Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus' Trial, Peter's Denial
Scripture: John 18:12-27
Code: 1571

John 18:1227

We come in our studies to the eighteenth chapter of John, to a very familiar and most important and wonderful passage. We have seen in the years now, a couple of years that we have been studying the gospel of John, that John always wants to present to us the glories of Jesus Christ., He always wants to magnify His deity. He is not nearly so concerned about the human Jesus as he is about Jesus God, a very God. And no less than that does he do in our passage today, as always he does in his gospel.

Now, we're going to look at verses 12 to 27 and we can coverthat many verses, you can rest easy, because it's historical narrative. And it takes us through the flow of two dramas happening at the same time, both with tremendous significance on their own and they're mingled by John and the Holy Spirit here in this passage. And these two dramas teach us the two basic truths to all of Christian doctrine: the glory of Christ and the sinfulness of man. Now those are the two basics to Christianity. Christianity is built on the fact that Christ is glorious, God is holy and man is sinful. That's what it's all about. Everything moves from that foundation up.

But, these two basics of the tremendous majesty of Jesus Christ and the depth of sin in the life of men are contrasted graphically by presenting Jesus Christ in His trial and Peter in his denial.

Now, as I said, Jesus has concluded His time with the eleven in the upper room. From chapter 13 through chapter 17 He had spent time promising them wonderful blessings in the new age to come, praying to the Father that the Father would care forthem in the time that Jesus went to the cross, and continually from then on. And now the hour has come to move toward Calvary. And so, Jesus leaves the upper room with the little group of eleven, goes out the gate, perhaps Stephen's Gate, down the little slope of Kidron, cross the little winter torrent, up the other side, as we saw last week, into the Mount of Olives to a place called the Garden of Gethsemane. And in this garden, Jesus spends time in prayer, agonizing over the anticipation of sin bearing and separation from God.

Having concluded His time of prayer, John tells us Jesus confronts Judas leading the multitude mixed of Gentile and Jew coming to the garden to capture Jesus. The Jews had long waited for an opportune moment to capture Him. They couldn't do it in public because He was too much of a public figure and the people esteemed Him too highly and they waited for that secret moment when they

could get Him when He wasn't aware and when the people weren't aware. And indeed the moment has arrived and Jesus, to make it easy for them, moves to a place in the dark of night where they will have no trouble taking Him, there will be no people around but His own disciples and a place that He knows Judas knows He will go to. So it simplifies Judas' job, Judas being aware that Jesus retired night by night in that very garden.

And so, Jesus sets it up because it is time for Him to die. And now the whole force moves to get Jesus and they come led by Judas and armed to the teeth. Now we saw last we that as this army confronts Jesus, Jesus takes the occasion to display His majesty and His glory and His power. Never being the victim but always being the victor and particularly so in John's special emphasis presentation. We see in that record right there in the Garden of Gethsemane the tremendous display of the power and the glory of Jesus Christ. In what could have been a very debasing and very humbling and degrading situation Jesus shines forth in glory. There can be no really ... there can be no worse situation than be co ... than be captured like a common criminal, condemned to die And executed and yet in all of this Jesus shines in tremendous majesty. And here they come to Jesus to capture Him as a common criminal and Judas places that putrid kiss on His cheek to betray Him, and even in that, from that kind of degrading, humiliating scene Jesus is exalted in His deity.

You say, "How?" Well, you remember what happened; He turned their wellplanned maneuver into a triumph of His own power. The first thing He did was He said - who are you looking for? And they said Jesus of Nazareth. And He said - I am. And they all fell over. Likely there were at least a thousand of them ... somewhere between six hundred and a thousand, and they fell down. The word of His power flattened them on the ground.

Later on in the same scene He had exacted from their own mouth two times that they had come only for Jesus of Nazareth so they would admit by their own tongue that they had no right to His disciples. And then He said, "Let them go." And they had admitted twice by their own mouth that their orders were only for Jesus and thus in power He had controlled the situation and secured the release of His disciples ... always in control ... never the victim, always the victor. And so He built a little shelter for His disciples and naturally Peter jumped out of the shelter and went out and was going to start fighting, grabbed his little dagger, his little machairaas the Greek word indicates and cut off an ear, not aiming for an ear but that's the best he could get at that particular interval. And so, Jesus stepped out of that and He just created an ear on the spot for Malchus.

And so, in the garden scene, Jesus had displayed tremendous glory, He had displayed His deity, first of all, in His power ... then in His control and then in His ability to create. He had given them a display of deity. And instead of becoming a victim in the garden He looks like a victor and indeed He is. And He made sure that you know and that I know and that everybody for all time knows that no man took His life from Him, He laid it down ... what? ... of Himself. Matthew added that Jesus said, "Thinkest thou not that I cannot beseech My Father and He shall give Me more than twelve legions of angels,

but how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled?" Jesus could have asked God and received 12 legions of angels. Now that's enough to get you out of any problem. In the Old Testament one angel had handled 185 thousand of Sennacherib's forces. You can imagine what 12 legions of angels would be able to handle.

So, Jesus had manifested His majesty in the garden. And He had left for all time the impression upon all men who read the Word of God that Hewas never a victim, He was always a victor. And the sad and pathetic and almost unbelievable response after the display of glory and the display of majesty and the display of divine power is recorded for us in verse 12, and you'll look at that and we'll being our look at these verses.

