The King Who Surrendered

The Garden and the Sword

JOHN 18:1–18:40, 19:1–19

Where We Are

We have just finished our study on the Upper Room Discourse. Jesus spent the Passover with His loved ones, His disciples, teaching them and praying for them. Last week we sat in the prayer Jesus prayed for them, and for all those who would come to believe through their word, which is us. If you remember, He prays the same thing over and over: that we would love one another, that we would be united, that we would rely on the Holy Spirit, and that we would pray with faith and fervency.

Now, to use John's language, the hour is at hand. We are in John chapter 18, and Jesus is about to be betrayed by Judas, one of His own, one of His friends, one of His disciples. Tonight, Jesus is arrested. Tomorrow, He is crucified for the sins of the world.

> JOHN 18:1–18, 19–19 (NKJV)
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> When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.
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> Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."
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> Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"
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> So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.
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> Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.
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> JOHN 18:25–27
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> Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You also are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

Back to the Garden

Notice something simple but layered: where is Jesus betrayed? In the garden. This is Genesis imagery, and John often layers Genesis on top of his Gospel.

To level set for anyone who may not know, the first book of the Bible opens with God creating everything, and upon creating the world He makes a garden, commonly called the Garden of Eden. He places mankind there in the form of Adam and Eve. Adam was supposed to protect the garden from what was unclean and unholy outside of it, but he failed. The serpent slipped in, deceived Eve, and she did the one thing God told her not to do. She ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That brought sin into the world. They chose their ways over God's ways, independence over dependence on God. The result: sin was unleashed, death began to reign, and man was expelled from the garden where they were living with God.

Now look at the contrast John is drawing.

> The First Adam and Eve betray God.
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> In the Garden, Adam and Eve betray God.
> → *In the Garden, Judas betrays Jesus.*
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> In the Garden, Adam brings condemnation to the world.
> → *In the Garden, Jesus brings redemption.*
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> In the Garden, Adam unwillingly leaves.
> → *In the Garden, Jesus willingly leaves.*
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> In the Garden, Adam rebels.
> → *In the Garden, Jesus obeys.*

John is presenting here a truth that Paul will later expound. Our Jesus is the second Adam. The first Adam did not do his job and messed it up for everyone. The first Adam chose his ways over God's ways. The first Adam brought shame, sin, and death. The second Adam did what the first could not. He fixed what the first destroyed. He chose the Father's will over His own, and He brought life, liberty, and righteousness.

One action from the first Adam condemns the world. One action from the second Adam saves it. When our lineage was since Adam, for those born again, we are now tied to Christ.

"The First Adam brought the curse. The Second Adam bore the curse."

Through the Bloody Brook

Before He even enters the garden, Jesus chose to cross the brook Kidron. John is very particular about the details he puts in his Gospel. Remember the day this is happening: it is Passover. Animal sacrifices are happening to mass at the temple. The priests would take the blood and wash it off the temple floors, and the bloody water would run down into the Kidron Valley.

It is the bloody river coming from the temple that Jesus crosses on His way to the garden. Can you see the imagery? The true Passover Lamb, passing through the blood of the sacrifices that could never actually save the people, John is abruptly pointing the pictures that salvation is coming from outside the temple system, not within it.

And there is more. The last time someone crossed the Kidron weeping, it was David, fleeing Jerusalem in the rebellion of his own son (2 Samuel 15). A betrayed king crossed the Kidron with tears. Centuries later, the greater Son of David crosses the same brook on the way to His own sorrow. As Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemane, His dots so with a blood-dipped robe.

The Place of Intimacy

"Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples." The place is not just theologically significant. It is now personally significant. It is *their* place. It is where Jesus would hang with his disciples. It was a place filled with memories, filled with discipleship. Judas betrays Jesus in what was supposed to be a safe haven.

Get this. Jesus was betrayed by His friend, in a place where their friendship developed. He was betrayed by the person He had poured into, at the place where He had poured into him.

Some of you know exactly what this is like. You know what it feels like to be betrayed by those closest to you, in the very place you poured into them. Some of you are parents. Like Jesus, you poured yourself out to your own, and they have written you off. They have betrayed you. And it hurts. Jesus understands.

You ask yourself where you went wrong. You tell yourself, if I could have been a better parent, maybe they would not have left. Listen to me. Maybe that is true. But I want to point out: Jesus was the perfect father figure, the perfect friend, the perfect pastor, the perfect mentor, and even His had people betray Him. God was a perfect parent, and His kids rebelled.

You need to own everything you can own. Repent and make restitution wherever you can. But understand, sometimes it has nothing to do with you. For Jesus, the place of intimacy became the place of betrayal.

"For Jesus, the place of intimacy became the place of betrayal."

"I Am"

"Then Jesus, *knowing all that would happen to him*, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" This is a weighty statement. Jesus was fully aware of what was coming. He did not run. He did not try to wiggle His way out. He did not appeal. He obeyed the will of the Father.

He knew all that would happen to Him. He knew it. God is sovereign. He knows everything and at the end of the day has authority over all things. He is omniscient. He knows all things. And all things answer to Him.

This is a powerful thought because all throughout John's Gospel they have been trying to catch Jesus and He keeps slipping away. Why? It was not His time. He could not be arrested before this moment, because the sovereignty of God would not allow it. He is not *caressed* here. It is simply His appointed time, and He walks willingly into it.

