





When the Rooster Crows

Matthew 26:33-35; 69-75
Mark 14:29-31;66-72
Luke 22:31-34; 55-62
John 13:36-38; 18:15-27; 21:1-19

Trial & Crucifixion

This story is found in all four gospels of the Bible. Each gospel tells where Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny him, and each tell the story of Peter's denials. But only John gives the story of redemption after Jesus' resurrection.

The entire story of the trial and crucifixion of Christ is too long for one lesson. This lesson will focus only on Peter's denial and Christ's response. Be sure to frame the story to your class and explain the context in which the events took place.

Discuss and give a brief overview to summarize recent events:

Triumphal entry: Jesus entered Jerusalem with a triumphal entry, and was greeted by cheering crowds who laid branches and clothes over the path.

What did Jesus ride on? A colt; a young donkey that no one had ever ridden on.

The people welcomed him into Jerusalem, singing, Hosanna!

(Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)

They called him the King, coming in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38)

Last Supper: He shared his last supper with his disciples in an upper room. (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12)

The gospel of John tells many things that Jesus spoke to his disciples. He tells them about his death and resurrection, and to not be troubled, but they do not understand. He even tells them to buy a sword. (John 14:1; Luke 22:36-38)

Communion: He shares a meal with them that we now call communion.

Jesus washes the feet of the disciples.

He tells them that one of them will betray him.

Mount of Olives: They left the upper room and went into the mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26)

At the mount of Olives, Jesus tells his disciples that they will be offended. He references the prophecy in Zechariah 13:7 that the shepherd will be killed and the sheep will be scattered (Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27) but he tells them he will rise again.

Jesus told Peter that Satan asked for him, and he wanted to sift Peter like wheat. (Luke 22:31)

Discuss: What do you think that means? If Satan asked for him, do you think Satan saw something in Peter? Did he think that Peter was going to do something powerful?

Jesus told Peter that he prayed for him so that his faith would not fail, and when he returns to Jesus that he would bring strength to his brothers.





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What do you think Peter said?

Peter tells Jesus, "I will never be offended," saying he was ready to go to with Jesus both to prison and death. (Matthew 26:33-35; Mark 14:29-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38) He told Jesus he would lay down his life for him; but Jesus said, "Will you?" And tells Peter that before the rooster crows twice that day, that Peter will deny him three times. (John 13:37-38; Mark 14:30) Peter then becomes even more insistent, saying he would never deny him, and all the disciples agree. (Mark 14:31)

Jesus and the disciples keep walking until they come to the Garden of Gethsemane.* Jesus prays, and the disciples fall asleep. Jesus asked them the first time if they could stay awake and pray; and the next time he told them it was okay; they needed rest.

Then Jesus is arrested by the priests and scribes (yes, the church leaders!) It was not the Romans; they actually did not want to crucify him.

Peter has his sword with him, and he cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest. (Mark 14:47; John 18:10) Peter was probably trying to kill the man. He was passionate, but does not understand. Jesus had told them to have a sword, and Peter was ready to fight to the death. What he failed to grasp was that Jesus was saying that two swords were enough; everyone did not need to have their own sword. Jesus was he was trying to prepare them for conflict; but they did not understand that this would be a spiritual battle.

How did Jesus respond to the servant's ear? He said, "No more of this." (Luke 22:51)

He healed the man's ear. This is not the response that Peter was expecting; he thought he was defending Jesus.

Look at this from the perspective of the disciples; they have been with Jesus for three years.

They knew him to be the Messiah; they believed he was the one that was prophesied about throughout the scriptures. But the Jews believed that when the Messiah came, he was going to take over. He was going to get an army, overthrow the government, and bring Israel back to their place in the world as a supreme power. This is why Peter most likely thought it was time to rise and fight, to bring Jesus into power and be the king over Israel.

Jesus has been telling them what was going to happen. He told them he was going to die, he told them he would rise again, but they simply did not understand. They had no concept of what he was saying, and they did not understand until after he rose again.

They're probably wondering what is happening. They were convinced this was the Messiah. He was going to rule over the nation, with them at his side. They had even asked who would sit at his right hand in his kingdom. Now, they're probably thinking, is this how this ends? Jesus dies; there is no Messiah, no kingdom?

Jesus is arrested, and all the disciples run away. (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50) Jesus is taken to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest.**

*The details in the Garden of Gethsemane and the arrest of Jesus are covered in Finding Jesus: Gospels: Arrested!