Just an introduction here, "Then the band," the cohort, the Roman soldiers, "and the captain," the chiliarch, ruler over a thousand, "and officers," temple police, "of the Jews took Jesus," and the word "took" is the word for the official arrest," and bound Him." So this massive force takes Jesus and binds Him. Almost as if He hadn't even done anything miraculous to try to show them who He was, almost as if nothing had ever happened, as if their minds all of a sudden were blanked out as to what they had just experienced in the display of majesty that they had seen. And so they took Him and bound Him. The body of the Son of God was bound that our souls might be loosed from the cords of sin and Satan. It will give you a little insight into sin, won't it? And the blindness of sin ... that it cannot see the miraculous character and deity of Jesus Christ right in front of it.

Now, starting from there, in the following passage through verse 27 there are two dramas taking place. Not one but two. They are separate dramas, separate scenes in separate locations and only at the end of our message this morning will we see how they meet and they don't meet in John's gospel, they meet in Luke 22 and we'll get to that. But you have one drama going over here and one here. Jesus' trial and Peter's denial ... and they are inter- Woven through this passage. Jesus' trial to Peter's denial, meanwhile back at the trial, meanwhile back at the denial. It just jumps back and forth. And it shows us those two basic foundational truths of Christianity: the glory of Christ and the sinfulness of man. Even Peter who was certainly above other men in the fact that he believed, yet is a great illustration of the sinfulness of sin.

Now, I want you to notice that in John's record by the Holy Spirit they are interwoven accounts. It would have been very simple for the Holy Spirit to just put the trial in one spot, at least this portion of it before Annas, put Peter's denial together in one spot and have them separate so you can just take them each individually, but no. The Spirit of God weaves them together.

Now, as you study in commentaries and various books you find that most have the tendency to put them together and they sort of say - Well, we don't know why they're separated but for simplicity's sake we'll put them together, but it's better to leave them the way they are because that's the way the Holy Spirit wanted them to be or He wouldn't have put them that way. And so, what we're going to

study this morning, and really see some exciting things, are these two different dramas going on at the same time and how they finally resolve together in a closing climax that is powerful. Jesus' trial and Peter's denial.

Now, I asked myself, as I always do, why the Holy Spirit wanted to make sure these two things were taken together and intermingled. Perhaps we could say to emphasize those two truths the glory of Christ and the sinfulness of man. Perhaps to emphasize that Christ's atoning death was so necessary by showing not only the sinfulness of the unregenerate but even the sinfulness in the life of a believer who doesn't appear a whole lot better than anybody else at this point.

Another suggestion might be that the reason these two are intermingled is to give us a very lasting and a very vivid contrast between the loving faithfulness of Jesus and the loveless faithlessness of Peter. Certainly there's a distinction between the kind of love that Jesus shows which cares for His disciples right on through the trial, who always in the front of His mind are those disciples, who loves them and is faithful to them to the end, and Peter who is faithless, denying and so forth. And so, perhaps there's the point that it contrasts the love of Christ for us and its divine nature with the love of us for Him which leaves a lot to be desired.

But the clearest reason of all, the one that I think is most significant because of the gospel of John, is that the contrast is left here in order that we might exalt Christ. How are you going to exalt somebody in an arrest, in an indictment or an arraignment and in a mock trial in which He's spit on and punched around and pushed and abused and mocked? How are you ever going to exalt anybody in a scene like that? The only way you can do it is by contrast, right? So no matter how humiliated Jesus is, down this low there is always Peter down on the bottom. So by comparison, Jesus Christ is again exalted. So the Holy Spirit shows us somebody who was much lower than Jesus, who became much more humiliated and much more degraded than Jesus.And that somebody is Peter. So he exalts Christ by comparison to Peter and he makes sure that he weaves the two together so you keep being aware of the beauties of Jesus in comparison with the ... with the terrible degrading attitude of Peter who should have known better. And Peter was no runofthemill Joe, I mean; Peter was ... he was a pretty hot commodity. He belonged to Jesus Christ. He knew better. He was probably the greatest of the disciples in terms of natural abilities and force of personality. He was quite an individual. And yet he's the one that looks so low and thus by comparison, he being higher than other men, is still lower than Jesus. And after reading this particular passage you come out with those two things, you come out with the beauty and the dignity of Jesus and the depths of sin of Peter and so Jesus is exalted.

All right, let's look at act one Jesus' trial Act One. Verse 12 to 14, as I say, it's a historical narrative so we'll just move through it and find some interesting things. Verse 12: "Then the band and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him." Now, this is an interesting multitude that's doing this and a good illustration of kind of the world picture of sin and rejection of Christ. Because within this multitude you have Gentiles and Jews, heathen and religious, soldiers and

servants, priests and Pharisees, a whole lot of different types and though they may not all have all things in common, they all have one thing in common and that is they are totally stone blind to the incomparable qualities of the Son of God. They do not see it at all. They are insensible, they are unmoved, they come to parrot and carry out their orders, totally untouched by the tremendous display of the power of Jesus Christ that they've just seen. And they are graphic illustrators of the terrible sinfulness of the natural man who even in the face of a display of miracles does not believe. And that shows you the grip of sin. It's not hard to understand the unbelief and hardness of heart which we see today when we understand what was going on in Jesus' day.

If you read a little further in your Bible you'll find that even in the Kingdom, when Jesus Christ sits on the throne in Jerusalem and rules the earth and is there in physical presence, doing the marvelous things that only He can do, there will be a revolution worldwide of people who have rejected Him who will move to fight against Him. The depth and the sinfulness of sin.

