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JOHN 18:1-27

As we look at this passage of Scripture, the lengthy Upper Room Discourse that has been so instructive and encouraging has come to an end. The precious prayer Jesus prayed for Himself and His disciples and those who would follow has been lifted up to the Father...

and now we'll see things begin to take place swiftly...suddenly.

We've spent the last five months in the Gospel of John and all that we have read and studied, from the first verse of the first chapter has been leading up to the death of our Lord Jesus at Calvary.

In the next few weeks, we'll see His death, His burial and His resurrection.

Where would we be without these precious truths of the remaining chapters of this gospel?

Let's look at these portions of Scripture with a hunger and thirst to see something more than we've ever seen before.

I believe we can become so familiar with a passage of Scripture that we lose our interest and our excitement about it.

Let's ask and expect the Holy Spirit to teach us all that God wants us to understand and apply to our own walk with Jesus!

I want to point out that at the time that John wrote this gospel, the other gospels had already been written. John doesn't include many of the details that the other apostles do.

The emphasis of John has always been on the deity of Jesus Christ. But, we'll try and insert some of the details John omits as we go along.

Verse 1...

Notice that the disciples are with Jesus here.

Verses 2-3...

Let's just try and imagine this scene. And while we're letting our mind's eye create a picture for us...let's **contrast** this scene with what had just taken place...our Lord in prayer...with His eyes lifted toward Heaven...so solemn and so reverent.

John doesn't tell us of the time spent in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane when Peter, James and John fell asleep while Jesus was praying.

But, it was at that time that the Lord Jesus was so burdened that his sweat fell as drops of blood from his body...and He prayed that if it be possible that this cup could pass from Him...but He also told the Father, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done..."

And then picture this massive show of force...at least 600 men of the Roman army...
plus officers from the chief priest
plus the Pharisees
plus the one who would betray Him...

Notice the fact that both Jews and Gentiles participated in the arrest of Jesus!

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These folks didn't know exactly how Jesus and His disciples would react. They had heard of the miracles of Jesus...

Maybe He would perform one of His miracles against them...

Or maybe He would have a crowd of His followers there to defend Him.

Whatever the reason, they came well-fortified, fully armed...to arrest one man in the company of his eleven disciples!

You can almost see the humor in this, can't you? Here are all these armed and determined men who have come to arrest Jesus. They didn't know that Jesus had no intention of resisting them...

Remember... His "hour had come."

These men had no idea that they were part of the pre-determined, foreordained plan...a plan that had begun in the heart of God before the foundation of the world.

Verses 4-6...

I wonder how often these men had gone to arrest someone and that someone to be arrested had come up to them and asked "Whom do you seek?"

Remember...

Our Lord is omniscient...He is all-knowing!

These men are on His time-table...not their own.

Jesus had taken all the time He needed to deliver His instructions to His disciples.

Jesus had taken all the time He needed to lift up to the Father the precious prayer we saw last week.

Jesus knew exactly where and when His arrest would take place.

Jesus knew exactly what Judas had arranged.

None of this took Jesus by surprise!

So, Jesus calmly met these 600+ men with the calm, quiet question:

"Whom do you seek?"

They said they were looking for "Jesus, the Nazarene."

This was a slur. In Judean eyes, it was bad enough to be called a Galilean...but to be from Nazareth...well, that was considered beneath these cultured people from Jerusalem!

Here and again Jesus says "I Am"...The (**He**) is in parentheses or italics, and this means it was not in the original manuscript. I AM: the name of God: YAHWEH...the covenant keeping name of God: JEHOVAH!

And when Jesus said this:

"they drew back and fell to the ground..."

What an unusual arrest! First, the One to be arrested asked them whom they were looking for, and then when He told them who He was, they all fell down!

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This verse reminds me of the verse in *Revelation* that tells us that Jesus will come to smite the nations with the sword of His mouth. But, the difference is that in *Revelation*,

**He will come on a white horse...
with eyes like a flame of fire...
with many crowns...
in a robe dipped in blood
followed by the armies of God
and He will rule with a rod of iron!**

What a contrast! Before Jesus can come again in great glory...He had to first submit to this arrest and all that would follow! The key word is submit. Jesus willingly submitted...In fact, Jesus said in *John 10*...

“No man takes My life from Me, but I lay it down Myself.”

Verses 7-9...

So, Jesus asked them once again... “Whom do you seek?”

I imagine they would have been a bit hesitant to answer this question again, wouldn't you? After all, the last time they answered this question, Jesus claimed to be God, and His words had sent them staggering to the ground.

Notice too, Jesus made sure that His disciples were protected.

In *John 13:1* we're told that Jesus loved His own and He loved them to the end. He is the Good Shepherd protecting the sheep!

“Let these go their way...”

This is a command! Jesus is saying, **“Here I am. Take Me. But I command you not to touch My anointed.”**

Is Jesus in control here? Indeed He is!!