**The trial of Christ is covered in Finding Jesus: Gospels: Falsely Accused.





When the Rooster Crows

Discuss: What did the disciples do?
What did the disciples say they would do before this happened?
What would you do?
Do you think Peter is confused?
Why?

The gospel of John says that Peter followed Jesus, and so did “another disciple.” In the gospel of John, the writer, John, frequently refers to himself in the third person. He calls himself the “other disciple,” or “the disciple who Jesus loved.” Scholars have determined that when John refers to another disciple who followed Jesus, he is referring to himself.

Discuss: All of the the other disciples, who also said they would never abandon Christ, have run away. Only two of the disciples, Peter and John, have followed Jesus to the palace of the high priest.

John knew the high priest (John 18:15) and he went in with Jesus into the palace. But Peter is reluctant; he stands outside the door trying to get warm, probably trying to figure out what is going on. John talks to the girl who is keeping the door, and he must have told her to get Peter, because she brings Peter into the palace. Reading all four gospels helps the reader get a better understanding of the events. (Matthew 26:69; Mark 14:66-67; Luke 22:55) It appears that as the girl brought Peter in, she said to him,

“You were with Jesus of Nazareth, aren't you one of this man's disciples?” (John 18:16-17)

The girl looked earnestly at him. (Luke 22:56) Have you ever stared at someone? Have you ever thought you recognized someone but you weren't sure? You're looking at them closely trying to figure out how you know them. It seems like that is what she is doing. She's thinking, I've seen this guy, I think I recognize him.

How does Peter respond? It says, he denied before them all, saying,

I don't know what you're saying. I do not know him! (Matthew 26:69-70; Mark 14:67-68; Luke 22:55-57)

And then the rooster crowed.

What about John? Did he even have an opportunity to deny Jesus? We don't know. It seems that John wasn't afraid to associate himself with Jesus. John knew the high priest, and the priest probably knew that John was one of his disciples. We don't know for sure, but it seems that John was not afraid to be known.

It appears that after Peter was admitted into the palace, and he went out into the porch area. It was cold, and he was warming himself by the fire. (John 18:18)

When Peter went out to the porch, another girl saw him and spoke to the other people that were there. She said,

“This man was with Jesus of Nazareth,” they said “He is one of them.”

This second time Peter said, “I do not know the man; I do not understand what you're saying.

(Matthew 26:71-72; Mark 14:69; Luke 22:58) It says he denied it with an oath, which means he said, “I swear, I don't know him.”





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Everyone who was there that night probably knew what was going on. Jesus was very well known, the people in the city would have seen his grand entrance just days before. This was the big news of the day; people were waiting around the high priest's house to see what would happen. It would be very unlikely to have never heard of him.

Then a relative of the servant of the high priest - the one whose ear was cut off - said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"

If he was a relative of the man with the ear, he probably heard what happened. The man's ear was cut off, and the man he came to arrest healed his ear? The people standing around joined the conversation, and said,

'Surely you are with them, your accent (speech) sounds like you are from Galilee, you must have been with him.'

Then the third time Peter responded. This time he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know this man."

Then the rooster crowed again. (Mark 14:72)

Remember, at this time Peter was inside the door. He was in the interior porch and he could see what was happening. Jesus was nearby, being questioned by the priest. As soon as the rooster crowed the second time,

Jesus turned around and looked at Peter.

Can you imagine? A few hours before you told this person that you would never leave them, and you would die for them.

As soon as Jesus looked at Peter, he remembered what Jesus had said. He remembered that Jesus said before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

Peter was devastated. He went out and began weeping bitterly. What does it mean to weep bitterly?

Briefly summarize the rest of the events of the crucifixion and death of Christ. After the trial with the high priest, Jesus was taken to Pontius Pilate, and crucified later that day. The only disciple mentioned throughout the rest of the crucifixion is John, who is at the foot of the cross. (John 19:26) Three days later, Jesus rose, and the disciples saw Jesus and began to understand the resurrection.

John is the only gospel that gives the story of the redemption of Peter.

How long was Jesus on the earth after his resurrection before he ascended to heaven? Forty days. During that time he proved himself alive, visited with his disciples and shared with them truths about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:1-3)

This is the third time that Jesus revealed himself to his disciples. Peter and several of the other disciples had been fishing all night and caught nothing. (John 21) In the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize him. Jesus asked them if they had any meat, and they told him they had caught nothing. Then he told them to put the net on the right side of the boat, and they would find fish. They do this, and the net was so heavy they cannot even lift it because there are so many fish.