The Apostle Paul says: "The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them."

Now, you'll notice in verse 12 they bind Him. There were probably several reasons for this. Number one, it was common practice with the captive to bind him just to secure him. Secondly, in Matthew 26:48 Judas had made the statement, when you get Him, quote, "Hold Him fast." And so they were taking the advice of Judas. But beyond that there is certainly a very beautiful fulfillment of typical prophecy. Now I've told you before that there are two types of prophecy. There is verbally predictive prophecy which is where a statement is made that will be fulfilled. And there is typically predictive prophecy in which a certain act or a certain person or a certain thing typifies a fulfillment. For example, a prophet may say Jesus will be born in Bethlehem. That's verbal prediction. On the other hand, a sacrifice laid on an altar is a picture of Jesus Christ, that is a type, so that is typical prediction. Both are accurate. Both are important. And so, as Jesus is bound here we could conclude that He is, in a sense, fulfilling typical prophecy because in the Old Testament, according to Psalm 118:27, the Bible says: "Bind the sacrifice with cords unto the horns of the altar." When the sacrifice was given it was bound. Do you remember in Genesis chapter 22:9, Isaac, who has to be for us a picture of Jesus Christ, is taken and before he is to be sacrificed is bound? So, Jesus by being bound fulfills the Old Testament type, bound in preparation for a sin offering.

Now, verse 13: After He was bound ... and here we get into the nittygritty of the trial, "and led Him away to Annas first, for he was the fatherinlaw of Caiaphas who was the high priest that same year." Now there you meet two real crumbs Annas and Caiaphas. They are despicable individuals. They would definitely fit into the Bible's rouges' gallery. They are the lowest of the low. But they're very important to the scene.

Now Annas, we must look at Annas first, because the Bible says they led Him away to Annas first and there was a reason for that. This is the first phase of Jesus' trial. Let me give you a little quick note on His trial. Jesus had two trials a religious trial and a civil trial. His religious trial had to do with Israel; His civil trial had to do with Rome. And nothing, could be done in terms of Jesus' execution without Rome. Israel could decide that He should die but Rome had to execute Him 'cause they had no right to take a life since they were under Roman bondage. So first of all, there is then a religious trial. That religious trial has three parts: the arraignment, or the initial indictment before Annas which took place immediately after the garden, it was followed by a meeting with Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin who had gotten together in the middle of the night, which was, of course, illegal but was part of the plot, the whole trial was illegal, it never was intended to be legal it was all a mockery just to get it over with. The second part then, in the middle of the night with Caiaphas, and then to try to validate what they had done they had a regrouping in the morning after daybreak to try to make it legal ... of the same group, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. So they had three phases: Annas, Caiaphas in the middle of the night with the Sanhedrin and then in the morning again.

After that, He went to the civil trial which also had three phases. First before Pilate and Pilate didn't know what to do so he sent Jesus over to Herod who was the tetrarch of Galilee who happened to be down in Jerusalem at the time and Herod didn't know what to do with Him either so he sent Him back to Pilate. So there you have the three phases of the civil trial.

Now, to begin this whole mock trial which didn't have any evidence from beginning to end and didn't mean anything, it was all a part of the plot, He is taken to Annas first of all. Now according to the Word of God and especially according to verse 19 in this passage, we know that Annas is called the high priest. Now the question that always arises is how come Annas is called the high priest and so is Caiaphas? Can you have two high priests? Technically, according to God's design, no. But by this time Israel had deteriorated into so many problems that they had problems of this nature. There was not only one or two high priests there may have been others who rightfully had the right to be called high priests. But Annas was the power behind everything.

Now, let me tell you what I mean. It is possible and likely that Annas legitimately had the right to be high priest. He could well have been in the Aaronic line. If that is true then he did have the right to be high priest. And in fact he was high priest from the year 6 to 15 A.D., during the childhood years of Jesus. But around the year 15 he had been pressured by the Romans to bail out of being high priest because they wanted it to become a puppet office and Annas was a powerful guy. And I suppose historically they felt somewhat threatened or insecure with Annas in there running the show permanently until he died. Because in the Old Testament, you see, a man was high priest for life. And so technically Annas was still high priest and could legitimately be called high priest ... for he was high priest all his life, if in fact as we believe he was of the Aaronic line. But in order to kind of work together with Rome, Rome had felt they needed to put a puppet in as high priest and so they would appoint high priests. Technically they weren't legitimate.

Now, to show you what kind of a guy Annas was, he was so powerful that when they took Annas out of office, the next six, seven guys they put in, five of them were his sons, one was his grandson and this one was his soninlaw. So he may not have been high priest technically, but he was high priest for real. He was running the show. Now in order to be high priest you just had to get down on the ground and kiss Rome's hem and come up with a lot of money. You bought the office. It was a matter of intrigue, a matter of corruption, of contention and bribery. And Annas was so loaded with money that he just kept buying out the high priest office and consequently was always in control.

Now this kind of sets the stage for Annas being involved here and Caiaphas would be just a puppet for Annas. Evidently Annas was the biggest briber because he had the most money and it's very interesting to learn how he earned his money. Annas was in charge of the temple concessions. Now when Annas got bounced around 15, he took over running the concessions in the temple and Annas was an operator. He was really the biggest cog in the ecclesiastical machine of Judaism. He ran the show. He was immensely rich and consequently could buy his way into all these offices and he remained the power behind the scene.