Verses 10-11...

Well, what would we do without Peter?

He aims his sword at the head of Malchus and cuts off his ear instead.

John doesn't tell us, but Jesus healed the ear of Malchus. This act of healing was the last recorded miracle of Jesus before the Cross.

Jesus told Peter to put his sword away...and *Matthew 26:52* tells us Jesus told Peter **“...those who live by the sword will die by the sword...”**

Don't miss these truths...

Don't miss His perfect sovereignty...

Don't miss His perfect submission...

Jesus declared Himself to be the great “I AM”...

At the mention of His name, His enemies fell backwards and to the ground...

Jesus gave the command and His disciples were allowed to leave untouched.

Then, He says He must drink the bitter cup. He bows before the will of the Father. He is sovereign...yet He is submissive!

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Verses 12-14...

Notice the different characters who are involved in this arrest...

Gentiles, Jews, soldiers, servants, priests, Pharisees, heathens, those who claimed Jehovah and those who were pagans...

But all were lost! All were blind to the goodness, grace and salvation of Jesus Christ!

Jesus was led from one person to another. No one seemed to know exactly what to do with the Son of God!

If we followed the complete sequence of events, it would go like this:

The Jewish Trial

- 1) an appearance before Annas
- 2) an informal investigation by Caiaphas
- 3) a condemnation by the Sanhedrin

Both Annas and Caiaphas are called high priest, which only proves to us the confusion that existed among religious leaders then. The Roman government had gotten involved and politics always confuses things...

I might add that the procedure the Jewish leaders followed were illegal for reasons that we'll point out next week.

But, not only was there the Jewish trial...but there was also

The Roman Trial

- 1) first appearance before Pilate
- 2) appearance before Herod Antipas
- 3) second appearance before Pilate

We'll see more of His appearances before Pilate next week, but I just wanted us to get an idea of the circus-like atmosphere that prevailed.

It's hard for us to imagine the sovereign Creator of this universe, submitting of His own will, to such humiliation at the hands of these wicked men! But, He did...and He did it for you and for me!

I read in A. W. Pink's commentary:

"To suffer for those who are in some sense worthy of our affection, this is suffering we can understand.

To submit to ill treatment quietly, when we must, when we have absolutely no choice...this is submission that is both noble and admirable.

But,

to suffer voluntarily, when we do have the power to prevent it...to suffer for a world of unbelieving and ungodly sinners, this we cannot understand!"

Jesus was bound and led away captive not because He could not help Himself, but because He had set His heart on saving sinners!

Verses 15-16...

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We can't help but wonder who this "other disciple" is in **verse 16**. John, many times refers to himself as "the other disciple", but could it have been John when this disciple was known to the high priest? After all, John was just a fisherman.

Maybe this other disciple was Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. These men were believers and they also knew the high priest.

Verses 17-18...

Here we see our brave, brash, confident Simon Peter deny Jesus the first time. His first denial comes as the result of an off-hand question by a slave girl. It didn't take much to shake old Peter, did it?

We expected the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, but the denial of Jesus by Peter...this big, strong, rugged fisherman...is not quite in keeping with all that he had professed, was it?

Verses 19 through 24 tell us that Annas questioned Jesus and Jesus told him that He had taught openly and publicly...He hadn't spoken in private or in secret.

And Jesus told Annas to question not Him, but those folks He had taught and those whom He had healed...

"Why do you question Me? Why don't you do what your law demands? Why don't you bring in the deaf, and the lame and the blind whom I have healed and bring in the lost whom I have saved and let these witness against or for Me?"

And when Jesus told the high priest to question those who had received His teachings, one of the officers standing there struck Jesus...

Have you ever wondered what happened to this man and to all the others who would strike and beat and whip and mock the dear Son of God?

Do you think they ever realized that they had struck the very One who gave them life and breath?

Verses 22-23...

Then we're told that Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the other high priest, who just happened to be his son-in-law, by the way. One had been replaced by the other by the Romans.

We're going to cover the rest of this chapter next week with a portion of **chapter 19**, but let's spend the time we have left looking again at the denial of the Lord Jesus by the Apostle Peter.

Verses 25-27...

Peter was a man who, by all indications, had committed his all to Jesus. By all appearances, he held nothing back. But, at the same time, Peter was impulsive, bold and very self-assured.

Peter was a leader.

Peter was an initiator.

Peter was always the first to speak up on any occasion.

Peter didn't hang back, and we see this in the very fact that he had followed Jesus this far...He followed at a distance, but he did follow...

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**Peter, however, many times acted in the flesh.
Peter, you see, was self-sufficient!**

And what I want us to see is that Jesus knew the heart of Peter. Jesus saw Peter's strengths. And Jesus saw Peter's weaknesses.

Jesus knew for Peter to be used for His kingdom, Peter must be shown that he had **not** arrived...that he had **not** achieved...that he was **not** self-sufficient.

