

**The Gospel of John**  
**Week Twenty-Six**  
**John 18:1-27**

**Day One**

<sup>1</sup> When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. <sup>2</sup> Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup> So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

v. 1 – Jesus had prayed for a long time and then it was time to move on to the mission at hand. If you go back and look at Jesus’ prayer in John 17, you will see how “unreligious” it is. He didn’t say God’s name every third word as some do when they pray. **When you pray, who are you talking to – your heavenly Father or some distant or austere God?** Prayer is not some official, religious function. Rather it is communicating with a God who knows your thoughts before you ever speak them. So don’t get “religious” when you pray and put on a sanctimonious air when you talk to God. Talk to Him as Jesus did.

Jesus and the men walked across the valley to the Garden of Gethsemane, which is still there today. Some of the olive trees in the Garden are 2,000 years old and they look it! The Church of All Nations is also on that sight, maintained by the Franciscan order of the Catholic Church. It is a moving sight to visit. I hope one day you get to go there.

v. 2 – Judas had left the dinner early so he could carry out his dastardly deed of betraying Jesus. Jesus went off to pray with His disciples and Judas used that event as the moment to pounce. This Garden was a favorite prayer place for Jesus. **Do you have a favorite prayer place? Do you have a favorite time?** I can’t say that I have either, but I know many who do. If you have that place, then use it. In fact, if there is anything you can do to enhance your prayer life, you should employ it as often as possible.

v. 3 – Judas led a contingent of soldiers and officials to where Jesus was located. The men in that company were prepared for anything and knew that their work would be easier if they carried it out by night. Remember, the people considered Jesus a prophet and could have interfered with this arrest had they known what was occurring. The leaders knew they had the best chance for success at night. This is consistent with what John wrote back in the beginning of his gospel:

[The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it \(John 1:5\).](#)

This is why we are always to walk in the light as John later instructed:

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1:5-7).

## Day Two

<sup>4</sup> Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" <sup>5</sup> "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) <sup>6</sup> When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

v. 4 – John let us know over and over again that what happened to Jesus was not a surprise or catch Him off guard. He was fully informed and fully involved in the entire process. **Why is this important?** It is critical because the plot against Jesus must be seen for what it was and is: the plan of God and not some conspiracy of men that somehow succeeded. Jesus came for the very purpose of dying on the cross and He had to be sacrificed by the leaders of Israel. That was God’s plan and it was carried out just as God intended.

There was no way that Jesus was going to die in an accident or suffer some kind of “untimely” death. He knew about His coming death and He submitted to the Father’s plan willingly and without hesitation. **Can you do the same to the plan of God for your life? Do you know what that plan is?**

v. 5 – Jesus asked them who they were looking for and they responded that they were looking for Him. He identified Himself readily, not trying to hide or evade their grasp. We know in previous encounters Jesus had passed right through their midst because His time to die had not yet come. On this occasion, the time had come and Jesus did not resist it.

v. 6 – On occasion, you see people being prayed for and falling down. Some “believe” in this experience and some do not. Here we have it happening to those who heard Jesus say, “I am.” When Jesus identified Himself by the same description that God used to Moses, the power of the name was so great, all those who came to seize Jesus fell to the ground. The interesting thing is that not one of those was a believer in Jesus, yet they fell down, unwillingly acknowledging that He was and is the Lord God of all.

This is a remarkable account of Jesus first encounter with those who came to seize Him. They had their agenda, but they came face-to-face with the Lord, and they all had to fall down in submission to His sovereignty and majesty. I have never understood why some are uptight with the process of falling down when in the presence of God. Sure, it has been abused and some people just fall down for the sake of falling down, but when one

has an encounter with the living God, falling down would seem to be a natural human response to God's awesome presence.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last" (Revelation 1:17).

v. 7 – Once the group got up from the ground, they resumed what they had come to do like the falling-down incident had never happened. Jesus asked them who they wanted and they responded that they wanted Him. I suppose He could have repeated what had just happened, so they would fall down again, but He did not. He had shown His majesty and they had displayed that they were under the power of God's purpose, so the story could proceed and God's plan carried out.