Now about this particular situation of temple concessions ... You say, "What do they have concessions in the temple for anyway? That belongs at the football game." Well, they weren't those kind of concessions, hot dogs, and popcorn concessions. They were ... they were concessions having to do with the sale of animals for sacrifices. When people came to make their sacrifices, they came into the outer court called "The Court of the Gentiles," and there were all these concession booths set up for the exchange of money because they would have to pay a temple tax, put money in those trumpetshaped things that were on the walls where they dropped their collection. And if they brought in foreign currency, of course, they had to exchange it. Also, they came in there to make sacrifices. Well, Annas had a monopoly going. Because the Old Testament law required that any sacrifice be without spot and ... what? ... blemish, and all the details. So here comes somebody from out of his particular field and he's coming to Passover and he's gathered his own sacrifice, he's got a little lamb under his arm ... illustration. He comes in. Annas has stationed in there certain guys who are inspectors of sacrifices. And the sacrifice must pass the inspection before it can be legitimidized (legitimized).

Naturally, nobody's sacrifice ever passes. And so what happens is the suggestion is made that if you want a sacrifice that's already been approved, they're for sale over at the certain booth in the Court of the Gentiles. And you go over there and you buy it at five times the price it's worth. And then, of course, when you come in and you attempt to change your money to give your money to the temple, you find that you are cheated about five to one. And so, Annas has got a real good thing going.

Now, as history indicated to us, and we mentioned it last week, at least one Passover time had a quarter of a million sacrificial lambs. That's a lot of money. That's quite a business. And Annas had

made his money on extortion. In fact, the whole temple ground became known ... that area became known as "The Bizarre ofAnnas." And he ran it. In fact, the Jews themselves hated Annas. They hated him. The Talmud, which puts down for history the beatitudes of the Jews, says about Annas, and I quote: "Woe to the house of Annas. Woe to their serpent's hiss. They are high priests. Their sons are keepers of the treasury. Their sonsinlaw guardians of the temple and their servants beat the people with staves." They had a monopoly going. They had ... they were in control of everything. So the Talmud gives us an indication of the Jewish hatred of Annas and his house.

Now, to add to that problem, not only was he the brains behind the whole scene, guess who had twice messed up his operation? None other than Jesus who when He began His ministry went in there and chased everybody out and evidently did it again at the close of His ministry. This did not make Him very popular with Annas. So naturally if they wanted to get an indictment of Jesus, they would go to Annas for those two reasons. Number one, he was the brains behind the machinery anyway, even though he wasn't technically the high priest. And number two, he had a hatred for Jesus who had messed up his business. And they figured if anybody could come across with some pretty powerful indictments, our boy Annas could cut it. So they brought Him to Annas.

But, Annas, my friends, was about to meet his match and infinitely superior. Annas hated Jesus because he had been hit right where it hurts, in the moneybag. He hated Jesus because Jesus represented to him something threatening the security of his office, even as he did to Caiaphas who was scared that Jesus was going to take over, start a revolution and Caiaphas would lose his job.He was purely a paid politician, paid by the Romans.

So, they bring Him to Annas first. Then we meet Caiaphas because Caiaphas has to be introduced because he's technically the guy who's really the high priest at this time in terms of function. Verse 13: "He was the fatherinlaw of Caiaphas who was the high priest the same year. Now Caiaphas, "verse 14, "was he who gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people."

Now, Caiaphas had been plotting Jesus' death all along. You know how these purchased politicians are; they're scared all the time. They know they never got the office by ability to begin with and they're hanging by a thread. And here is Caiaphas and he's scared to death. He loves the prestige of his office ..., he sees Jesus. And Jesus moves in and Jesus moves the people. He sways the people. He is popular. I mean, it's only been less than a week ago and the whole place has been screaming "Hosanna!" right? And he is really scared. And he said back in John chapter 11, verse 49, he got together with his cronies and they talked about the tremendous problem of Jesus just prior to Jesus' triumphal entry and they had heard about Him raising Lazarus from the dead.

"And one of them named Caiaphas being the high priest that same year said unto them, Ye know nothing at all." 'Cause they suggested - Just let Him alone and ... you know, it will pass. Caiaphas

says: "Nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and the whole nation perish not." And here he says -- why, if we don't get rid of this Jesus He's going to mess up the nation, we're going to have a revolution, the Romans will come down and "Whapo!" they'll wipe outall of us. So what we ought to do is kill Jesus to save the nation.

Now, he didn't know what he was saying but he was speaking prophecy. It says in the next verse**,** "And this spoke he not of himself but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation." How do you like that?

Oh, Annas, opened up his hateful mouth ... with political end in mind and say: We ought to kill Jesus because it's better for one man to die for the nation than the whole nation die. And he didn't even know what he was saying. And God was putting a prophecy right through his lips. So that's Caiaphas. He hated Jesus. And so was ready and plotting to get rid of Him. They were only waiting for the right moment. And of course, Judas had already consulted with them and set it all up. So we see the beginning of Jesus trial and a mock trial at that.

Now let's switch to Peter's denial. Act one Meanwhile back at Simon Peter, right? Verse 15: "And Simon Peter followed Jesus," Mark 14:54 says he followed a far off. He was kind of hiding back in the bushes and sneaking along. "And so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest and went in with Jesus into the court of the high priest." They had gotten Jesus clear to Annas. Taking Him through the outer deal into the courtyard, and this other disciple and is not named, some think he's John. Personally I don't think he is John. What connection would John have with the high priest? I mean, they would know him very definitely to be a disciple of Jesus. One writer went to great pains to show that he thought that John's father sold fish to the high priest, and so since the high priest knew John because ... or knew John's father cause he bought fish from him, he would know John the son. Well, that's okay except we don't have any evidence that John's father sold fish to him ... which kind of blows the theory.

