

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of August 9

Background

On the night Jesus crosses the Kidron Valley, just moments before he is arrested, it seems everyone has a plan, an agenda. The religious leaders have a calculated plan they have been scheming, by all accounts, for 2+ years. Their agenda is to silence Jesus for good. Judas has a plan to betray Jesus to the religious leaders, for in his mind, assisting them will catapult Jesus before Rome and onto the world scene. The Roman soldiers and Temple guards have a plan; they have been ordered to bind Jesus and bring him in for trial.

Peter has a plan. He intends to stand up for Jesus and defend him even if the other disciples desert him. But Peter's plan foils when soldiers and guards show up to take Jesus, and Peter takes up a sword to kill. All these plans ... as Jesus plans to pray. He enters the grove of olive trees known as Gethsemane, asking that the Father's good plan trumps all other plans. On this night, Jesus sticks with the agenda before him all along, to finish the mission for which his Father has sent him.

Read John 18:1-18

Notice how Jesus is and remains in control. When trouble comes, capital L leaders run toward the problem, not away.

- Think of a time you, as a leader, were compelled to face something difficult before you. What did you learn? Share one insight from that experience.
- Jesus was determined to accomplish what his Father wanted (see Jn 3:16-17). He prayed in Gethsemane, *Father, not my will, but your will be done*. Once Jesus stood after agonizing three times in deep prayer of honest surrender, there was undeterred resolve and victory in sight. What specific details are in Jn 18:1-2?

Further Study: Inserting the other gospel accounts between Jn 18:2 and Jn 18:3, allows us to see more of the picture. What else do you glean from Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-53?

- Why did the religious leaders arrange guards to accompany Judas? What prearranged signal had Judas given the guards, according to Mark 14:44?
- Nothing takes Jesus by surprise. Although it is disturbing that Judas would betray his Rabbi with such an intimate expression, Jesus remains strong emotionally, spiritually, and physically. He doesn't fall to pieces.

Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

"Jesus, the Nazarene," they replied.

"I AM he," Jesus said ...

As Jesus said, "I AM he," they all drew back and fell to the ground! (Jn 18:4-6).

Peter in anger slashes off a man's ear. The disciples scatter (Mark 14:50; John 16:32). Like puzzle pieces on the ground, everything is a dark mess. It seems everything and everyone is in mayhem, except Jesus. Yet, also like puzzle pieces ready to be connected, there is a bigger picture to unfold from the events of this night, on this Passover. At the point of Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and mock trials in the middle of the night, darkness has the upper hand. But may we take heart! Heaven's agenda will be accomplished ... all because of Jesus' obedience to his Father.

- Perhaps you have experienced a time when everything in your world seemed to be falling apart. When darkness closes in around us, what must we remember? (see John 1:5) What did Jesus say in John 14:1, 18; John 16:1, 33?

Read John 18:19-27

Two weeks ago, we learned how the only way for Jesus to return to his Father in heaven with mission accomplished was through the cross. The only way we can go to heaven is through Jesus, the Son of God who paid for all sin, for all time, by his death on the cross. On this Passover, like an apex towering over the landscape of human history, Jesus willingly becomes the great sacrifice that great sin requires. He alone is our hope! Jesus allows himself to be "led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. Unjustly condemned, he was led away" (Isaiah 53:7b, 8a). The Lord Jesus Christ is *'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'* as proclaimed by John the Baptist on the outset of Jesus' public ministry (John 1:29).

- In the throes of life, and certainly when darkness closes in around us, there may be times our weakness causes us to do the unthinkable. Here with our brother, Peter, he denies three times that he even knows the Lord. We must never judge or belittle Peter. But instead, pray (even now) for grace and strength to stand when the hour of trial comes.
- According to the following passages, the Lord Jesus not only restores Peter, but empowers Peter to lead well as the gospel message begins to spread and the early church expands. Note one take-away from each passage—
Acts 2:14-18, 37-41 Acts 10:34-44 2 Peter 1:16-21

Read John 18:28-40

Jesus answers Pilate: “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world” (Jn 18:36).

When you look around your world and everything seems to be a mess, like puzzle pieces dumped out on the ground, go to Jesus. Spend some time in the quiet place and ask him to restore you to himself. Give him the broken pieces, the disjointed mess you can’t fix, and ask him to complete the work of beauty he sees in you ... for the strengthening of his Kingdom. Cooperate with him. Trust him. Honor him by honoring his Bride, the church, and sticking with the call he has over you. Close in prayer and confession.



Text: John 18

PLAIN TRUTH:

Though pieces of our lives seem beyond our _____ to _____, Jesus is in _____ wanting to _____ them into a beautiful _____.

One Year Bible Reading

August 9: Ezra 8:21-9:15, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Psalm 31:1-8, Proverbs 21:1-2

August 10: Ezra 10:1-44, 1 Corinthians 6:1-20, Psalm 31:9-18, Proverbs 21:3

August 11: Nehemiah 1:1-3:14, 1 Corinthians 7:1-24, Psalm 31:19-24, Prov. 21:4

August 12: Nehemiah 3:15-5:13, 1 Corinthians 7:25-40, Ps. 32:1-11, Prov. 21:5-7

August 13: Nehemiah 5:14-7:73, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Ps. 33:1-11, Prov. 21:8-10

August 14: Nehemiah 7:73-9:21, 1 Corinthians 9:1-18, Ps. 33:12-22, Prov. 21:11-12

August 15: Nehemiah 9:22-10:39, 1 Cor. 9:19-10:13, Ps. 34:1-10, Prov. 21:13

August 9, 2026