I said earlier that Peter had held nothing back...but he had, hadn't he? He had held back that area of his life.

Our Lord knew, that for Peter to be mightily used for His kingdom, some changes must be made. He must empty Peter of his self-sufficient pride.

On the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus began a dialogue with His disciples and He had warned His disciples that they would forsake Him; and of course, this was Peter's cue to speak up...

When we look at all the gospel accounts of this we see Peter saying in essence:

“Lord, I understand what You're saying and I understand that the rest of this group are of the sort that they might leave You...but I want You to know, Lord, that You can count on me. I won't forsake You. I'm willing to go to prison with You...I'm willing even to die for You.”

I wonder if this discouraged our Lord Jesus. I mean, at the end of three and one-half years under the teaching of Jesus...Simon Peter still hadn't learned!

Ron Dunn preached a great sermon years ago entitled **“Sifted But Saved”** and his text was in the **Gospel of Luke**... Please turn there.

Luke 22:31-34...

I want us to notice two things from this passage of Scripture...

- 1) **“demanded”** (NAS); **“desired”** (KJV)...this means **“to obtain by asking permission...”**
- 2) **“when once you have turned again...”** or **“when you get straightened out from this mess” you will be able to strengthen your brethren...**

Do you see what Jesus is saying?

“Simon, Satan has asked permission to get hold of you and turn you inside out...and I have given it!”

Now, in one way, this is encouraging. It tells us the devil can't touch us without the permission of the Lord Jesus. God has built a hedge around us and the only way Satan can get to us is by His permission.

But, why would Jesus grant Satan this permission? Because He wanted Peter to learn something!

And Peter did learn it...he never again had a problem with self-sufficient pride. God taught Peter something through failure that he refused to learn any other way!

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If we had the time we'd go over to the **Galatians 2** and see where Paul and Peter later had a disagreement over associating with Gentiles. Peter was disassociating himself with Gentile believers and had influenced other Jewish believers to do the same thing. He had influenced even Barnabas.

This was wrong, and Paul pointed this out to Peter. Peter allowed himself to be corrected by Paul. He had learned his lesson, and he didn't let his pride and self-sufficiency get in his way.

The bottom line is this...There are some things in our lives that we cannot or will not learn from God apart from failure. And the Lord loves us so very very much that He will go to great lengths to make us useable...

Jesus said to Peter:

"I have prayed for you...**when** you are turned again, strengthen the brethren..." (not **if you are turned**, but **when you are turned**)

Did Jesus know Peter would fail? **YES!**

Did Jesus intercede for Peter? **YES!**

I believe that God longs for us to take Him at His word and learn from Him and never ever fail...but He knows we will fail and He knows there are lessons we will never learn apart from failure. Think about it...we know, just from being parents that there are lessons our **children** can never learn apart from failure.

Peter's failure was not recorded in vain. Peter's failure was recorded to give you and me hope.

Let me ask you...Have you ever failed God?

I truly believe we would all walk around so smugly...so self-righteously...we would be so "holier than thou"...if we had never failed. What I want us to learn today from Peter is that the Lord knows all our failures...but through them we can learn to serve Him better. He works all things together for our good and His glory!

Luke tells us that when the cock crowed, Jesus turned and looked at Peter. How this must have broken Peter's heart! All of us have failed...and all of us have been broken-hearted because of that failure.

But, the good news is that the Lord Jesus looks beyond that failure and sees what we can become as a result of that failure.

The Lord Jesus didn't come to Peter and say, "Well, old boy, you really blew it. Too bad. I thought you had a bright future. But, I don't use failures."

No, Peter was turned again...and Peter indeed **did** strengthen the brethren.

Peter's failure taught him to rely on the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We never again see Peter having a problem with self-sufficiency. We see Peter go on to be a better evangelist, church planter,

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disciple and discipler,
friend...

because he had failed and had learned from his failure.

By the way, I believe there are other ways to deny the Lord Jesus Christ than the way Peter did it. I believe we can deny the Lord Jesus by simply refusing to do what He wants us to do.

Have you ever thought much about the fact that you and I, created by God for His own pleasure and glory, are permitted by Him to deny Jesus?

James Montgomery Boice:

“Those who serve...who are really used in God’s service, who are a blessing to other people, who take the gospel of eternal life to those who need to hear it, who keep on in the midst of difficulty...these are not those who have **never** denied Christ. **They have!**

They have denied Him many times and in many ways. But they have found the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ even in the midst of their denials and have been purged from their sin.

Then with a sense of their own weakness, but an even greater awareness of Christ’s strength, they have gone on to live for Him.”

I pray that Peter’s story of failure will give you and me hope when we fail the Lord. Satan may come to the Lord Jesus and ask permission to sift you and me as wheat... And Jesus may grant him permission to do just that.

Remember, Jesus is praying that when we are turned again we will be successful in His service. May we find hope and assurance from Peter’s story.