Who is it then? Well, I have two choices that you can choose from that I think are valid. One would be Nicodemus who perhaps at this time had not really yet revealed himself as a disciple but since he is one of the Sanhedrin would have been able to slide in there. And his name is not used in the sense that he is still unknown. The other one and the one that I think I lean toward is Joseph of Arimathea ... a very wealthy and rich aristocrat who did not really declare himself a disciple at all. And in John 19:38 it says: "Joseph of Arimathea being a disciple of Jesus but secretly for fear of the Jews," etc. "besought Pilate to bury the body of Jesus." So, maybe Nicodemus, maybe Joseph of Arimathea, it doesn't really matter. But somebody who had an in with the high priest. Either Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea likely would have had such an in.

So, Peter is following along. Now this is typical of Peter. Peter will not stay where the Lord wants him to stay, you see. In the garden the Lord built a little protection shelter for them and allowed them to

get away. You remember? But Peter didn't accept that. He jumps out and starts to fight the Romans. And the Lord said: "Peter, put that thing away." And He grabs him and puts him back in the little shelter. He says - Now why don't you accept My protection, that's not how it's going to be.

And no sooner has Jesus gotten him secured and Matthew told us the disciples fled, forsook Him and fled, they went away, not Peter. He still hasn't got the sense to know what he can't handle. Do you see? Now he's moved by the fact that down in his heart he remembers that he promised Jesus he'd die with Him and he loves Jesus and he can't stand the thought of not being with Jesus. Now we know that. I mean, I know Jesus spent three years with Peter walking down the road stopping and having Peter run into the back of Him, you know. Peter was always there. And on one occasion He said, "Will you go away?" And he said: "To whom shall we go, Thou and Thou alone has the words of eternal life." So, Peter had a tremendous desire to be with Jesus. And there is no question that he loved Jesus with all his heart he loved Him. But he just had this kind of overwhelming selfconfidence that he thought that he could just kind of hack his way into any problem and he would not accept the security that Jesus had provided for him, that we studied last week.

And before you get too hot about Peter, look at your own life. I mean, the Lord says - Now I'm going to give you a secure place, don't get out into the world's system, don't buy the world's philosophy, don't entertain yourself with the world's entertainment, don't gobble up on the world's customs, don't become a part of the scene, I've built you a place where you can grow and when you're strong enough you can go out there and you can meet the world and you can be victorious but until you get that strong, hang in tough with those who belong to Christ and build yourself up until you're ready for that. And so many Christians say, "Oh, are you kidding? I can handle that." Boom, they go out there. And the Lord spends His time reaching out and taking Christians and spanking them on the way back to put them in the shelter. Because we will not accept the place that God has given us to abide in Christ, we always have this overconfidence thinking we can go in the world and do what the world does and we'll come out all right.

That's Peter. He is not content with what Christ has provided for him in security until he gets strong enough to handle it. Now later on he was strong enough. Boy, after the Spirit of God filled him he could go right out in the middle of the world and just bomb the message out and really with devastation. He was powerful. He could handle anything. He got before some of those persecutors later in his life, wound up being crucified upside down, I mean, he could handle it. But not yet. And the Lord puts him in this thing and says - Stay there, Peter, until you're ready. If you were ready I'd take you with Me, you're not ready.

But Peter doesn't know that. He's just selfconfident Peter. But he's not too selfconfident. Right? He's following a far off. Just kind of, you know, well, I'm ... you know, I can handle it, I ... I think. You know, so he's kind of sliding along. He wanted to be with Jesus and yet he was afraid.

All right, verse 16. Now the other disciple has gone into the courtyard but Peter is standing at the door. Peter stood at the door,he didn't have an in yet. "Then went out the other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, spoke unto her which kept the door and brought in Peter." See, now he's got permission to get Peter in there. And the doorway would be kind of a little hallway going through one of the apartments that surrounded the courtyard likely. But Peter would be progressing through. He's waiting on the outside, the disciple on the inside who ... they motioned him to come on. So, he starts through. And he's making it in there.

And I can imagine that in his mind he is plotting. "Now, when I get in there I'm going to get right next to Jesus. Hmm, see. I'm going to get my arm right ... and if anything happens I'm going to say - Jesus, You did it in the garden, do it again." See. Ha. Make them all fall down or do something. You know, he felt whenever he got near Jesus he had tremendous security, fantastic security, never fear anything. So he's figuring, "When I get in there, I'm just going to get in there and I'm going to get right up to Jesus and if anything goes wrong we'll just zap them, you know, that will be it, see."

But, he didn't plan very well. Cause on the way through the door, verse 17 says: "Then saith the maid that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" And the Greek question's in the negative. You're not one of His disciples, are you? She's kind of looking at him in the dark and he says: "I am not." And I know that he just all of a sudden said, "Oh my ... what did I say? I ... what did I say?" You know, that's what shocked him. I'm sure he just realized that he had said something without even thinking that he had said it. I am not. Just in fear. Now, get the picture. He was going in to where Jesus was on trial. He was ready for that. But he wasn't ready for the little girl at the door, you see. I mean, you know, those temptations you know are coming up in two weeks; you can plan for it, right? You lay that strategy out let's see, when I get there I'm going to avoid this, oh; I'm just going to be it's all set. And on the way Zap! You get hit from the blind side. That's how Satan works. You get that selfconfidence and you build up in your mind how I'm going to handle this See, when I get in there I'm going to say I believe in Jesus, yes, I'm one of His disciples. Haha, you see, holding on very tight to the Lord.

