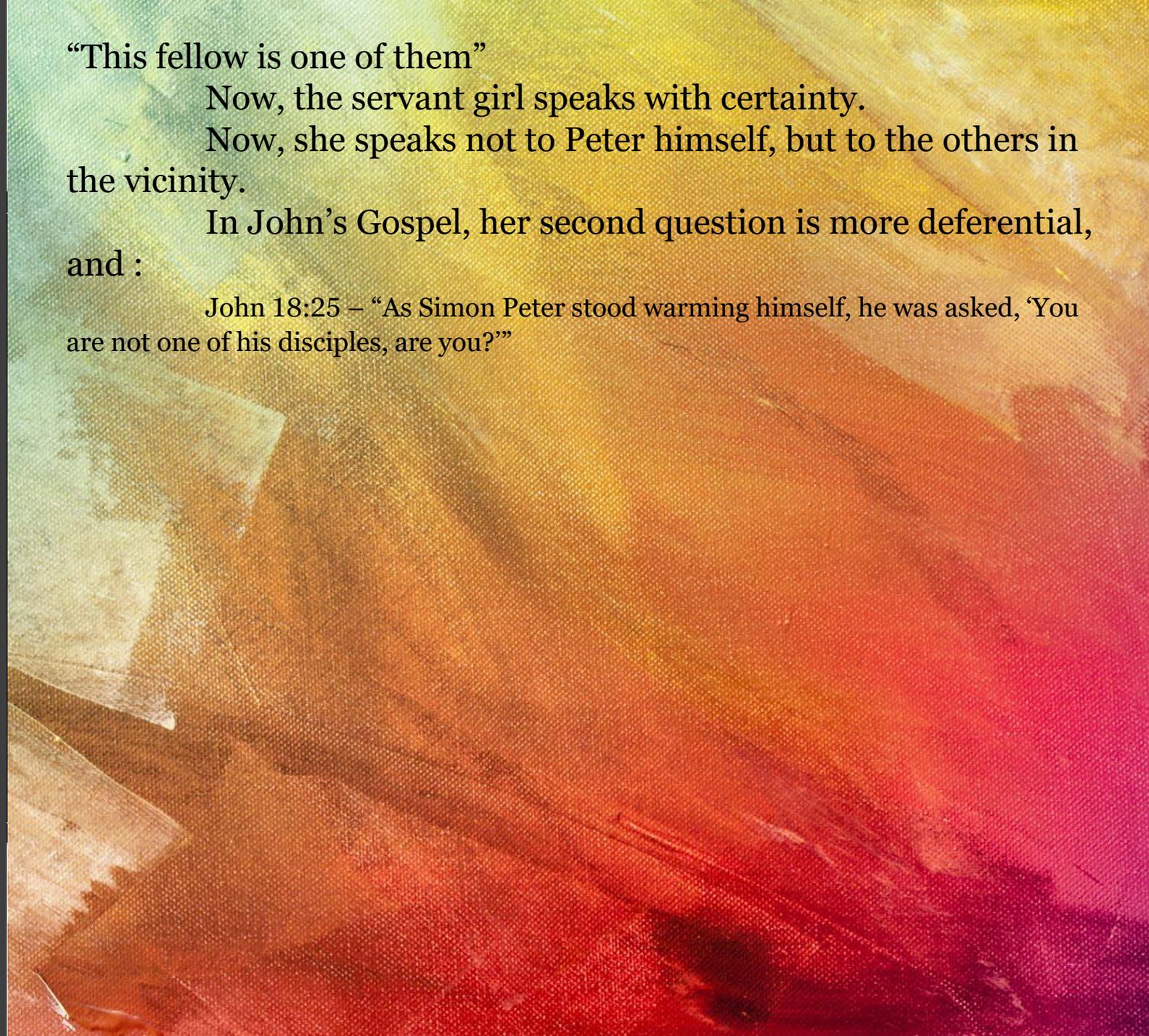
“This fellow is one of them”

Now, the servant girl speaks with certainty.

Now, she speaks not to Peter himself, but to the others in the vicinity.

In John’s Gospel, her second question is more deferential, and :

John 18:25 – “As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, ‘You are not one of his disciples, are you?’”



Mark 14:70 (NIV)

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.”

“Again he denied it”

Mark does not give the actual content of this denial. But we can again compare Matthew’s and Luke’s versions:

Matthew 26:72 – “He denied it again with an oath: ‘I don’t know the man!’”

Luke 22:58 – “A little later someone else saw him and said, ‘You also are one of them.’ ‘Man, I am not!’ Peter replied.”

“for you are a Galilean”

The situation has just grown more dangerous. Not just a servant girl, but a crowd member now makes the accusation.

Matthew tells us it is the accent that allows this identification with Galilee:

Matthew 26:73 – “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.’”

Galileans were known for pronouncing the Hebrew letters “aleph” and “ayin” the same.

Acts also has a scene in which the disciples are recognized as Galileans by their speech:

Acts 2:7 – “Utterly amazed, they asked, ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?’”

Mark 14:71 (NIV)

He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

“to call down curses on himself”

Fearing confirmation of his identity, Peter denies in the most emphatic manner possible.

The Greek words are actually simply “he cursed and swore”.

The “on himself” is the NIV translator’s choice.

Mark 14:71, Common English Bible: “But he cursed and swore, ‘I don’t know this man you’re talking about.’”

It is POSSIBLE that the curses are directed at Jesus.

At the very least, what Peter says here is along the lines of “May I be damned by God if I am lying – I don’t know him!”

Mark 14:72 (NIV)

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.

“Immediately the rooster crowed the second time”

The word “immediately” is meant to convey that it happened RIGHT AWAY, as soon as the third denial was out of Peter’s mouth.

Remember the prophecy of 14:30, that Peter now remembers:

Mark 14:30 – “I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘today – yes, tonight – before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.’”

“he broke down and wept”

Peter recognizes the exact correlation to Jesus’ prophecy.

The contrast drawn between Jesus and Peter in these scenes is nothing short of remarkable.

While Jesus is confronted with the demand to “Prophecy!” prophecy is being fulfilled outside in the courtyard!

Peter’s failure serves to make Jesus even more impressive.

Peter is also on trial – but whereas Jesus tells the truth about himself at all costs, Peter lies about himself to protect himself.

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SUMMARY

Throughout chapter 14 of Mark, Jesus has demonstrated control and authority.

He is not a helpless victim here.

He had full knowledge of ALL of it, and allowed the evil plans of his enemies to develop.

Jesus also had full confidence that God would raise him from the dead.

The evil intentions of Jesus' enemies would be used to bring about much good, as with Joseph in his story in Genesis:

Genesis 50:19 – “But Joseph said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.’”

We should see here that although God is able to deliver us from suffering, it is not always God's WILL to do so.

Jesus suffered, even though he fully trusted God.



Bibliography

The following materials have been used as sources for this Bible study:

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