



John 18:12-18

You Are One of this Man's Disciples Aren't You?

12 Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.

13 And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.

14 Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.

16 But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in.

17 Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

18 Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

Christ's first interrogation is before Annas, as we shall see next week, it is basically what we would call a fishing expedition. Annas is hoping to find something incriminating that he can use against Jesus later in front of the Sanhedrin.

Some confusion there is only supposed to be one high priest – why do the scriptures then keep mentioning Annas AND Caiaphas?

Annas held the office from 6 to 15 AD when Pilate's predecessor as governor, Valerius Gratus, had removed him from office.

Many Jews deeply resented this, the high priest was supposed to hold his office for life. The resentment was even deeper because there was no king at this point, and so the High Priest held tremendous political power as well. So he would have retained a great deal of authority, and history tell us that Annas did indeed wield that authority. Annas saw to it that no less than FIVE of his sons were appointed to the office. So Annas was the king-maker, he made this ecclesiastical office into a family business. So you could think of him as Don Vito Corleone, and Caiaphas as Michael Corleone

John reminds us that this Caiaphas was the same man who had told the Sanhedrin that it was "expedient that one man should die for the people." That detail is included, I believe, for two reasons – FIRST once again to remind us that nothing even close to a fair trial is about to occur, Night cases under ordinary circumstances were considered illegal, also under Jewish law, a prisoner could not be

sentenced on the same day as his trial. Both of those things will happen to Christ. But it doesn't matter - Christ was already sentenced to death by these men long before he arrived in the courtyard

SECOND to remind us that this was a prophecy spoken in accordance with God's redemptive purposes.

In one sense it is appropriate, that it should be the high priest who was responsible for putting Christ to death. After all here finally, standing in the courtyard, was Jesus, the true The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" that all those priestly sacrifices had pointed forward to

But in another sense it is so tragic - They aim to execute Jesus as a law breaker not realizing that all of the law, all of the ceremonies have pointed towards his coming, and only He, of all the men who ever lived perfectly kept it.

John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

40 "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

If they had truly understood the Law they claimed to be protecting then they would have said with pious old Simeon who had held the infant Jesus in his arms many years before and said

Luke 2:29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation

31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Now there is an interesting detail given to us in verse 15, namely that the disciple who followed Jesus to the courtyard with Peter was known by the High Priest. Who is this disciple, we assume it's John, some such as Calvin think that's unlikely, but certain elements make that more likely - The detail of the charcoal fire suggests an eye-witness recollection

But what we do know is that the High priest knew this disciple and that consequently the slave girl knew the first disciple well enough to admit him AND to know that he was a disciple of Jesus, the second disciple she does not know.

So she asks Peter "You aren't also one of this Man's disciples, are you?"

The answer implies a safe "No" answer.

He takes the out and answers NO

Then having denied Christ he goes and stands with the servants and officers by the fire.

Why would he go and stand with them? Well on a cold night it would have been more conspicuous NOT to have stood with them!

Applications:

1) In one sense you have two trials here, the trial of Jesus and the trial of Peter, both went voluntarily to them but only Jesus will pass the test and continue on steadfast to the cross. Peter on the other hand will utterly buckle. His faith will collapse in the courtyard. Here you have the great contrast between

Jesus, the savior of Sinners, and Peter, a sinner trying to save himself. In this place, Jesus succeeds, while Peter miserably fails.

Peter though, had run headlong into his failure, despite Christ's repeated warnings:

Jesus had warned Peter, that Satan desired to sift him as wheat – his response to that was ***“Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.”***

Then Jesus had told Peter he was going to deny Him three times, and yet Peter's response was, ***“Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!”***

And then he rashly follows him into the place of greatest danger, into a place where Jesus had not said, you must go!

But still is Peter's experience really singular? Has anyone ever warned you that you are in danger of falling into some sin, and yet you've said “Nah. I can take it” and then continued on?

Or have you never overextended yourself in that way? Gone someplace you shouldn't have gone? Entered into a relationship you shouldn't have made? Started doing something that had caused others like you to fall in the past?

The Christian faith is full of individuals and indeed entire denominations who have said like Peter: ***“Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.”***

1 Cor. 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

When you get that kind of good advice, to turn aside, to flee temptation, – TAKE IT, and do not go about trying to do more than Christ has said we can.

“Christ had plainly declared that he spared Peter and the others, he who was so weak would have found it to be far better for him to groan and pray in some dark corner than to go into the presence of men. He now undertakes, with great earnestness, the performance of a duty from which Christ had released him; and when he comes to the confession of faith, in which he ought to have persevered even to death, his courage fails. We ought always to consider what the Lord requires from us, that those who are weak may not undertake what is not necessary.” - Calvin

Also if you fall once under a certain trial or temptation, don't linger there. LEAVE!

“Lingering in the arena of moral failure is an invitation to fall further, when the next challenge comes, as it inevitably will.” - Gordon Keddie

I have met far too many men who have fallen to temptation in one particular area or another and yet they continue on in that place assuming the same thing can't happen twice!

Learn from Peter's example it is here in the scriptures for a reason, it is a warning for how far a true Christian CAN FALL!: ***“This fall of Peter is doubtless intended to be a lesson to the whole Church of Christ. It is recorded for our learning, that we be kept from like sorrowful overthrow. It is a beacon mercifully set up in Scripture, to prevent others making shipwreck. It shows us the danger of pride and self-confidence”*** - Ryle

2) "You aren't also one of this Man's disciples, are you?"

That kind of question is being asked more and more often these days. You don't really believe all that do you? Surely you don't.

In the Academic realm

In the moral realm

In the religious realm

And it is asked in a way that it is so tempting to say "No" and then you can walk through the door free and clear.

Francis Collins

SMART GUY

Scientist who led the human Genome project mapped Human DNA

He was recently tapped by the president to be the Head of the NIH

Many scientists were opposed to his nomination precisely because Collins had identified himself as an evangelical Christian and they were afraid he would be against things like embryonic stem-cell research

And indeed they should, not only because he's said he's an evangelical, but because so far only ADULT stem cell research has produced any advances or cures, and embryonic stem cell research only seems to be being pursued because it furthers the policy of denying that unborn children really are human.

Nonetheless Collins assured critics he would uphold the President's policy and on December 2, Dr. Collins announced the NIH approval of the first 13 additional stem cell lines for federally funded research. Collins said: *"I think that there is an argument to be made that what is being done is ethically acceptable, even if you believe in the inherent sanctity of the human embryo."*

Even if you believe that an embryo is sacred its ethically acceptable to destroy it to further what so far has been an utterly useless line of inquiry?

We can beat around the bush, but ultimately they asked Francis Collins **"You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?"** and He said, **"I am not."**

What about you?