But he never got there because he blew it in his own self-confidence. Satan is too subtle. Now I have this opportunity this week to speak at Valley College, I think it's on Tuesday. There was a man there who gave a series of five lectures against Jesus Christ, a Jewish man, so they asked me to come and kind of present Christ.And I don't fear this, there's no problem. I can meet that challenge. I'm ready for whatever ... tomatoes, or you know, whatever they want to do to me. I don't care about ... I'm ready, I've got it all worked up, I'm ready to go today, you know, I've got that deal laid out. That's not what bothers me. It's not those big super confrontations, it's those little shots on the way in that you get. Satan is subtle. And here all of a sudden, before Peter even knew what happened, he was going to go meet the whole Roman shot and all the Jewish leaders and he was going to make it but he couldn't get pass the little girl at the door. He blew it. And once he had told the lie he was stuck with it

because now if he turned his story around, then he made Jesus look bad a lying disciple. Not only that it would have seemed like he had a plot going on or something. So he's stuck with his lie. And he's got so much pride he's going to save his face so he just keeps on lying and just keeps on blabbing that he doesn't know Jesus from then on out through the end of the evening.

I mean, take the lesson, it's all there. If you're not really trusting in God at every moment, you'll get shot down on the little thing that you don't even expect. You get that kind of selfconfidence and that kind of smugness that says - I can handle this deal, I'm looking forward to this, and I can make it through that ... you know, whatever it may be ... I've got a business trip this month in Las Vegas but I'm set, I'm ready, I'm getting premeditated, I'm already on that deal, I've got it all figured out how I'm going to handle that and not get tempted. And then on the way something happens and tears you up because you're confiding, in the flesh, you see. And you're strengthening yourself in the flesh and the trust that you need in the Lord is a moment by moment thing.

So, Peter wasn't ready for the little one that really tore him up and there he fell. Dropped by a door girl. Gone are all of his heroic promises to Jesus, gone was all the courage that was in his heart, gone was all of his fleshly selfconfidence and he was a great big nothing. The arrogant coward, unable to confess his Lord, cringing in lying denial. And the whole thing happened so fast he didn't even know what hit him.

Well, if you get those formal challenges where you can choose your weapons and plan your strategy, you're fortunate. But watch out for the sudden blows when you're not ready, when you're trusting in the flesh. They're the ones that will flatten you.

And so, Peter jumps out of the protection, gets right exactly in the thing that Jesus didn't want him to get into, he got in over his head where he couldn't handle it. He was not strong enough. Jesus knew what would happen. It was inevitable. He had provided escape for him but not Peter, Peter had to go the way Peter wanted to go. That's Peter. And that's us in so many cases.

Now, it's interesting that the time in the garden when he did this Jesus rescued him quick. But this time, Jesus let him hit bottom and bounce a few times. He just let it hurt to teach Peter the tremendous lesson he needed to learn.

Now, notice verse 18. And this is the most tragic part of all. "And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves," and watch this statement, "and Peter stood with them and warmed himself." Now, Peter, what are you doing with them? Those are the enemies of Jesus. Now you see how far this poor guy has come. In the garden he's standing beside Christ, defending Him with his little sword. Now he's standing by the fire warming himself with the enemies of Jesus and he's already denied Him repeated times. Now, if you put all of the gospel accounts together there are at least six different statements that Peter makes

denying Christ. He denied Him on three occasions but made six different statements. Jesus said - "You'll deny Me three times." He did. Three different times but he made several different statements in each of those occasions. And he's just denying Jesus. There he is, he's cold so he's going to get warm and stand with the enemies of Jesus. Peter should have been long gone.

You say - Well, how did he get messed up so badly? I mean, what is he doing here?" Number one, his problem all began self-confidence. I can make it on my own. I don't need a daily prayer life. I don't need a daily time with God. I don't need a daily time in the Word. I don't need that, I can make it. I mean, I've been around a long time in this Christian deal, I mean, I'm a disciple. I can hack it in the world. I don't need to sweat that. I can go out and do what the world does and I can do the things they do in the way they do them, and I can buy a little bit of the world's morality and I can flirt a little bit with the world's kind of thing. And I'm all right 'cause I've been around, I'm a disciple, I'm one of the inner group. Selfconfidence. And wham! First mistake.

Not only selfconfidence but the second big tragedy in the life of Peter was unpreparedness. He wasn't ready. He was so self-confident that he had no right to be. He thought he was big stuff, he was little stuff, he was no stuff.

And the third thing, he wound up standing with Christ's enemies. He started out being selfconfident I can move into the world. Moved right in and wasn't ready. Boom! Next think you know he's standing around with the enemies of Jesus. How many Christians have you know that's happened in their life? How many times in your life? You started to think you'd arrived spiritually, Satan moved in, tempted you, next thing you knew you woke up one day and you were standing with Christ's enemies and things were all backwards. That was Peter. That's exactly the pattern of backsliding. And that's happened to so many Christians and then they come back to the church or they come to see the pastor or they come to see somebody and they say, "Oh, my life's all fouled up, I don't know what happened, I got into this and I got into that. What went wrong?" And you go back and you say You started out by thinking you could make it on your own so you moved into the world, you weren't ready, you got shot down, you wound up standing with sinners and that's where you've been.