### Day Three

<sup>8</sup> "I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." <sup>9</sup> This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." <sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) <sup>11</sup> Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

v. 8 – Jesus once again refused to run or hide. He identified Himself as the One they were looking for and requested that His followers not be arrested. Jesus was concerned for them, plus He knew He had to endure what was coming alone. Jesus was a good leader who protected His followers from things they could not handle. At some later time, they would have to face those kinds of confrontations and they would do it successfully. At that point, they could not handle it and He protected them. **Who is in your world that you need to protect?**

v. 9 – Jesus was looking to fulfill every aspect of God's word concerning the events surrounding His death. He had already promised earlier in John that not one would be lost except Judas and here He was acting to preserve the integrity of that word. This fact is indeed good news for you and me. If Jesus was able to preserve all those with whom He walked on earth as He promised to do, then He can preserve all those who come to Him today.

v. 10 – The other gospels do not identify Peter as the one who pulled the sword, nor do they name the servant whose ear was cut off. What a bloody mess that must have been! Simon Peter tried to make good on his promise that He would die defending Jesus. Someone said that Peter cut off the man's ear, but that isn't what he was aiming to do. He probably was swinging for the man's head, but missed! Simon still had some spiritual development to undergo, but he was certainly zealous and courageous. Peter was sincere but he was sincerely wrong! **Have you ever been in that condition?** Sincerity is not sufficient to cover wrong actions or motives.

**I wonder why John felt the need to tell us the name of the servant? Was this person a believer when John wrote his gospel? Would the readers have been familiar with this man?** I am not sure, but John made sure his name was recorded for all posterity. Perhaps it was because this man joined in with the conspirators that captured Jesus and contributed to his death.

v. 11 – Jesus rebuked Peter that he was interfering with God’s purposes by resorting to swordplay. Jesus did not require protection, for what was happening was God’s will, not man’s will. Jesus used the metaphor of drinking a cup for what He was about to endure. The Father had handed Him a cup filled with suffering and He was going to drink it to the full. Jesus used this metaphor previously when He talked to the mothers of the disciples.

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father" (Matthew 20:22-23).

**Do you have a cup assigned to you to drink? Are you drinking it to the full?**

#### Day Four

<sup>12</sup> Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him <sup>13</sup> and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. <sup>14</sup> Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.

v. 12 – **Did the leaders really need to bring soliders with them?** Obviously they did, for Peter had already drawn the sword to protect Jesus. Yet these guards didn’t do a very effective job of protecting Malchus, whose ear was cut off by Peter. I think this shows that the leaders were not bold, but scared and cowardly. John does not bother to tell us that Jesus actually healed the servant’s ear, as Luke does in Luke 22:51.

So Jesus was placed under arrest and bound like a common criminal. The sinless, harmless Son of God was treated like one who was dangerous, and He *was* dangerous to those who opposed the will and plan of God. For that reason, the leaders had to take every precaution to insure that their plan did not fail.

**Why did they try to take Jesus at night?** It was because the people maintained that He was a prophet and could have interfered with their leaders’ plans. As I have written many times, the people were more knowledgeable and spiritual than their leaders. They had discernment, while their leaders only had blind ambition.

v. 13 – The gang brought Jesus first to the father-in-law of the High Priest. Annas had been high priest and his family controlled the priesthood for many generations. Perhaps Annas wanted to meet Jesus or perhaps he had a secure home in which Jesus could be held until daybreak and the Roman officials were on duty.

v. 14 – Caiaphas had prophesied that it would be expedient for one man to die to save the nation, but he had uttered that statement while thinking politically. He wanted to preserve his family’s place in Rome’s favor, but he spoke beyond his knowledge. Jesus’ death did save the nation, but only in a spiritual sense and not a political one.

