

(Matthew 26:69-75, NIV84)

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him.

"You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. 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." He denied it again, with an oath:

"I don't know the man!" 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." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. 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.

I heard a former police officer, now a pastor, describe how when he first became a pastor he wanted to go out and knock on doors and witness to people. But instead he sat in his car paralyzed by fear. So he resorted to shaming himself: "Look at you! You used to be so tough! You would do things that would make most people cringe, but now you can't get out your car to knock on a door and talk to someone about Jesus?" He put his fears aside and became a powerful witness for his Lord.

St. Peter was paralyzed by fear too. He denied Jesus in the face of the great threat of a little servant girl. When viewed in that light, it sounds ridiculous doesn't it?

The fears that we have of letting our lights shine are oftentimes just as ridiculous. Those to whom we need to speak the truth in love pose no serious threat, and yet we hesitate.

Great or small, the threats we face in bearing witness to Jesus cannot compare with the power and strength of the One who is with us, to guide us and empower us to testify before others as to who He is and what He has done for their salvation.

When paralyzed by fear, don't look to your own strength or abilities. Look instead to Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower and guide you as you open your mouth to testify of the saving love of Christ. May God be glorified in you!

Testifying of Christ with you,  
Pastor Golm

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May 17

## Afraid To Confess Christ?

Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. Matthew 10:32

The story is told of a Christian young man who went to spend several months in a timber camp. The camp was notorious for its rough and lawless characters. When the young man returned, one of his friends asked him how he had fared in that kind of company. "Oh, fine", he said, "they never caught on."

Several months in the company of godless men-and they had never "caught on" to the fact that he was a Christian! What a perfect record-of shameful denial! He had been afraid to confess Christ in the midst of godless men because he was afraid of the consequences.

But what of our own record in the presence of Christ's enemies? Is it really so much better? What hiding of our colors, what dodging of the issue, what shaving of the truth, what flagrant, base denial of the Christ does our record show? Of John the Baptist we read: "He confessed and denied not." Too often we have denied and confessed not!

There is a species of church members that might be called "chameleon Christians". A chameleon is a lizard that is able to change the color of its skin. As a result, it is frequently indistinguishable from the grass in which it slinks and slithers. God forbid that we make our way through this sinful world as chameleons, always changing our colors, always concealing our true identity as Christians.

Let us pray him to forgive us our sins of cowardice. Like Simon Peter, after he had been forgiven and restored by the Lord whom he denied, let us confess the Savior before friend and foe. Like the early disciples, let us act on the conviction that "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"-the things that pertain to our salvation. Surely, he who shed his lifeblood that we might live has the right to expect no less!

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear Friend On whom my hopes of heav'n depend?  
No, when I blush, be this my shame, That I no more revere His name!

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)