

John 18: 15-27

Prayer

Turn to John 18: 15-16

The Surrender and Obedience of Jesus: The Response in the Face of His Accusers

Last week we saw the continuation of Jesus's willful submission to the process that God laid out for him in being betrayed by Judas and being arrested by the Roman cohort, the commander, and the officers of the Jews. He establishes himself as the, I am He, in the story. **John 18: 4-8**. Jesus doesn't hide. He doesn't shy away. He made himself as available to his enemies, the ones who will soon murder him, as he was to his disciples. Jesus tells his accusers, here I am, take me. He gives himself up. He surrenders. Jesus was obedient to his Father in the face of hatred. He stands tall, wanting his Father, to get all the glory. I picture Jesus looking them directly in their eyes. Never batting an eye. Not -- even -- once. Jesus even tells Peter to put the sword away. We know that Peter was just trying to protect his mentor and friend. But Jesus said, No more violence. Jesus didn't want violence associated with his name. It is to John we owe the information provided that the man with the sword (the Greek for this word means short sword) was Peter and that the man he wounded was named Malchus. At any time, Jesus could have pulled a heroic superhero movie scene in which he and his sidekick Robin, also known as Peter or John, decide to kick some high priest you know what. But he didn't. And he never would. Why? Because **HE** did what he did because he loved you and he loved me. God's master plan included things playing out just like they did with Jesus at the center from the beginning. He loves you and he loves me. In the past, the present and the future tense. This is who God is. This is who Jesus is. Turn to **John 15:13**. Jesus remained willfully submitted the entire way through this process. Last week's message and today's verses are all part of the process of Jesus laying down his life for those he loves.

In today's verses, we see more betraying and Jesus continues on this road of willful obedience to God's plan for him. The main character in these verses is Peter. So who was Peter? Turn to Matthew 4: 18-20, where we will see the story of when Peter begins to follow Jesus. **Matthew 4: 18-20**. Jesus's first words to Peter were, "Come, follow me." His last words to him were "As for you, follow me." Turn to **John 21:22**. Every step of the way between those two challenges, Peter never failed to follow -- even though he often stumbled and put his foot in his mouth. When Jesus entered Peter's life, this plain fisherman became a new person with new goals and new priorities. Fisherman in Jesus's day were gruff, unkept, vile, shabby dressers, and often used vulgar language. They were full of vigor and had boisterous tempers. Fishing was a physically and mentally demanding job and so fisherman had to have a lot of courage. No fear as much as they could must. Peter didn't become a perfect person when he chose to follow Jesus. Becoming a disciple of Jesus doesn't make you perfect. Only Jesus was perfect. It's interesting to think about what drew Jesus to Simon, then renamed Peter by Jesus. Peter means "the rock." Peter was anything but a rock during many moments of his life. Peter was brash and impulsive, he often times spoke without thinking. We will see in today's story that Peter denies Jesus 3 times. Peter later found it hard to treat Gentile Christians as equals. But Peter became the recognized leader among Jesus's disciples, he was one of the inner group of 3. HE was the first great voice of the gospel during and after Pentecost. He wrote 1 and 2 Peter. Ever read those books. Pretty decent huh. And he probably knew Mark and gave him information for the Gospel of Mark. So it's probable that the Gospel of Mark is actually an eyewitness account of Peter. Peter is mentioned in Galatians 1:18 and chapter 2: 7-14. His story is told in the Gospels and the book of Acts. But Jesus chose Peter to be his disciple because Jesus

chose genuine, real deal people, not model people who seemed to have it all together. Jesus chose people to be his disciples who he knew would mess it up, but would always in their heart of hearts follow Him. Jesus chose people to be his disciples who could be changed by his love. He chose people to be his disciples who when they messed it up, learned from their mistakes, humbled themselves and kept loving Him. I know that's why Jesus chose me. Because I'm an ordinary person who has failed, stumbled at times and messed up in my life. Many times. Just like Peter. This fact that I know to be true gives me a lot of comfort as I have experienced the abundant, life giving, grace filled world that I live in with my Savior.

In Verse 15 we see Peter and another disciple following Jesus. **John 18: 15-16**. This other disciple, most likely, is John. John would have had connections. It says he was acquainted with the high priest. This refers to more than a casual acquaintance. In his commentary, Merrill Tenney says, "It may be that the family had connections with the priesthood, either by business relationships or possibly by marital ties." It's clear John had entrée into the high priest's house and could bring Peter in. We also see John, referred to as the other disciple, spoke to the doorkeeper and got them both in. So it's clear John knew people, he knew the doorkeeper from prior engagements. I'm just guessing, but John was a little more tactful than Peter was. He had a way with people that was a little more gentle and receptive than Peter and could connect really well with others. So John gets them in the courtyard. And I'm sure Peter is wondering what is about to happen? He's probably nervous I would guess. He probably doesn't exactly know what to expect. But Peter's experience in the next few hours would change his life forever.