People today still try to make Jesus a political entity, when He was not. He urged His followers to render to Caesar what was his, but to God what was His. Today some offer to Caesar what is his and consider it one and the same with their offering to God. That is a mistake, no matter what party label the person may hold. God is not for any political party. He has his own agenda.

### Day Five

<sup>15</sup> Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, <sup>16</sup> but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in. <sup>17</sup> "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" the girl at the door asked Peter. He replied, "I am not." <sup>18</sup> It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

vs. 15&16 – It seems that this “other disciple” could have been John, the author of this gospel. Whoever it was, the high priest knew him, so he was able to gain access to the high priest’s courtyard. Peter had to wait outside until that mystery person could intervene on his behalf and secure Peter’s entrance. Little did Peter know what was ahead of him by this simple act. This brought Peter to the place where he would deny Jesus, something he swore he would never do. Peter would go from defending Jesus with a sword to denying he knew Him in a matter of hours.

Peter thought he wanted to follow Jesus that closely, but that proximity revealed the reality of Peter’s heart. Your close relationship with Jesus will always do that and sometimes it is not pretty. I liken it to being a tube of toothpaste and being squeezed. I don’t know what’s in me until pressure allows it to come forth. This is a true test, when God orders some situation to reveal what is in your heart, good or not so good. **Have you been tested lately? How well did you do when you were tested?**

v. 17 – The girl asked Peter a simple question and he lied in response. There is no indication that Peter would have been in any danger if he had said he was a disciple, but he felt it best to lie. **How truthful are you when the truth may compromise your standing with someone else?** There is no such thing as a little white lie. A lie is a lie and it is always offensive to God.

**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices (Colossians 3:9).**

**So how committed to telling the truth are you?** Don't answer too quickly. If Peter could lie and he walked with Jesus, you and I have the capability of lying, too.

v. 18 – The men present in the courtyard were standing around the “heater,” which was a wood fire. I can visualize them all standing there with hands extended, perhaps chatting about the events of the day. The light of that fire was about to reveal even more about Peter and his spiritual condition. We can all try to warm ourselves by any other light than the light God provides, but that light is not light at all. I want God to be my light, which may reveal my imperfections but only by the grace of God. If God did not care, He would leave you and me to live in the deception of our own hearts. Instead, He confronts us and then gives us the grace to repent and change. **What is the Lord confronting in your life? Are you cooperating or fighting and denying what you see?**

### Day Six

<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. <sup>20</sup> "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. <sup>21</sup> Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said." <sup>22</sup> When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded. <sup>23</sup> "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" <sup>24</sup> Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.

v. 19 – The high priest interrogated Jesus about His teaching and disciples. Perhaps there was more danger to all of the men than is indicated in the gospel account. So Peter was brave to follow Jesus to His place of arrest, but then panicked when the reality of the situation became clear.

v. 20 – Jesus responded to the priest's questions with a statement of fact: He had always taught publicly. Nothing Jesus did was in secret because He had nothing to hide. He healed, taught, and moved about in full view of everyone who was interested. This makes me think of Proverbs 8:

Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud (Proverbs 8:1-3).

Since Jesus operated in the open, men had to respond to him, one way or another, in the open as well.

v. 21 – Jesus was direct and a bit sarcastic when He responded to the high priest. He knew they were trying to trap Him (again), so he urged them to ask those who heard Him what He said. This would result in condemnation for those who knew what He said but did not obey it. So rather than implicate Himself, as the leaders hoped, Jesus tried to

implicate those who heard but disobeyed. Man cannot judge God, for God is always the One who will turn and judge man.

v. 22 – As a harbinger of things to come, someone reached out and smacked Jesus on the cheek. This person felt He was being insolent in His response to the high priest. This man wanted to preserve the dignity of the official Jewish leader, even though he had lost all dignity by carrying out his evil conspiracy.

