

The Betrayal Night

John 18:1-27

Pastor John Miller

As I said, we come tonight in John 18 to a new division of the book. Let me outline the whole book. This is one of my favorite outlines of the gospel of John. In chapters 1-12 we see the signs of the Son of God. The theme of John's gospel is: Behold Your God. Matthew says, Behold Your King; Mark says, Behold Your Servant; Luke says, Behold the Man; and John says, Behold Your God. In the first twelve chapters we see the seven miracles or signs pointing to the deity of Jesus Christ. John says, "...but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name," in or by trusting in His name, so we have the signs of the Son of God. In chapters 13-17, which we just spent several months in the Upper Room Discourse, we saw the secrets of the Son of God where Jesus opens His heart with His twelve and Judas is dismissed. Jesus teaches them in the upper room and closes in His High Priestly prayer.

Tonight we come to chapters 18-20, and chapter 21, the resurrection, and see the sorrows of the Son of God where He is crucified, buried, and the resurrection; so we see the signs, the secrets, and the sorrows of the Son of God. We'll take several weeks before we get there. The private teachings and prayer of Jesus have now ended and the public drama of redemption is about to begin. The rest of the book of John is about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—His redemptive death on the cross.

John shows us the culmination of unbelief, which is the central theme in his gospel, that man will do his worst, but God will do His very best. Even though Jesus enters into a difficult hour of His rejection, He is not the victim but is seen to be the victor. All through this section, Jesus is in control. Jesus is the Son of God, voluntarily, willingly laying His life down for the redemption of mankind. Jesus gives Himself as the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world.

Now, I want to approach this large narrative section tonight in kind of a different way than I normally would teach. I want to key in on some themes which you can use as symbols to kind of convey the meaning of each one of these sections. I'm going to give you five symbols, and I want to use those five symbols to convey what is being taught or explained in each passage.

The first is the symbol of the garden, that is, the Garden of Gethsemane. It's in verse 1, "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples." Jesus has ended His Upper Room Discourse, that's what he's referring to in verse 1, "When Jesus had spoken these words," that would be John 13-17, and John 17 ended with this great High Priestly prayer that Jesus gave. Now, after He finished that prayer with His disciples, notice verse 1, "...he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron," and entered into a garden into which He entered with His disciples.

That garden is not named here in the passage, but it's the Garden of Gethsemane. The

Garden of Gethsemane was actually an olive orchard. In that olive orchard, they would actually press the olives into olive oil. That's what the word "Gethsemane" means. It means oil press or olive press. It was a place where there was a grove, a private property of olive trees, and Jesus would often actually retreat to this spot and sleep under the stars. It was kind of His getaway spot. If you ever take a trip to Israel or if you have taken a trip to Israel, you know. You've visited this spot. It's a beautiful place among these olive trees where you think of Christ in agony on the ground praying to His Father. What a blessed place that was.

What is this "brook Cedron" mentioned in verse 1? The city of Jerusalem sits on a mountain. As far as elevation goes it's pretty high, about a half mile above sea level. That's why they sometimes get a little snow there in the winter. We're going to see in our passage tonight that Peter warmed himself by the fire outside the palace of Caiaphas. It was a chilly night in Jerusalem. To the east of the city of Jerusalem, there is a valley. In this valley there was a creek that ran from north to south. On the other side of the creek that was known as Cedron, on the side to the east is the Mount of Olives or sometimes called Olivet. The Mount of Olives is that place where Jesus actually ascended back into heaven and where Jesus Christ will return when He comes back in His Second Coming glory.

The brook Cedron is dried today. There's no water running in this brook. In Jerusalem during the Passover, which this was, it would actually probably be red with the blood of the lambs that were being slain by the priests for the Passover Feast. It was just north of there where they would be slaying the lambs, and the blood would run into the brook. As Jesus passed over the brook...and it was probably just a little brook that you can step on the stones or jump across or stretch your legs and walk across. They would probably see the red blood of the lambs as they walked over that brook. What a picture that was to remind that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would soon die on the cross and shed His blood for our sins.