John 18: 17-18 – All 4 Gospels tell us that Peter's first challenge came from a slave girl, the most unimportant person imaginable in that society. In the NASB translation, the slave girl says the same thing but it adds the word also. She asks the question to Peter in this way, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" The **also** means that John was already known to her as a disciple of Jesus. FF Bruce in his commentary says, "The servant-girl presumably knew the 'other disciple' to be a follower of Jesus, and when she saw him bringing in Peter, she said, in effect: 'Oh no, not another!'"

Notice how the girl framed her question. She asks, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" The form of the question implied a negative answer and Peter capitalized on her expectation. Instead of standing tall like Jesus in the face of hatred, death and accusations, Peter shriveled up like a wet noodle. He wilted like a flower in the sun filled heat. He denied that he was a disciple of Jesus. He said immediately without flinching, "I am not." This first test of Peter's loyalty seemed easy; he could have answered with nothing, mumbled something, or said, "Yes I am."

We see Peter at the end of verse 18 warming himself. So he was clearly there to get warm, but also to blend into the small crowd so that he wouldn't stand out and be noticed. You can imagine that in this setting, as a disciple of Jesus, to be with another disciple and to be found to be associated closely with Jesus was very dangerous. Remember Jesus was arrested at this point, about to go on a scam trial at night, and in some serious trouble.

John 18: 19 The High Priest Questions Jesus-- just a little info on a few of the characters known as the bad guys in the story, the high priests. The high priest being referred to here is Annas (ruled from AD 6-AD 15)

Annas, or Ananias, or Ananus, son of Seth, was appointed high priest by Quirinius, the governor of Syria in AD 6. This Quirinius is also mentioned in **Luke 2:2**, as he was the governor of Syria at the time of the

birth of Jesus. Annas was finally deposed by the Roman governor Valerius Gratus in AD 15. The next two high priests, including one of his sons, were both deposed after about a year, before Joseph Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, was appointed. Caiaphas ruled from AD 18 - AD 37.

After being deposed, he remained a powerful figure in Jerusalem, and even though he had no official position was still referred to as 'high priest'. Through skillful diplomacy and probably much bribery, he was able to ensure that his family remained dominant in Judea for many years. To give a date for the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, Luke refers to the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas (**Luke 3:2**). At first sight, this would seem to imply that there were two high priests in office at the same time, but instead indicates the power and influence that Annas continued to exercise, even after he was deposed. By this time, Annas had been deposed for more than ten years, and Caiaphas was the current high priest.

The High Priests

Aaron, the brother of Moses was the first to be anointed as high priest (Lev 8-9). From then, the office of high priest was passed down to the family of Aaron, from father to son. This family line continued without interruption for more than 1100 years, until Onias III, who was deposed in 175 BC, and murdered in 170 BC. Under Roman rule, the high priesthood became a political appointment. High priests were appointed and deposed by the Roman governor. Their appointment often depended on how much they were willing to pay or bribe the governor. If someone was willing to pay more, then the current high priest would be removed, to make way for him.

Read John 18: 19-21 – Pic 5 Annas wanted to know about Jesus's disciples. Why would he want to know about his disciples? One possibility is because of fear or jealousy. Then he wanted to know about his doctrine. Why would he want to know about his doctrine? Because Annas thought that Jesus's teachings might be a threat to the religious establishment and to their power and to their money. The fact that Annas started this trial at night proved it was a sham trial. Trials were only to be conducted during the day and the religious leaders knew that. For the *Talmud* states, in regards to the Sanhedrin that- "Criminal processes can neither commence nor terminate, but during the course of the *day*. If the person be acquitted, the sentence may be pronounced during that day; but, if he be condemned, the sentence cannot be pronounced till the next day. But no kind of judgment is to be executed, either on the eve of the Sabbath, or the eve of any festival." Pretty clear, right?. It's possible Annas regarded this a preliminary inquiry and not the trial itself. He knew Caiaphas wanted a piece of Jesus as well. Either way, they are breaking many Jewish laws here in dealing with Jesus. These religious leaders followed the letter of the law in every other aspect of their so called faith and life. This is what they hung their hats on. But not here.