When they say, "Jesus of Nazareth," He responds, "I am he." In the Greek it is simply, *I am*. He is responding to the burning bush. And at the weight of the revelation, for just a moment, they fall. It is as if Jesus, the radiance of the glory of God, was on display in the declaration that He is God. Who is in control here? It is not the guards. It is not Judas. It is Jesus.

This is striking, because when you read the synoptic Gospels, Mark and Matthew and Luke all present Jesus in the garden in agony. The focus of their account is the humanity of Jesus. But John presents a completely different angle. He reminds the world that Jesus never ceased to be divine in those moments.

The Shepherd Who Protects

"So, if you seek me, let these men go." Jesus shows that a true shepherd protects, and thinks of others before Himself. Some of you, when you think about being like Jesus, you think being knowledgeable, or humble. You think not defending yourself, not saying anything when people say negative things about you. You think giving your life to serving those around you.

Let me tell you something really important. You want to be like Jesus? Be a protector. Be someone who protects others from being hurt, taken advantage of, or abused. Protect others at your own expense. That is exactly what Jesus is doing in this moment.

It is the same instinct as Jonathan Blunk and Mam McQuinn in the Aurora theater, who took bullets to shield the people they loved. Sometimes protecting is shielding, sometimes it is fighting. But the fact is, Jesus is a protector, and we are called to be as well.

Peter's Sword

"Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?'"

We are called to protect. I said that to protect means sometimes we shield and sometimes we fight. That works in every other context except this one. For Christians, we fight to protect the vulnerable. Always. It is not optional. But Jesus was not vulnerable. Peter's mistake was that he was fighting the guards when he was not protecting the vulnerable. He was fighting the will of God, trying to protect the only One who did not need it.

Now look, this is important. Put yourself in Peter's shoes. He had just been told that he would deny Jesus. He is probably on a little quest to prove his allegiance. To prove he is not like Judas. To prove he is not wanted. To prove to God how much he loves His. Peter was well meaning, but Peter was foolish. First of all, you cannot prove anything to God. He knows everything already. Secondly, you do not need to protect God from people. He is a big boy. He can handle it himself.

In his well-meaning zeal, Peter found himself fighting against the will of God. It was God's will for Jesus to be arrested. Had Peter listened to the repeated warnings from Jesus that this was supposed to happen, he would have given to them lifelong people's ears of.

What is the lesson? You will do foolish things to prove yourself to show around you. And here is another one: not every hard thing in your life is the devil. I have sat in so many prayer meetings when people are rebuking the challenging situation, the trial, whatever it is, and I will just be sitting there quietly thinking, you all are just kibbing off cats. There are hard situations you find yourself in right now. You are fighting them, rebuking them, refusing to deal with them. Maybe you are fighting the will of God for your life, because He wants you to go through the hard thing for the joy on the other side. That is exactly where Peter finds himself.

> Peter Jesus to Jesus Christ
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> ### Am I Peter?
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> Peter follows Jesus, but only to a point. Peter, in this moment, is willing to follow Jesus until it is going to cost him. How many of you know a believer like this? Willing to follow Jesus until it costs them. Now do you think about them. Think about you. You are the most likely person to follow until it costs.
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> Resist the temptation to think of others when you read. Get low, and ask the honest question.
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> *Where have I drawn the line?*
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> — *Am I happy to wave the Jesus banner until it costs me happiness?*
>
> — *Until it costs me money?*
>
> — *Until it costs me social status?*
>
> — *Until it requires me to give up my own dreams, will, and desires?*
>
> — *Until it requires me to serve the needy and the poor?*
>
> — *Until it requires me to live differently and give up my sin?*
>
> *That is Peter. He was happy to follow Jesus until it might cost him his life and his reputation.*

The Charcoal Fire

Peter has his first test, and it is a little servant girl. He could not even stand up to a likely twelve-year-old girl. Now what I want you to notice is the pattern. He does it once. Some time passes. He denies again. Shortly after that, he denies a third time.

When you do the wrong thing once, it is easier to do it again. The more you do it, the easier it gets.

> The Pattern
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> Weak moment → Weak seasons
> Weak seasons → Weak patterns
> Weak patterns → Weak conscience
> Weak conscience → Weak faith

This is Peter's challenge. He did the wrong thing once, and it got easier. But notice where the denials happen. Around a charcoal fire, *doubtless*. This word is used only one other time in the New Testament, and it is right here in John, just a couple of chapters later, in chapter 21, when Peter is restored. Peter denies Jesus around a charcoal fire. Peter is restored by Jesus around a charcoal fire. John is already pointing us toward the grace that is coming.

A Few Thoughts on Peter

As we close, hold these in mind. They are not just observations about a first-century fisherman. They are observations about the kind of disciple Jesus actually keeps.

- Peter loves Jesus, and still sins against Jesus.
  Love for Christ does not mean the absence of sin in a believer's life. It means a heart that returns when it falls.
- Peter fails in the same manner repeatedly, and is still forgiven.
  Three denials in a single night. And Jesus still walks back to him.
- You could be Peter.
  Sin with shut. Not in shame, but in honesty. The disciple who sat closest to Jesus is also the one who broke first.
- The person who sinned against you could be Peter.
  Not every failure is a well-in-disguise. Sometimes it is a weak disciple who will weep bitterly and come home.
- Peter is weak. Judas is a wolf.
  Learn the difference. Weakness gets pastored. A wolf gets named. Both are present in this passage. Do not confuse them.
- Peter fails Jesus, and then turns to Jesus.
  That is the difference. Judas ran from. Peter ran toward. When you fail, run toward.