Authoritarian leadership is always concerned with how it looks. Anyone who threatens his or her position is subject to persecution. This is why there cannot be just a little authoritarianism in your leadership style, for it tends to grow with time and separate you from the kind of leader you intended to be when you started out. **What are your leadership values? Do you believe that leaders are superior to those who follow?** There are only two styles of leadership – that of Jesus and that represented by the high priest in this story. Choose wisely.

v. 23 – Jesus denied any wrongdoing and immediately put the tribunal on the defensive again. If He had done wrong, prove it. Otherwise, He demanded that the one who struck Him explain his actions. God does not have to explain His actions to man; it is the other way around.

v. 24 – Since Annas was getting nowhere in his interrogation, he sent Jesus bound to his son-in-law, who was the sitting high priest with more authority. Neither man was able to intimidate Jesus, for Jesus knew they served at the pleasure of the Father and not only the Roman government. Jesus was comfortable before them for He had done nothing wrong. God had set up a situation that would continue to reveal Jesus' innocence and showcase His magnificent behavior and excellence.

There are times when God may do the same with you. He may put you in a situation so that others may behold the excellence of His work in you as you reflect Jesus in your relationships and affairs. **Are you in a situation for which there is no explanation? You did everything right but others are accusing you of wrong?** Then you are just where Jesus was. Accept it as from the Lord, rejoice and shine brightly, for God will vindicate you in time, just like He did Jesus!

### Day Seven

<sup>25</sup> As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." <sup>26</sup> One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" <sup>27</sup> Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

v. 25 – I am told that the question was posed to Peter in such a way that a 'no' answer was expected. Peter, who was ready to face the Roman army on behalf of his Lord, lost his nerve when he had to face the upper echelon of his own people, the Jews. This was

not the last time he would lose nerve in the face of Jewish peer pressure, for many years later, Paul had to confront him about some hypocritical behavior:

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray (Galatians 2:11-13).

v. 26 – Malchus’ relative also recognized Peter as having been in the Garden with Jesus. This all happened just as Jesus predicted:

Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!" (John 13:37-39).

Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself, which is no great revelation. The interesting thing is that we don't always believe that someone, including God, can know us that well. I recently had a man come to me who is my age and has had all kinds of job problems. When I gave him the advice I had and told him what I saw him doing, he politely but categorically rejected what I said. Now, that is his prerogative and I cannot hear the Spirit for him or direct his life. Yet he was so confident that he could correct what he had messed up that he quickly and arrogantly brushed aside what I was saying.

I can't judge Peter too harshly because I have done the same thing! I have a master's degree in economics, but it took me many decades to acknowledge that I am not such a good money manager. I would mess up and then redouble my efforts to get a handle on things. I never listened to anyone else; I knew better. **Where do you know better than anyone else, thus missing what the Lord may be trying to tell you through them?**

Peter knew better. He was brash and brave but now he was face-to-face with himself and all his weakness. It was a painful experience as Peter had to look at the reality that he had been denying. That denial led him to another – the denial that he even knew Jesus, His Lord and Master.

v. 29 – At that moment, the rooster crowed, just as Jesus had predicted and Peter had denied the Lord three times. I wonder if Peter ever heard a rooster crow again and failed to think of that moment in his life. When God brings you face-to-face with the ugly side of you, it isn't meant to be pleasant. Yet it doesn't have to be fatal, either. You can face your own dark side and come out stronger, just like Peter did.

Later in this gospel, we will see how Jesus made Peter face and relive this incident, not to rub Peter's nose in the mess, but to help him come to grips with the call and purpose of God on Peter's life. That purpose could not be accomplished in the same attitude and blind confidence that Peter had expressed in John 13. It had to be done in the spirit of

humility and sense of his need for God's help in his life. **Are there any lessons in this story for you? What aren't you facing that you need to face? What failure are you trying to cover up or get away from that God wants you to face so you can learn and grow?**