Witnesses were supposed to be brought in to establish guilt and so this trial had so many aspects that were illegal. It was actually the high priests duty to call witnesses. The religious leaders knew they had no grounds to charge Jesus with anything. So they tried to build evidence against him by using false witnesses. Take a look at **Mark 14: 55-59**. In John 18: Verse 20 Jesus basically says, "I have spoken openly. I have not spoken in secret like you are doing." **John 18: 20** It would not have been difficult to call a bunch of witnesses to this trial. Like hundreds.....even thousands. But the religious leaders weren't interested in following the law for this specific trial. Jesus is just showing them that the message he taught in public was the same message he taught the disciples in private. It's the same message the Holy Spirit is teaching us today. It all lines up perfectly. The commentator Trapp says this, "Truth is bold and barefaced; while heresy hides itself, and loathes the light." The truth speaks for itself and will never be

hidden. People aren't going to like the truth of the Bible, but it's still the truth. People not liking it or agreeing with it, doesn't change this fact. Jesus responds to his accusers with truth and a respect for God and the message he is to deliver. He wasn't sarcastic or rude, he just met them with truth and the words God wanted him to speak. These are divine words, just like every word Jesus spoke. As Duane mentioned last week, these are referred to as Power words. We should be paying attention that our words, like Jesus's have an enormous impact on others. Our responses to accusatory questions we will be asked about our faith are crucial to sending the Gospel of Jesus Christ out to a broken, lost, confused world. Pay attention to how Jesus responds to his accusers here because he does it perfectly with the agenda to give God the glory and spread the truth of his message. Notice Jesus doesn't defend himself, he doesn't have to. Jesus also answers the questions with his own questions. This is a brilliant way to getting his point across. Study Jesus responses to people throughout the Gospels. You can learn so much from the way he responds to others in how God wants us to respond in our current culture.

The anger that we are about to see in verse 22 is brought on by Jesus's response in verse 21. **John 18: 21-24.**

So here's the picture. I thought it would be good to give you a visual for this scene. **Play short you tube , www.youtube.com/watch?v=XofTrAevyUo**

So apparently this is a real thing that people do. It's called the Power Slap League. Just wait to youtube it until after church today please. Actually, all of the pastors and I are hoping that we can get into this league, but Pastor Thom hasn't given us the blessing yet. I think he said he's praying about it or something like that. Just so you know, this was actually Pastor Dan's idea if you can believe it that.

Pic 4. So this slap, it's the word struck literally means a blow with an open hand. It's exactly what we just watched or very similar. This was also highly illegal. The commentator Alford says, "This blow was a signal for the indignities which followed." The man's name who slapped Jesus was not recorded but this anonymous official began the physical abuse that would ultimately end with Jesus's crucifixion. In His deity, Jesus knew his name; but as one of those who did not know what they did against God's Messiah, his name was graciously not recorded. **Luke 23:34.** This is just another example of that. One more note. This slap against Jesus is based out of pure hatred. These religious leaders hated what Jesus taught, they hated what he stood for, they hated his disciples, they hated how he acted, they hated his response to them, they thought he was arrogant, they hated Him with a passion. Hatred has become a normal part of many people's everyday lives. Hatred among family members, hatred among spouses, hatred among siblings, hatred among races, hatred between political parties, hatred between sports teams, hatred between friends, hatred between coworkers, hatred between various ideologies, hatred between colleagues, the list is never ending. When Jesus is the center of your life, it is much more difficult to get to the point of hate. It isn't impossible because Christians are still sinners, but hate is much less common in born again believers on a consistent basis. You can get angry, Jesus got angry, but hatred and anger are 2 different animals. Hatred leaves no room for grace. Hatred leaves no room for humility. Hatred leaves no room for the love of Christ. Hatred leads to a great multitude of sins. If you want to eradicate hateful hearts in this world and many people do, Jesus is the only answer. Everything else will not work. But people keep looking elsewhere to seek peace, comfort and joy. Anyone who sees the hatred around them in the world and wants it gone. Anyone who recognizes that hate exists in their own heart and is tired of it. I have the answer for you. Accept Jesus into your heart and begin a deep, meaningful, genuine relationship with the King of the Universe. Turn to **1 John 2: 9-17.** Examine your hearts for any hate that has crept in and ask Jesus to get rid of it. I don't want to admit it, but from time to time there's negative, angry, hateful thoughts that run through my mind that stem from sin in my heart. Know Jesus

deeper and continue to love Him with all your heart. Stop loving the things in the world and love Jesus the most. This is the answer to deliver us from a hateful heart and from hateful thoughts.

John 18:24 – Pic 1, (Caiaphas’s house pic from Israel trip) Pic 2 (model of what the high priest house would have looked like, courtyard in the middle), Pic 3 (map of where the high priests house was in relation to other landmarks of Jerusalem at Jesus’s time) – Annas had nothing to answer to Jesus. He sent Jesus on to a more official trial to the man who held the actual office of high priest, and sent Jesus **bound** as if He were a dangerous criminal. Which when you think about it as actually kind of comical.