And so Peter, the end of verse 18, sad comment, "... Stood with them and warmed himself." His hands were warm, his heart was cold. Meanwhile, back at the trial, Jesus' trial, Act 2 verse 19: "The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine." Now, this is a most, most interesting thing because the examination before Annas was a mockery of justice. It had been decided already that Jesus was going to die, it was just a matter of getting something to trap Him in so they could have right to kill Him legally. I mean, it was already for sure He was going to die. The motive was envy, fear,loss of power and position and all the things they were afraid of. But Jewish law said that when anybody was brought on trial he could not testify to bring guilt upon himself. The evidence had to be presented from witnesses testifying against him. He was innocent until proven guilty. There was a kind of running Fifth Amendment that no man could condemn himself by his own

word. The burden of proof was on the court. There also was a rule that there was never to be any striking of the prisoner, no display of emotion before the judge. Well, they violated all of that in His whole trial. Not only that, there was a rule that from the trial to the execution there had to be an interval of at least two days and that was broken. Another interva ... another rule was that they couldn't try anybody at night and they broke that. The whole thing was rotten from beginning to end. It was all part of the plot to kill Jesus. Historically the Jews have claimed that they... that the trial of Jesus was legal. It was not legal. It was illegal everyway you look at it. They were after Him. It was decided that He would be murdered. It was only a matter of trying to figure out how they could justify it.

And so, verse 19 says that the high priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Now, that begins the mockery of this indictment and arraignment before Annas. He had no right to ask Him that. He was not even suppose to be the one who testified. That isn't even a legitimate trial. What is he bringing Him there for? Instead of saying - Now we have brought You here because You have been accused of this and now the witnesses and all ... No, he says -- Well, Jesus, why don't You tell us about Your disciples and Your doctrine. He wanted Jesus either to talk about a planned insurrection or to talk about His heresy, do you see? And then they could say - Aha, You're planning a revolution ... or, Aha, You're a heretic. And they could have justification.

Maimondides, the great Jewish medieval scholar said: "Our true law does not inflict the penalty of death upon a sinner by his own confession." That was part of Jewish law. And Roman law agreed with that as well. They had to have witnesses. He did not have to prove Himself innocent; they had to prove Him guilty. So Annas violated the principles of Jewish justice when he questioned Jesus. But that was nothing different 'cause the whole thing was illegal anyway. And he wanted Jesus to say He was training His disciples for a revolution, or He was teaching heresy. Either way they'd get Him.

But, Jesus replies not by answering their questions but by indicting them. He's at His own arraignment and He arraigns them. He's at His own indictment and they get indicted. This is beautiful. Look at verse 20 ... just calm majesty: "Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple where the Jews always resort; in secret have I said nothing." Didn't have any secret doctrine that He's teaching His disciples to start a revolution. "Why ask thou Me? Ask them who heard Me what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said." Where are your witnesses, Annas? I mean, this isn't the way it's suppose to be done. Jesus probed and found the core of the whole thing and in dynamic devastating words indicted Annas You phony, where are your witnesses, Annas? You see, they wanted to get the trial over with in the middle of the night when there weren't any witnesses. Now sooner or later they came up with some and they were false witnesses. Jesus said I haven't taught any secret doctrine to any small group that's going to cause a revolution, everything I've said has been for public consumption. And Jesus is not being uncooperative, He's simply says - I want a legal trial, why don't you do it right?

You say - Well, did He expect to get a legal trial? No, but He just wanted to make it clear from the very beginning that it was illegal so when it was all over the guilt would be theirs and it would be true what is said that He was hated without a cause. And He was crucified in innocence in a mockery of a trial. And Jesus wants us to be aware of that, to know that.

So, the whole thing was a plot with no evidence. And Jesus really left Annas nonplussed, unable to proceed**,** with egg on his face. He turned the tables and Annas doesn't know what to say. This isn't legal, Annas.

Well, there's Annas sitting there not knowing what to say and he's a big shot, right? And he has really been put down. And so, one of his henchman, looking for a promotion no doubt, verse 22: "And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers (temple police) who had ... who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand saying, Answereth thou the high priest so?" I mean, you know, this is a typical guy looking for a promotion, pleasing Annas, see. I'll defend you, Annas you know, see.

Now, it's interesting that the word rhapisma, which is the word for "struck with the palm of the hand," also can be translated "struck with a stick." And since it is evident that the temple police carried sticks or clubs, it is more likely that he hit Jesus across the side of the face with a club. Again, this was illegal. Not only unkind and ruthless but illegal ... never to strike a prisoner. But he hit Him with a club. But there's something even wonderful about that because I read in my Bible and Micah 5:1, these words: listen to this, "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek." Perfect fulfillment. Do you think that guy knew what he was doing? Fulfilling prophecy. And I love the fact that Micah calls Him the Judge of Israel. They didn't know it. Annas was sitting up there playing judge but guess *who* was real judge? Jesus Christ. It was an outrage to strike a prisoner but Jesus calmly, no violent retort, no anger, no vengeance, beautifully, verse 23, 1 love this, "Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?" Isn't that good? If I've done something wrong, where are the witnesses? If I haven't, *why* are you hitting Me? Oh, that's powerful. So calm, so dignified, so much in control and you've got a frustrated henchman to go with the frustrated Annas.