Jesus leaves Jerusalem, heads east, and goes over this little brook down in the valley. He then goes back up on the Mount of Olives where there was this garden. The garden was on the western slope of Mount Olivet facing Jerusalem. (I probably should've brought a map or given you some pictures.) They would leave Jerusalem, go down the valley...and until I went to Jerusalem I thought maybe it was just a little dip in the land, but it's a big, deep valley. They would walk up the hill, and the Garden of Gethsemane was on the side of the Mount of Olives. It was the Passover time when Jesus was headed to this garden.

Jesus had dismissed Judas and could've escaped and gone the other direction, but He went to the garden. Jesus knew Judas knew the place, and He knew that there He would be arrested, apprehended, tried, and ultimately crucified. He was completely in control of what was going on.

There is so much implied in this episode in the garden, and John passes over a lot of information that the synoptics give us. When Jesus was in this garden, He asked His three disciples—Peter, James, and John—to go deeper into the garden with Him. Sometimes they are known as the inner circle. He says, "Come with Me," and they went deeper into the garden

and left the other disciples alone. Then Jesus said to them, "Watch with Me and pray." He said, "Would you stay awake and pray?" Then Jesus went a little distance further from the three and lay on His face and began to pray. We know the story. He was in great agony and heaviness. It was such a stressful time for the Lord that He began to sweat or perspire blood. He prayed and said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," but then said, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Then He came up from His prayer, went back to the disciples, and they were sleeping. I'm going to tie this in a little later in the passage tonight, but He said, "Stay awake and pray," instead they went to sleep and didn't pray. Three times He went again into the garden. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood," but I think in the bigger picture this is where the victory of Calvary was accomplished, and the theme that I would like to hone in on is obedience—obedience to the Father's will that if it was the Father's will for Him to die on the cross, and it was, that the cup would not pass, that He would have to drink the cup; that is, the suffering of the substitutionary death; and He willingly, voluntarily, even in spite of the agony of the cross, gave Himself in obedience to the Father.

There are a lot of themes, as I said, you can draw from Gethsemane, but even as it's a picture of how they would take the olives, put them in the press, and with a large weight, roll the stone over the olives and press out the olive oil. The weight of the cross was on the Son of God. As He was bleeding these drops of blood, it was as though He was just surrendering to the Father's will for the cross. What a time that was for the life of Christ when He surrendered in willing obedience to what God had planned for Him.

Someone said, "Selected obedience is not obedience at all, it is merely convenience." It's interesting that sometimes we'll pick and choose the things we want to obey, but we don't want to really do the things that God calls us to do when there's agony, sorrow, or suffering. We need, like Christ, to be able to say, "Whatever Your will is, Father. If it's Your will for me to drink this cup, this sorrow, this suffering, take the sins of the world, not My will, but Thine be done." To do that it takes faith. Faith is not believing in spite of evidence, it is obeying in spite of consequence. "No matter what happens, Lord, I will obey You. I might lose my job, I might be laughed at, I might suffer, I might die; but I believe You're calling me, and I want to obey You. I'm going to drink the cup that You hand to me," obedience not out of fear, obedience not out of just a desire to get reward, but obedience for love's sake to God. "God, I love You, and I will obey You. I'll go where You want me to go. I'll do what You want me to do. I'll say what You want me to say, and I'll be whatever it is You want me to be." I think all the way through our Christian lives, that should be our prayer, "Lord, what do You want me to do? What do You want me to be? What do you want me to say? I'm Yours, and I'll be obedient to You."

I think of Abraham in Genesis 22 that had a very similar experience when God told Abraham to take his only son Isaac and offer him on a mountain that He would show him. It turns out that very same mountain which Isaac would be offered on was no doubt the same mountain in which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would give His life for the sins of the world. Abraham willingly, voluntarily was going to give his son. God stopped him and gave him a ram in the thicket of the bushes and substituted it in place for his son. How hard would that be? God

says, "I want you to offer your son." "Well, I don't think so. I think I changed my mind. I don't think I want to follow You anymore, God. I don't think I want to obey You anymore, God. I don't think I want to live for You anymore, God. I don't think I'll go to church this Sunday, and I'm certainly not going to put any money in the offering because of the way You're treating me." Instead, Abraham obeyed, even this very painful, difficult call to offer his son; and God blessed and rewarded him for his obedience.

