



Sermon Reflection Guide; John 18:12-27

1. In verse 12 we read that the band of soldiers “bound” Christ. What is the irony of Christ being bound in this moment on his way to the cross?
2. After this Jesus is taken to Annas, the father in law of the high priest Caiaphas, who had said back in John 11 that it would “expedient” for them to put Christ to death rather than the whole nation to perish. Caiaphas justifies his sin in the name of convenience, ease and expediency, in what ways do we do this very same thing?
3. Back out in the courtyard Peter is questioned by the servant girl concerning his connection with Jesus. Peter like Caiaphas justifies his sin and lies in the name of convenience. In what ways are we tempted to cower from our association with Jesus and for what reasons do we do this?
4. Back inside the home we see Annas being severely unjust to the Lord Jesus. How could the high priest of Israel do this? Consider this James Hamilton quote, “*They hate God and slap Jesus because what God has made sacred—the high priesthood—is more precious to them than God himself. This is a common error with God’s gifts. God gives a good and holy gift, such as sex, authority, or the stewardship of resources and humans exalt their pleasure, their power and their money over God himself. They refuse to worship God because they are making idols of his gifts.*” In what ways does this ring true in your own experience?
5. Compare and contrast the Lord Jesus with those inside the home and Peter out in the courtyard. How is Jesus faithful and obedient while all those around him fail to be faithful?

Sermon Summary

In our text we are presented with two different storylines. One follows Jesus after his arrest as he is before Annas and the Jewish Sanhedrin and the other follows Peter as he waits outside in the courtyard among the servants of Annas' house. We will follow these two storylines by breaking it down into four scenes that present us with a picture of Christ and our need for him.

In this first scene we see Jesus arrested and taken to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the high priest. John writes, “¹²So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him.” We must stop and realize the irony of this statement. Jesus, Lord of all things, who is in control of all things allowed himself to be bound. John Calvin observes, “But let us remember that the body of the Son of God was bound, that our souls might be loosed from the cords of sin and Satan.” Christ allowed himself to be bound by sinful men that through him we might be set free from sin.

Jesus was taken to Annas the father-in-law of the high priest. Annas was the high priest in years past but had been deposed by the Romans. In the years that followed many of Annas' family members served as high priest, including his son-in-law Caiaphas. To the Jews Annas was still considered the high priest even if the Romans did not officially recognize him as such. The further irony is that we have two high priests in this passage, Annas and Caiaphas, but neither see the truth that Christ is the real, true and better high priest. In John 18:14 we read, “It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.” Caiaphas advocated for doing to wrong thing, executing Jesus, because he believed the outcome would be worth it or as he put it “expedient”. This is so often where we start when we begin down a path of sin. We justify our sin even though we know what we are doing is wrong, but we do so in the name of convenience or ease or expediency. Just as Caiaphas justified killing Jesus in order to maintain his power, we too do wicked things because we think it will be worth it. James Boice writes, “Expediency! That was the lever then, as it so often is today. It is in the name of expediency and self-interest that the most terrible things are done.”

In the second scene we move outside to the courtyard where Peter and another disciple are waiting for Jesus. We don't know for sure, but it is likely that the other disciple is John the Gospel writer. This other disciple was allowed inside while Peter had to wait outside but we learn in verse 16 that this other disciple spoke to the servant girl at the door and got Peter inside the courtyard. In verse 17 we read, “The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” Here we have the first of Peter's three denials of Jesus, just as Jesus said he would in John 13. Earlier that night in John 13 when Jesus said this to Peter, Peter full of confidence assured Jesus that would never happen. But now in John 18 in the moment of testing Peter fails and denies his Lord. Yet again we see sin justified in the name of expediency. It certainly would have been risky for Peter to affirm being Jesus' disciple but that was what the path of faithfulness required. Instead Peter justifies his sin and denies Christ.

In the third scene we return inside to the room where Jesus was being interrogated by Annas. And as this trail unfolds, we see that it violated virtually every rule for a 1st century Jewish trial. In verse 19 we read that Annas questioned Jesus about two things; his disciples and his teaching. Annas wanted to trip Jesus up about his disciples and bring him up on charges of insurrection and if he couldn't do that he wanted to try and bring him up on the grounds of heresy for what he had taught. Jesus answers in verse 20, “Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret.” Jesus' point to Annas was not that he had

never taught anything in private behind closed doors but rather that his private teaching and his public teaching were the same. Jesus had openly taught for anyone to hear many, many times and as Jesus said he had nothing to hide. Further Jesus adds in verse 21, “Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.” This was Jesus’ way of challenging Annas to actually begin conducting a proper trial by first calling legitimate witnesses. In response one of the officers stepped forward and struck Jesus saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?”

When we observe this scene and see the injustice Jesus suffered at the hands of Annas we may be asking, how could this happen? How could the high priest and his servants act in such a wicked and unjust way? Commentator James Hamilton offers a preceptive answer, “They hate God and slap Jesus because what God has made sacred—the high priesthood—is more precious to them than God himself. This is a common error with God’s gifts. God gives a good and holy gift, such as sex, authority, or the stewardship of resources and humans exalt their pleasure, their power and their money over God himself. They refuse to worship God because they are making idols of his gifts.” Hamilton is right, this is so often the case. Rather than worshiping God as ultimate and being thankful for the good things he gives us; we elevate those good things to the ultimate place and forget God altogether.

In scene four we transition back out to the courtyard and return to Peter, the other disciple and the servants of the high priest around the charcoal fire. We read, “²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” ²⁷ Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.” Luke’s account in Luke 22 adds that when the rooster crowed the Lord Jesus turned and looked at Peter and Peter went out and wept bitterly. At this point everything that Jesus said would happen to him has happened to him, Judas betrayed him and Peter denied him.

What should we take away from these two scenes in the night of Jesus arrest and trial? The first thing we can take away is that this story is a fulfilment of what the Old Testament prophesied would happen to Jesus on this night. In Isaiah 53:3-4 we read, “³He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.” As Jesus undergoes the injustice of this night and the hours to come leading to his innocent death on the cross everything the prophet Isaiah foretold would happen to Jesus in chapter 53 comes true.

Second, we should compare and contrast Jesus to those inside the home and Peter outside in the courtyard. Inside the home Jesus is the true and great high priest and Annas is an unfaithful high priest. Jesus will selflessly lay down his life for the benefit of his people while Annas is motivated by self-interest and accumulation of power and will condemn the innocent Jesus to die. Outside the home Peter, cowers, denies and lies; while inside Jesus boldly stands up to his questioners and denies nothing.

Third, this passage teaches us about the Gospel of God’s grace. It was wicked for Annas to treat Jesus how he did, it was wrong for Peter to lie and deny Christ, but this passage shows us the kind of people that Jesus was willing to die for. Jesus did not go to the cross for sinless, perfect people. Rather he went to the cross for people like Annas and Peter, for people like you and me. A sinful, shameful and rebellious people. And all those who will repent of their sin and by faith trust in Christ alone God promises to forgive and save.