Now that is a kind of reaction you don't normally get out of a man. Can you imagine if one of us as believers were in a deal like that? And we got smashed like that? Well, there was one of us, the Apostle Paul. This is terrific. Acts 23, he got in the same situation, almost the same name of the high priest. Twenty-three: one, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." He defends himself. I've lived in good conscience before God all along. "And the high priest Ananias (a different guy) commanded them that stood by to smite him on the mouth." Ananias says - You hit him in the mouth for saying that. And you know what Paul's reaction is? Contrast this with Jesus. "Then Paul said unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." I mean, that's biblical swearing. You whited wall ... Now that's a human reaction. God will get you, you whited wall. Now of course, that was ... you

know, the wall was brown dirt and they whitewashed it white, he's saying you hypocrite. "For sittest thou to judge me after the law and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law." Why here you bring me before this law and then you hit me, well, that's illegal, you whited wall. "And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?" They said to Paul - What are you doing? And then ... Paul said - "Oh, I knew not, brethren, that he was the high priest, for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Now that's a human reaction. Oh, is he the high priest? Even if he's a bad one, he's still God's authority. But that's Paul's reaction, contrast 'that with Jesus'... who just shatters the scene with His calm and His indictment.

Well, Annas has had it, to say the least. And verse 24, "Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest." Annas had blown it. He had been indicted. So he sent Him to Caiaphas. Now the trial at Caiaphas was a mockery, in the middle of the night. During the time He was at Annas' they had gathered together the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas to carry on the mock trial. They wanted it at night before the people knew about it. They'd have Him convicted and turned over to the Romans by morning and nobody could do anything about it. Then they would mingle in the crowd and cry "Crucify Him" and they would bring about His death, and that's exactly what they did. It was an illegal gathering everyway. It was a gathering of false witnesses. It was just a part of the plot all the way along.

They couldn't find any evidence against Him. Finally, two agreed that He said He was going to destroy the temple. They tried to hold Him on that but they couldn't really convict Him on that. And then finally they asked Him - Are you the Messiah? And He said - Yes, I'm the Messiah. And they said that was blasphemy. The high priest tore his clothes and screamed -Blasphemy! -- and people began to spit all over Jesus and they pushed Him and shoved Him and some slapped Him in the face and said, Tell us, who slapped You, prophet? And they abused Him. That was the mockery of trial. And you see Jesus before Caiaphas humiliated.

But lest you think that Jesus was humbled, let's go back to Peter and see what a mess he is. Peter's denial, Act 2 and we'll close it out here. Verse 25: "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself." Sounds familiar, doesn't it? All this has been going on and guess where he is? Same place he had been in verse 18. Verse 18 says: "Peter stood and warmed himself." Verse 25 says, "Peter stood and warmed himself." Peter, what are you doing there? Get out of there. All through this time he's been denying Jesus standing around with those unbelievers. Once you get immersed in the world it's so hard to get out of there. And I'm sure Jesus' heart was grieved by Annas, Caiaphas and the man that hit Him in the face with the stick and the people who spit on Him but I don't think His heart was grieved by them to the degree that it was grieved by Peter. And verse 26, one of the servants ... or verse 25, "They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of His disciples? He denied it and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off (a kinsman of Malchus) saith, did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" That expects a "yes" answer in the Greek. "Peter then denied Him and immediately the cock crowed." Peter, what are you doing there?

Get out of there. You can't stand up for Jesus Christ in that situation, that's a compromising situation, you're with His enemies, get out of there. You're not ready for that. And Jesus ... and Peter denies Him again and then the cock crows and, boy, like a bell it went off in Peter's brain when that cock crowed because Jesus said - Three times you'll do it and that will be before the cock crows. The cock crow was at 3 a.m. The cock crowed, we know a little bit about what time this was going on.

And then Luke tells us the two scenes came together. For as they led Jesus out, He passed Peter just at the moment the cock crowed, Luke 22, verse 60: "And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately while he yet spoke," evidently denying again as recorded in John, "the cock crowed." And oh, listen to this, "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." Ooo, oh, that's painful. Here he is outside with the enemies. Jesus comes out. The cock crows and Jesus looks at Peter. And the two dramas come together. "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord," John 13:38, "how that He said unto him before the cock crows thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out and did ... what? ... wept bitterly."

I'll tell you something, friends, if you've gotten to the place in your life where you're fooling around in the world and you just don't know it's wrong, it's just not like it used to be, selfconfidence and you didn't make it, you couldn't handle it, and you got shot down and now you're standing around with unbelievers most of the time. There's only one way out and that's to really look into the face of Jesus Christ and remember what it use to be and get back to it.

This morning, this message is the look of Jesus Christ at you and you ought to go out and weep bitterly and make it right. There's so many things that Peter teaches us. We learn that the believer is weak. We learn the danger of selfconfidence. We learn the consequence of prayerlessness. Peter should have been praying in the garden instead of sleeping, he might have been ready for this ... the danger of evil company. We learn the power of fear**.** All these things. We also see, as John wants us to see, the beauty and the majesty of Jesus Christ. And the story ends when Jesus recovers Peter and three times Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him and three times Peter has the privilege of saying "I love You." One time for each of the intervals of denial, Jesus let him redeem himself. And then Jesus made him the rock that He wanted him to be. God can restore you if you're willing.

Father, we thank You this morning for Your Word...

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).