Obedience actually keeps us into close fellowship with God. If you want to stay in fellowship with God, you must stay in obedience. Obedience keeps us in the place of fellowship and communion with God. I heard the story of a little boy who was riding his tricycle furiously around the block, around the block, around the block, around the block. A police officer observed this little boy riding his tricycle around the block over and over again and said, "Son, why are you riding your tricycle around the block?" "Because I'm running away from home." The officer said, "Running away from home? Why are you going around and around?" "Because my mother told me not to cross the street." I thought, What a cool example. He's just so obedient to his mother that it kept him from running away from home, so it takes faith and obedience. Write down Psalm 143:10 were the psalmist says, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God." The prophet Samuel said to King Saul, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The second symbol or image, and it's not named in the passage, but this is when it took place, is that of the kiss. It starts with the Garden, and the second picture image is that of the kiss, verses 2-9. Let's read it. "And Judas also, which betrayed him," that is, Christ, "knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." Jesus knew that Judas knew and could have avoided it, but He's in control. Verse 3, "Judas then, having received a band of men," this is a Roman cohort of soldiers. We're not absolutely sure of how many that would be, but a large group of soldiers, "and officers from the chief priests," He would have some of the police from the temple, "and Pharisees," there as the passage said, and maybe some of the Sadducees as well or some of the Sanhedrin, "cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons." How interesting. They're coming to apprehend the light of the world with their torches, lanterns, and weapons to arrest the Prince of Peace. By the way, there's no need for any of this. They don't need to bring weapons, Jesus is going to surrender to them.

Note this in verse 4, "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" It's very clear from that passage, and when you read this episode in the synoptics, that Jesus voluntarily, willingly, knowingly gave Himself to be apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane. He didn't try to fight, resist, or run. He gave Himself. He's knowledgeable and in complete control of what is going on which is consistent with the theme of John's gospel that He is the Son of God.

Notice that Jesus steps forward and says, "Whom seek ye?" This is no doubt at this point where Judas would've stepped forth, omitted in John's gospel, and gave Jesus the kiss of betrayal. In the Greek it's actually, "He kissed Him lavishly and repeatedly." In the Middle East they kiss instead of shaking hands. They'll kiss on both sides of the cheeks and do in many

European countries as well. This was a kiss of friendship, but it was a hypocritical kiss. The teaching behind this imagery is that of treachery and hypocrisy. Jesus actually said to Judas, "Friend, you betray the Son of God with a kiss?" What hypocrisy. Think of Judas' privileges and opportunities that he had. Looking at Judas on the outside, he looked like all the other apostles; yet his heart was not right with God.

So many times you can look at people and they read their Bible, go to church, and go through the motions, but God looks upon the heart. He looked like the real deal, but his heart wasn't right with God and he was practicing hypocrisy—the word *hypokrites* in the Greek. The idea is that he acted or put on a show. He wasn't real, authentic, or genuine. I don't believe that Judas was by any means a true disciple or a saved individual, yet he did do miracles and was sitting under Jesus and had all those privileges. But again, the warning: We guard our hearts that we can have all those blessings, all those privileges. You can come to church, listen to the Bible studies, sing the songs, but have you been born again? Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Judas looked good on the outside, but his heart was not right with God.

Judas came with the torches and the lanterns. Jesus knew what was going on and steps forward, "Whom seek ye?" Notice verse 5, "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them," and this is so cool, "I am he," now if you have, like I do in my King James translation, the italicized "he" there, I've drawn a little line through that "he." He didn't say, "I am he," He just said, "I am," have a familiar ring to it? We've had seven "I Am" statements. The "I Am" there is actually the same as the Jehovah or Yahweh of the Old Testament. Remember when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and Moses said, "Well, who am I going to say sent me when I go to Pharaoh and command that he release the people of Israel and when I go back to Israel and say that God called me?" He says, "You tell them I Am has sent you—I Am, that I Am." This is the name for God who is the becoming One, the eternal One, the covenant-keeping God. What Jesus is actually claiming here is that He is God.