John 18: 25-27 – So picture the scene, Peter was waiting by the fire roasting marshmallows with a bunch of servants of the religious leaders. I tried to find depictions of Peter roasting marshmallows around the fire, but I couldn’t find any so you’ll just have to use your imagination. Remember he was there to get warm but also he wanted to be close to the action because he cared deeply about his teacher, Jesus. He needed to be close to the action. He didn’t want to miss out. John says, **they** asked him again, which implies it was more than 1 person asking questions. In Matthew, it says another girl asked this question. In Mark it says the same girl asked the questions. In Luke it says a man asked the questions. Some people have a hard time with these inconsistencies. I’m here to dispel some of that. With a group of servants talking around a fire, there would have been men and women most likely. Several would have doubtlessly asked Peter and repeated the same question. This is highly plausible. The servants probably did not really expect to find a follower of Jesus in the high priest’s courtyard under those circumstances of that night. But for some reason, the question must have seemed worth asking him. I picture Peter being very confused and afraid. So he denied that he was a Disciple. He knew if he would have said yes, these servants would have gone straight to the higher ups and he would be put in prison as well....or worse.

We also know that Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny him 3 times. Turn to **John 13:38**. We also know in Peter’s mishaps, Jesus forgave him. This is the most important part of the story. Jesus knew Peter was going to deny him 3 times. Peter denied him 3 times, because Jesus allowed it and it played a big part in Peter’s testimony. And then Peter must have repented because Jesus forgives him. Under pressure, Peter caved. Under pressure, you will cave. Under pressure you will mess up. Even if you aren’t under pressure, you’re going to mess up. You know how I know that? Because it happens to every single person on the face of this earth. Everyone caves from time to time and everyone messes up. I said something a few weeks ago that sticks in my mind that I genuinely wish I could take back. I responded poorly. I can’t take it back of course, but Jesus forgives me. I’ve repented and am praying that I learn from it and don’t do it that way again. I truly see the error in my way and want to change. Take a look at **John 21: 15-17**. Peter got it wrong 3 times in our story today. But then in John 21, he gets it right 3 times. For the next 30 years, Peter’s actions proved he got it right. He boldly preached the Gospel throughout the countryside of Israel for 33 years. Peter was crucified upside down on a cross at age 65 because he didn’t want to die the same way his friend did. He was given the option of how he wanted to die and that’s what he chose. God transformed Peter from an arrogant, cocky, man of thunder into a humble, willing servant who followed Jesus and obeyed and pleased him all the way to the same type of death. Although Peter’s death is only mentioned in scripture from Jesus’s prophecy, many writers of the time link Peter’s death to Rome during the reign of Nero sometime around 67 AD. Jesus prophesies about Peter’s death in **John 21: 18**. Peter went from a fisherman to a fisher of men. One of the best fishers of men ever to walk the earth.

I'd like you to consider 2 applications from today's teaching. The first application is this question? Who do you love the most? If you're a true Disciple of Jesus you are going to mess this up from time to time. You are going to mess up, **plain and simple**. You are going to displease God from time to time. But if you **always**, consistently, come back to loving Jesus the most out of anyone and anything in this world, then you'll be just fine in God's eyes. Peter was. And you will be too. Love Jesus the most. More than your wife, more than your kids, more than your grandkids, more than your money, more than your phone, more than your job, more than the things you love in the world. Whatever they are.

And the second application – God uses ordinary people, Ordinary people just like Peter to get his work done. There's a bunch of ordinary people sitting in this room right now. There's an ordinary person standing up here in front of you. I have fears, anxieties, issues. I mess up. In fact I've failed on many attempts in my life. He wants you to follow him. He wants me to follow him. So follow Him. Now. Immediately. There's an urgency here that you cannot afford to wait on. Don't get to it next month, get on it now. Do what Peter did, stop following what you've been following and answer Christ's call. Follow him wholeheartedly, not one foot in and one foot out like most people do. You don't have to be the best at something to be used in a powerful way by God. You don't have to get cleaned up first to follow Jesus. The best place you can be as a Disciple of Jesus is right where Peter was. A mess up. On your knees, always going back to the Father with a heart of gratitude, a love for Jesus, a love for God's word and a servant's mentality that others are more important than yourself. If you get those things right, Jesus will be very pleased with you. Just like he was with Peter. And that should be our only goal in this life, to please our master, Jesus, at all costs.

Father God, This is what you teach in Luke, ²⁷“But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. ²⁹If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. I pray we would be Disciples who model your words, your responses and your actions. You modeled this for us. I pray we would be more like you. You didn't just talk the talk, you walked the walk. I pray we would be a people that walk the walk of your truth. If there's anyone in this room or listening online who would like to accept Jesus into their hearts right now, I ask that you pray along with me. Father, I've made a lot of mistakes, but I accept you into my heart. Thank you for saving me from myself. Thank you for forgiving me of my sins. Now help me to go and follow and trust you all the remaining days of my life.

Jesus, we thank you that we didn't have to get cleaned up to get saved. We thank you that the type of people you want to be your disciples are people like us, like Peter....people who mess up but people who are always after your own heart.