Then, the disciple who Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord."

Who is this disciple that Jesus loved? John. Jesus loved all the disciples; but John had an understanding of Christ's love for him and always referred to himself this way.





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John probably remembered another time that this happened; the first time they followed Jesus. John was with Simon, whose name was changed to Peter, on a day when they had fished all night and caught nothing. (Luke 5:1-11) Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down his nets. Peter let down a net, and he caught so many fish that his net broke. **On this day when John saw the nets full of fish, he must have remembered this and knew it was Jesus.**

When Peter heard this, he jumped in the sea and swam to the shore. Peter is passionate, he is excited, he cannot wait to see Jesus. The other disciples followed in the small ship, dragging the net of fish.

Jesus already had some fish and was cooking breakfast for the disciples.

No one dared to ask Jesus who he was because by this time they knew it was the Lord.

After they ate, Jesus said to Peter,

“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?”

The word Jesus used here for love was “agape”. This is usually the highest form of love: selfless, unconditional, and sacrificial.

Peter responded, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” But the word for love that Peter used was “phileo.” This meant brotherly love, a close friend.

Then Jesus responded, “Feed my lambs.”

Then again, Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?”

Again, Jesus used the word for love, “agape”.

Peter responded, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” But again, Peter used the the word for love, “phileo.”

Then Jesus responded, “Feed my sheep.”

The third time, Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?”

But this time Jesus used a different word for love, “phileo.”

This time Peter is grieved; he is sad, uneasy. **Peter said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.**

But again, Peter used the the word for love, “phileo.”

Then Jesus responded, “Feed my sheep.”

Why did Jesus ask Peter this three times? Probably because Peter denied him three times. But he also did this to show Peter his love. Peter responded differently than he had weeks before. He was not so bold; he hesitated to say he had selfless, unconditional love. But Peter changed dramatically and became bold later through the Holy Spirit, when he received strength from the Lord, not his own strength.

Jesus did this in front of all the disciples. Peter’s denial may have brought doubt to his relationship with Jesus, and the way others saw Peter. Jesus was intentional in showing his forgiveness in front of all the disciples. Jesus confirmed to Peter that he still has authority in the kingdom of God.

Peter has a purpose and a commission from Jesus to “feed my sheep.”

Jesus then went on to tell Peter how he would die. Jesus said he would stretch out his hands and be taken where he did not want to go. History tells us that Peter was also crucified; but he did not consider himself worthy to die the same death that Jesus did and asked to be crucified upside down. But by then, Peter had developed the agape, unconditional love for Christ, and by understanding the selfless, unconditional, sacrificial love of Christ for him, he was willing to give everything to Jesus.



Jesus in the Story



Look at the power of what love can do. Understanding the love of God changed Peter's life.

Jesus loved us so much that he had the agape; the unconditional, selfless, sacrificial love for us.

John called himself "the disciple who Jesus loved."

Did Jesus love John more than all the other disciples?

No. Jesus did not love John any differently.

But John knew he was loved; he had an understanding of the love of Christ that perhaps not all the disciples understood.