The Jews that were present, and we read in verse 3 that there were chief priests, Pharisees, some of the Sanhedrin, and the temple police, they would have known well what Jesus was claiming when He stepped forward and said, "I Am." "And Judas also, which had betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." I love this! "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye?" At this point, if I were the soldiers, I would've said, "Never mind. Enjoy Your evening in the garden," and I would take off running! The Scripture is very clear that when they fell backwards to the ground, it was involuntary. They weren't falling down to worship Him or falling down to do obeisance to Him, they were falling down under the power of the Great I Am of who He is!

I don't want to get sidetracked, and I may upset somebody, but I need to upset you if you're getting upset. This is not what some people claim to be the experience of being slain in the Spirit. I could not mention this and bypass this and can go somewhere else, and many times in my mind I'm thinking, Who thinks about that anymore, but it's prevalent. In some churches they feel that when the Holy Spirit comes upon them or usually when the evangelist prays for them by touching and pushing on them, and they know there's somebody to catch them, the let

themselves go and fall over supposedly slain in the Spirit. Nowhere in the Bible is that taught. Jesus didn't slay people in the Spirit; and if He did in this case, they weren't believers, they weren't followers of Christ. It wasn't practiced in the book of Acts, it's not taught in the epistles, it's not some experience that we should be looking for. Now, if the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you fall to your knees or fall to the ground, good for you, that's awesome, praise the Lord; but it's not a practice that we should be pursuing because it's not clearly taught in the Scriptures, and I think that it leads to people seeking experience as opposed to just looking to the objective truth of God's Holy Word.

In verse 6, "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth." This is the third time. He said it in verses 5, 6, and then in verse 8. "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way," Jesus, the Good Shepherd, watching over His sheep and also a picture of Him being a substitution—giving His life for His disciples. Verse 9, "That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." That's John 17:12 where Jesus was praying and said, "...those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost," so it was a work of God that they weren't arrested and apprehended as well. The danger here that we need to guard against is that of hypocrisy, duplicity, not practicing integrity.

Here's the third image in John 18:10, it's that of the sword. So, we have the garden, the kiss, and now we have the sword. "Then Simon Peter having a sword," and in the Greek it's not a long sword. It's actually more like a large knife or a dagger that was being used here, "drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." We all know about this episode recorded here in John's gospel, but only John tells us who it was. I don't know if Peter appreciated that or not. Now here's the theory, and I don't know that it's important that I mention it, but some feel that it was omitted that Peter was the guy that cut off the servant's ear in Matthew, Mark, and Luke because during that time when the synoptics were written, Peter was still alive. It could have endangered his life. They could have actually said, "Well, let's go get that guy. His name is Peter," and could have arrested him. By the time John's gospel was written, Peter was actually passed off the scene and no longer alive. John tells us that it was Peter, and he had a sword.

It's interesting that in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament written in Hebrew, that in Genesis 22, when Abraham lifted up the knife to plunge into Isaac, it's the same Greek word used here in John 18:10, "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." What John doesn't mention, and it's interesting he mentions the servant's name, Luke mentions that Jesus picked up the ear. I won't embellish this. A little sanctified imagination usually gets me in trouble. He put the ear back on Malchus and heals him. If it were me under arrest and one of my followers cut off the ear I'd say, "Good show, Peter. Good job. Way to go, Buddy." Jesus had to pick up the ear, and the last miracle, so to speak, Jesus performed was on an enemy. He actually had to cover for Peter's impetuous, zealous mistake that he made. He had zeal but not according to knowledge.

Jesus actually subtly rebukes Peter and says, “Peter, put away your sword,” and back to the cup, “...the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Peter, this is not the way it’s supposed to be here. You don’t understand. The Father has a purpose and a plan, and this world is not our home. This kingdom is not our home, and we’re not going to fight with those who are coming to arrest Me. It was a fulfillment of His prayer in John 17:12, so we have the sword.

What an interesting thing—Peter, in his impetuosity, demonstrating zeal but without knowledge. The motive might have been right, but it was not God’s method. It was wrong. God wants us to have the right motive and to do our work in the right way as well, so it’s important that we serve the Lord. In John 18:36, Jesus is going to go on to say (we’ll get it next week), “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight...but now is my kingdom not from hence,” and that’s consistent with what He tells Peter here at this point in time.

