

John 18:1-27 - "The Betrayal"

Starter: Have you ever heard the audible voice of God? Or have you ever been led by him in such a way you would say, "That has to be God"?

Read John 18:1-27.

The passage this week is really familiar in parts but also fairly exclusive to John in others. The chapter begins with the betrayal by Judas and arrest of Jesus where John highlights a few key things. When Jesus asks who the crowd are looking for they tell him, "Jesus of Nazareth." His response to them is "I AM (he)" (but the "he" isn't in the Greek) or 'Yahweh'. It was Peter who cut off the servant's ear and the servant now has a name - Malchus. Malchus was presumably known to the first readers then.

Then there's an interchange between the inside dealings with Jesus and the outside dealings with Peter and John. Only John records the happenings with Annas the deposed former high priest.

We'll focus on the betrayals of Jesus starting with Judas.

Q. How do you reconcile what Jesus says in v9 with what immediately precedes it (Judas' betrayal)?

Q. Does Judas betray Jesus? Or is he just acting according to God's will? Could Judas have NOT 'betrayed' Jesus? Could Jesus have changed Judas' mind?

Now onto Peter. "The other disciple" or "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is most likely John referring to himself. John was known to the high priest and was allowed into the court. John then has a word with the *girl* (let's be clear this was a young girl in a patriarchal society) who lets Peter into the court. She asks him if he's one of Jesus' disciples "also". My suggestion is that she knows John is a disciple of Jesus.

Q. Why on earth would Peter deny he was a disciple to a young girl?

As Peter gathers around the fire with the same servants and officers that arrested Jesus in the garden, they recognize him and ask if he is one of Jesus' disciples. Peter responds with "I am not." [I wonder if there's anything in Jesus' identification as "I AM" and Peter's, "I am not."] Finally a relative of Malchus recognizes Peter and asks if he was in the garden. Peter says he wasn't and a rooster crows.

Q. Was it wrong for Peter to deny knowing Jesus (see also 13:36-38)? Does Jesus condemn Peter for it?

I think Peter condemns himself for it hence passages like John 21:15-19. Possibly Jesus didn't care too much about Peter's denial of him compared to his blatant disregard for God's will? Matthew 16:21-23 and 26:51-54 show Jesus condemning Peter's words or actions.

Q. Is there anything wrong with Peter's statement in 13:37, "Lord, I will lay down my life for you"?

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My suggestion is that we betray Jesus when we don't act according to his will but try to take matters into our own hands - just like Peter did in those 3 passages above (the two in Matthew and the John 13 passage).

On Sunday I suggested that we need to STOP, PRAY and LISTEN before acting according to the Holy Spirit's leading.

Q. Would you agree with that? If not, why not?

Finally: Do you need to discern God's will in something particular right now? Why not pray for each other that his guidance will be clear (Ps 143:10).