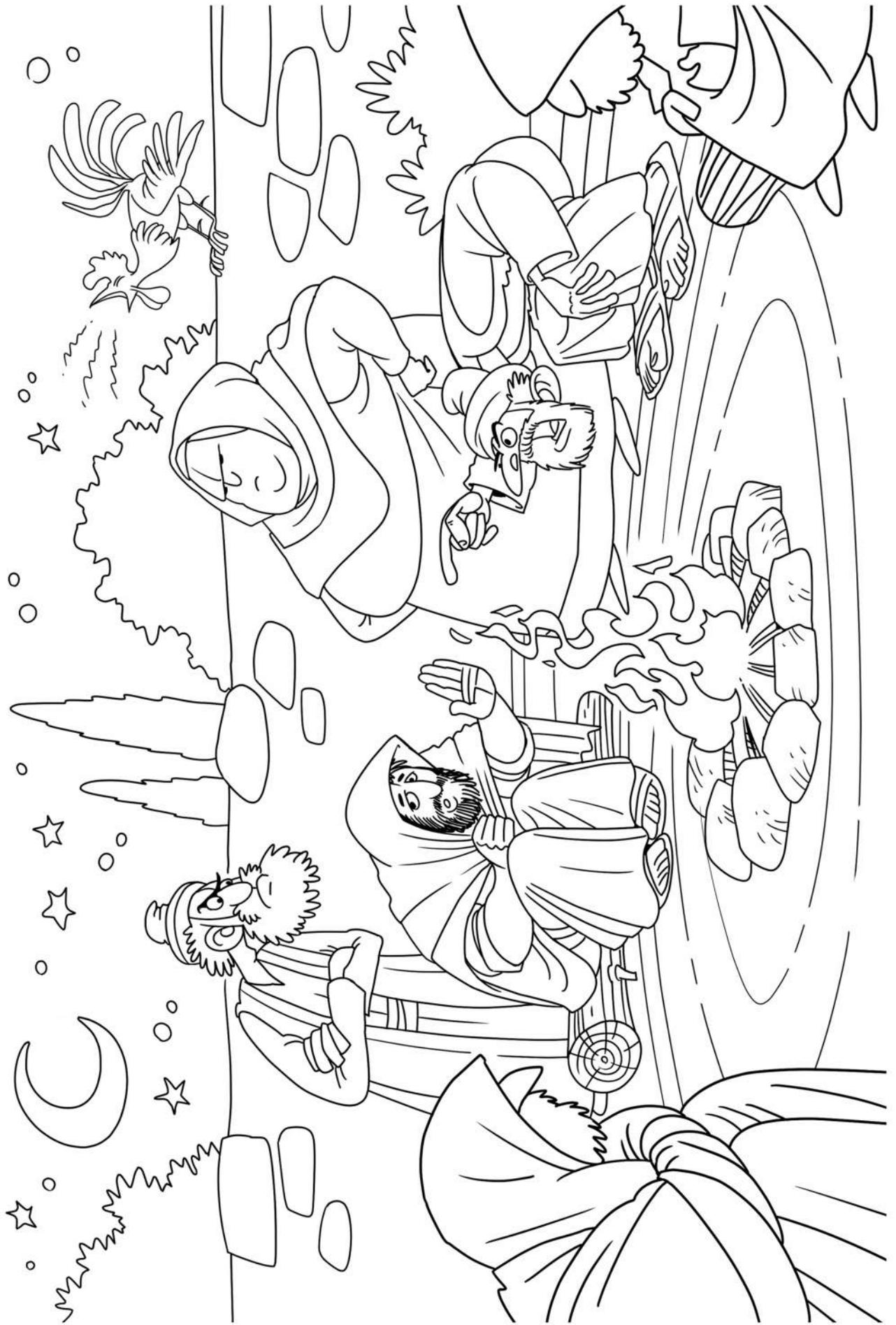
John knew he was loved; his whole gospel speaks of the love of Christ, and John's writing is evident of his understanding of God's love. The Bible is a book of balance, and it has counterparts. Jesus fulfilled the scriptures in the Old Testament, and gave it a New Testament counterpart.

The three denials of Peter are balanced by the three questions that Jesus poses to Simon Peter.

Jesus told Peter that Satan "asked for you, that he may sift you like wheat." But Jesus said he prayed for Peter and when he returns to Jesus, he would strengthen his brethren. (Luke 22:32) That is exactly what happened. When Peter returned to Jesus, he understood his own mistakes and experienced the grace of Christ.

Jesus is "the Word made flesh....full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)





Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

45. Falsely Accused

1. Have you ever been accused of something you did not do?
2. Did you think it was unfair?
3. What does Matthew 5:44 say to do to people who hate you and despise you?

1 John 3:4-5

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

46. When the Rooster Crows

1. In Mark 14:30, how many times did Jesus say the rooster would crow?
2. In Mark 14:70, why did they think Peter was with Jesus?
3. In Matthew 26:75 and Luke 22:62 what did Peter do after the rooster crowed?
4. In John 21, how many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him?

Romans 5:20

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

47. Crucify Him!

Read Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 15:6-11

1. What was the first question that Pilate asked Jesus?
2. What would the governor do for the Jewish people at this feast?
3. Who was Barabbas?
4. What did Pilate's wife say?
5. What did Pilate do in front of all the people? (Matthew 27:24)

Isaiah 53:7

He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent so he opened not his mouth.

48. King of the Jews

Read John 19:17-42

1. What did Pilate write on the sign they placed over the head of Jesus on the cross?
2. Why were the priests upset about what he wrote?
3. When they pierced the side of Jesus, what came out?
4. Who came to take the body of Jesus, and who else came with spices to anoint the body?

John 3:14-15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