Now we move from the sword to the cup, verses 11-14. “Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Good question. This cup came from the Father’s hand, and I know He loves Me and His ways are perfect. I will drink it. “Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him.” Again, Jesus is in control. This would never have happened if Jesus didn’t give Himself voluntarily, but He was bound so that we could be set free. Verse 13, “And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. 14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”

Jesus finally mentions the cup, and as I said earlier, He told Peter, “...the cup which my Father hath given me,” now that’s important to focus on. It was a cup of sorrow, a cup of suffering, cup of sin, cup of judgment. The cup primarily symbolized the wrath and the judgment of God going to be poured out on Christ, who would be our substitute, who would take our place. Notice He says it comes from the Father’s hand, and the point I want to make is that whatever comes from the Father’s hand is for our good and for His glory. If it is a cup of sorrow and suffering, we should drink it in willing obedience. If it’s the cup of blessing and joy, we should willingly take it in obedience to Him. Don’t try, in the flesh like Peter, to help God out but willingly submit to the judgment of God that He gives to you, that you drink of that cup that He’s giving to you. So, he had a sword in his hand when Jesus had a cup in His hand. Peter was resisting God’s will, but Jesus was accepting the Father’s will. How important that is.

In verse 13, Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas. It’s kind of a little hard to understand, but it’s basically that Caiaphas was at this time the high priest. Previously, from A.D. 7 to A.D. 14, Annas was the high priest. The priesthood was basically a corrupt institution that had been taken over by the family of Annas and Caiaphas. Caiaphas had sons that became priests, and they were more political than they were religious or spiritual. That’s a very, very dangerous thing when spiritual leaders become political rather than spiritual leaders. It was corrupt, and they were giving the high priesthood to their family members. They probably all lived in one

kind of large house there, so the courtyard that we're going to see in the next scene is probably outside both homes that were together with one large courtyard.

Jesus was brought first to Annas. Now, this was night. He was arrested in the garden. Everything that takes place is against Jewish law, so it was a kangaroo court. They first brought Him to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and from Caiaphas to Pilate. From Pilate He went to King Herod, and from King Herod He went back to Pilate. That's the order of these trials the night Jesus was arrested and would ultimately be sentenced to death to be crucified.

Verse 14, "Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people," that's recorded earlier in the gospel of John, but here's the point I want to make about the cup. The cup represented the wrath of God, the suffering of God, and the cross that He would have to endure; but He said, "It's the cup My Father has given Me." Jesus was able to accept the cup because it was mixed by the Father and given from His hand. This is the theme of submission to God's plan. No matter what God has for you, submit to His purpose, submit to His plan. Someone said it like this, "Never fear the cup that the Father hands you whether it be sorrow or joy." If we ask the Father for bread, He's not going to give us a stone. If we ask Him for an egg, He's not going to give us a serpent to eat. He gives only good and for His glory. Like Jesus, we must not focus on the foes who attack us, but we must focus on the Father who lovingly distributes His will to our lives.

Let me illustrate this in the life of Joseph. You can always go back to Joseph, he's a classic example. Joseph was rejected by his own brothers. You talk about having a bad day. Someone said, "How's it going, Joseph?" "Oh, not too good. My brothers sold me today." He goes to Egypt, gets a job with Pharaoh, and Potiphar's wife gets eyes for Joseph and tries to seduce him. He resists, is lied about by her, and gets arrested. He gets thrown in prison, and he's in the dungeon. Now, you talk about bummed. Eventually, through interpreting the dreams, he's exalted second to Pharaoh. He's sitting on the throne, and his brothers show up. This is when you're thinking, Sweet! He's gonna smoke 'em. He's gonna get 'em good. He's gonna really, really, really go after 'em. He discovered by his treatment of them that their hearts had changed, and their attitudes had changed. Finally, after this whole episode of dealing with his brothers, he reveals himself, "I am Joseph." I'm sure that their first response was, "You are Joseph, and we are dead! You're going to kill us." What did he say to his brothers? "You meant it for evil, but God intended it for good." He went on to say, "God sent me before you so that I could sustain and keep you alive." Now, he looks back with hindsight and sees the hand of God allowed all of this sorrow, all of the suffering, all of this hardship in his life for good and for God's glory.

You see, we have such a narrow kind of vision, and we get all upset, "Why did God let this happen? Why does God let that happen? Why does this happen? Why did this person die? What is happening?" We don't realize that God is in control and whatever is handed to us from the Father is for our good and for His glory, so we should take the cup and drink it gladly.

The last image in verses 15-27 is that of fire. "And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did

another disciple," He's arrested in the garden and Peter follows, far off as we're going to see but he followed, "...and so did another disciple," that other disciple is most likely the apostle John, the writer of this gospel, "that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest." Palace meaning the home or courtyard area of the high priest, which probably included a home for Annas and a home for Caiaphas together with a common courtyard.

Verse 16, "But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith," here it is, first denial, "I am not. 18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." Peter is outside; John goes in. We don't know for sure that it's John, but it's a pretty good guess it's John. We don't know how John knew the servant girl at the gate or some of the people there at the palace of Caiaphas, but John was able to have access to go in. John talked to the maid at the gate and said, "You know, let my friend in," and Peter came in. She recognized Peter as being one of the disciples. She knew John was one of His disciples. She was asking, "Are you one of His disciples?"

It's believed that John, who was the son of Zebedee, and his brother James were pretty well off, had a fishing business, and possibly through their selling fish to the priest in Jerusalem, they got to know them through their business relationship; so Peter is brought in to the courtyard. At first they all forsook and fled, "...smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered," but Peter and John followed Jesus to the home of Caiaphas.

Verse 17, "Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" In the grammar of her question in Greek, she's actually expecting a "no" answer. It would be translated like this: "You're not one of His disciples, are you?" Which, by the way, makes it kind of easier for Peter to say, "Oh, no," so Satan is trying to snare him. Remember Jesus told Peter, "Satan desires to have you, that he may sift you like wheat?" This is what's going on here; but Jesus said, "I prayed for you." The first denial of Peter is there in verse 17, "You're not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

Verse 18, "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. 19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? 24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. 25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples?" Again, "You aren't one of His disciples, are you?" "He

denied it, and said, I am not.” This is the second time Peter denied His Lord.

Verse 26, “One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off,” he was related to Malchus, “saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?” This question here in verse 26 actually expects a “yes” answer: “Didn’t I see you in the garden? Weren’t you playing with knives? Didn’t you cut my uncle’s ear off in the Garden of Gethsemane?” Peter is really freaking out. It’s cold, and he’s being warmed by the fire; but he’s probably going, “It’s getting hot here,” you know, “it’s kind of getting sweaty.” Verse 27, “Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew,” the rooster crowed. This is the third time Peter denied his Lord.

What an amazing story this is. Jesus had warned Peter. He said, “Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted,” so you will fall but will be brought back, you’ll be converted. I want you to do something. I want you to, “strengthen thy brethren.” Peter did that by writing 1 and 2 Peter, those two amazing epistles where he strengthened them in their suffering and warned them of the dangers of false teachers and apostasy. The lesson here is the danger of denying our Lord. Jesus had predicted that Peter would deny him back in John 13:38, and Jesus actually said, “Three times, Peter, three times you will deny Me.”

What were the steps that led to Peter’s fall and denial? The first was self-confidence. Remember Jesus said, “You’re going to deny Me.” What did Peter say? “No way, Jose!” That’s a free paraphrase. “It ain’t gonna happen.” He’s talking to Jesus, the Son of God, telling Him, “Sorry, but you don’t know what you’re talking about because I am awesome. I’m Peter. It ain’t going to happen.” One of the great dangers in our Christian life is self-confidence, trusting in the flesh. The Bible says, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” It’s really dangerous to have confidence in your flesh—to think that you have the ability to live the Christian life—you don’t. You don’t have the ability to resist temptation or to be obedient to God, it has to be a work of God’s grace. You have to fix your eyes on Him, trust Him, surrender to Him, and put your faith in Him.

The second step in Peter’s denial was prayerlessness, and we saw that as I related the story of the garden. What was Peter doing when he was supposed to be praying? Sleeping. Some say they have the gift of sleep. I believe God has given me the gift of sleep. What a precious gift that is. The older I get, the more I like to sleep. Thank God for naps. Try telling your 7-year-old grandson, “Let’s take a nap.” “Noooo!” It’s like torture. Peter should’ve been praying instead of sleeping. How many times we do not watch and pray, and we trust in ourselves and fall because we are not praying. Prayer?? (prayerlessness) begins the downward slide to failure. You wonder why we have not? Because we ask not. You wonder why I lack power to resist temptation, why I lack the joy of the Lord? Because we do not pray. You have not because you do not ask of God. E.M. Bounds, who has written so many wonderful little books on prayer said, “Prayer generally begins at the closet door. The minute you stop praying, you are starting to fall away; and you’re in danger of denying the Lord.”

The third step was following afar off. In the text, Peter followed; and we know from other

gospels, he followed afar off. He wasn't walking close to Jesus, and sometimes we follow at a distance, the pressures of the world.

Fourthly, Peter was seated by the enemy's fire; so following afar off, prayerlessness, and self-confidence led to his failure, his fall, and his denial. In Psalm 1 it says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners," and, like Peter, doesn't "sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Peter's warming himself by the enemy's fire. What a dangerous place to be. Naturally, Peter is going to deny the Lord and fall flat on his face. He wasn't looking to Jesus.

At this moment it indicates in the Scriptures that Jesus was brought out of the courtroom of Caiaphas, so Annas sent Him then to Caiaphas. We don't have recorded what went on with Caiaphas. We have the little episode of Jesus being smacked on the face, and Jesus saying, "If I've done something wrong, you point it out; but if I haven't done anything wrong, why did you hit Me," but we don't have any record of what went on that we do in the other gospels as He stood before Caiaphas. As Jesus was coming out of Caiaphas' apartment or house, it would indicate that Jesus actually had eye contact with Peter.

If I were putting together my own movie on the life of Christ, I would have Peter there in the glow of the fire around the enemy's camp saying, "I swear I don't know the Man. I'm not His disciple," and then hears, through the early morning, the rooster crow. That sound carrying in the moisture of the morning air just cut right to his heart, and he realized the weakness of his own flesh. No doubt, at that very moment, Jesus coming out of the palace there had eye contact with Peter. Those eyes looking at Peter and Peter melted with godly sorrow that brought about true repentance. He saw what took place and realized, "Jesus, I have denied You." I believe that Jesus was looking at Peter with eyes of love. Peter did what? He went out and wept bitterly.

This was what I believe to be true repentance—godly sorrow that brings about repentance. It wasn't just remorse for what he had done, he was sorry toward God. Judas sinned and went out and hung himself. That was just remorse. He was sorry for what he'd done, but he wasn't sorry toward God. This was a Godward sorrow that brought about true repentance was to turn, forsake his sin. Peter was forgiven by Jesus, not forsaken. In Psalm 30:5, it says, "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Jesus actually would forgive and restore Peter, and we'll get it in John 21 when He rises from the dead, "Go tell Peter that I have risen," and He meets with Peter and commissions him back to ministry—feed My sheep, or feed My lambs.

In 1 John 1:9 the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us," that's a marvelous verse you should put to memory. That word "confess" means to agree with God that we've sinned, that God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If you've sinned, God is faithful, God is just, and He will forgive all of your sins. You don't have to gloat over them. You don't have to feel guilt or shame over them. They're washed, forgiven, and cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

As I said, in John 21, Jesus commissioned Peter to ministry to go back and feed My sheep. In Acts 2, Peter was the first of the preachers who stood on the day of Pentecost and preached, and three thousand souls were added to the church. God forgives us, God can restore us, and God can use us; so we see guilt and grace in the Garden of Gethsemane.

It's interesting that Adam was in a perfect garden and he sinned and brought sin and death on the whole human race. Jesus, who was the last Adam, was in a garden and He in obedience to God the Father drank the cup, went to the cross, and He redeemed mankind back from sin, death, and destruction. What a contrast between the first Adam in the garden bringing sin and the last Adam, Jesus Christ, by His obedience brought forgiveness and grace. But we, like Simon Peter, when we stumble and fall and sin need to remember 1 John 1:9, it's the Christian's bar of soap, that God will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Amen?

Love so amazing, so divine, God's grace demands my life, my soul, and my all. Amen?