

Date: March 31, 2026

John Section: John 18:1-40

Key Text: John 18:11

Main Idea: Jesus demonstrates power through submission to suffering.

Genre: Theological Narrative

Author: John

Audience: Primarily second-generation believers, Jews, and Gentiles, needing encouragement and clarity about Jesus' identity.

Setting: Likely written from Ephesus, AD 85-95, in a context of synagogue opposition and emerging false teachings.

Quote of the Week: "Man is never sufficiently touched and affected by the awareness of his lowly state until he has compared himself with God's majesty." - John Calvin



John Preview:

Highlight:

The Gospel of John is a unique New Testament account of Jesus' life, written by the Apostle John, the beloved disciple. John's Gospel is not merely a biography but a theological portrait, revealing Jesus as the eternal Son of God who became flesh to bring life and light to the world. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John emphasizes signs and discourses that unveil Jesus' divine identity and mission. From the opening words—"In the beginning was the Word"—to the climactic resurrection appearances, John presents Jesus as the one in whom God's glory is revealed, calling all to believe in Him for eternal life. This Gospel is rich with imagery (light, life, bread, water, shepherd, vine) and repeatedly centers on the theme of belief.

Focus of John:

- **Purpose of John:**
 - John tells us his purpose plainly: "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31).
- **Themes in John:**
 - Jesus is the Word made flesh
 - Jesus reveals God's glory
 - Eternal life is found in Him alone
 - Belief is the way to life
 - Life flows only from union with Christ
- **Our Response to this Truth:**
 - Believe in Him – Abide in Him – Live by His Word – Trust in His promises – Love as He loved

John 18:1-18 Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus - Ben

- As we move from John 17 into John 18, we're coming out of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, and for the first time in about 5 chapters, we will be leaving the Upper Room. This was an intimate moment where Jesus prays for His disciples and for all believers. Now, we step directly into His arrest.
 - Jesus crosses the Kidron Valley, entering a garden with His disciples.
 - A common theme we've mentioned throughout all of John's Gospel is the intentionality behind everything that is happening from Jesus' perspective. Jesus is aware of what is to come. He is in full control. Nothing about this transition is accidental. He is following the plan of the Father.
 - This idea is noted in verse 4:
 - 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to Him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"
 - When the people respond, "Jesus of Nazareth," Jesus answers with "I am He."
 - That is a rather simple response, but it carries a lot of weight with it. We've gone through the seven "I am" statements already:
 - "I am the bread of life" - John 6:35
 - "I am the light of the world" - John 8:12
 - "I am the door" - John 10:7
 - "I am the good shepherd" - John 10:11
 - "I am the resurrection and the life" - John 11:25
 - "I am the way, the truth, and the life" - John 14:6
 - "I am the true vine" - John 15:1
 - In this scene, after Jesus says, "I am He," we see that "they drew back and fell to the ground."
- **Why do you think John includes the detail that they fell to the ground when Jesus said, "I am He"?**

- Jesus protects His disciples by stepping forward and declaring, "I told you that I am He. So, if you seek Me, let these men go."
 - In John 17, Jesus prayed that He had guarded them, and not one of them had been lost. In John 18, He proves it by stepping forward and giving Himself in protection of His disciples.
 - Even in the moment of His arrest, Jesus is shepherding His own. He offers Himself so they can walk free. We are told in verse 9 that this is to fulfill the words Jesus had spoken during the High Priestly prayer (specifically in John 17:12).

- Next, we see, to the surprise of nobody, Peter acts quite passionately and impulsively by cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant.
 - We see a sharp contrast behind the actions of Jesus and the actions of Peter.
 - Jesus steps forward with obedience and divine intentionality.
 - Peter steps forward in impulse and looks to display his faithfulness.
 - This single act may be enough to convince the authorities that the false claims being brought against Jesus have truth behind them. Because of certain consequences of this act, Jesus calls out Peter to put the sword into its sheath.
 - The statement at the end of verse 11 is quite significant:
 - **11** So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"
 - Jesus makes it unmistakably clear that His arrest is not a tragedy or something out of His control; it is the fulfillment of the Father's plan. Peter wants to prevent the cross, but Jesus came *for* the cross.
 - After Jesus declares His willingness to drink the cup, the soldiers and officers seize Jesus and bind Him.
 - The same Jesus who just knocked them down to the ground with three simple words now allows Himself to be tied up like a criminal. Why?
 - Jesus is taken to Annas, the former high priest and the father-in-law of Caiaphas. John reminds us the significance behind Caiaphas in this situation:
 - John 11:49-50
 - **49** But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. **50** Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."
 - But we see in the next verse of John 11 that Caiaphas "did not say this of his own accord." God was speaking through a corrupt high priest to declare the plan that was to come to fruition.
 - In this section, we see the wickedness of human rebellion, but also the unstoppable sovereignty of God's redemptive plan.
 - **Why was it necessary for Jesus not just to die, but to suffer as much as He did?**
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- It's worth noting just how much humiliation Jesus faced. Jesus was not put through this pain, suffering, and betrayal by unnamed authorities. Rather, it was done by those closest to Him.
 - Jesus' humiliation is seen by how He was:
 - Betrayed by a chosen apostle.
 - Rejected by the Jewish people.
 - Denied by a genuine friend.

- However, Jesus' glory is seen by:
 - The disclosure of His identity (verses 5-8).
 - The fulfillment of His prophecy (verse 9 and John 17:12).
 - His commitment to His destiny (verse 11).
- We shift scenes briefly in verse 15, as Peter's first denial comes under pressure from a servant girl.
 - Someone with no authority, no weapon, and posing no major threat to Peter asks him a simple question, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" Yet Peter, who had boasted of his faith many times, crumbles and denies even knowing Jesus.
 - The same man who swung a sword in the garden cannot speak a single truthful sentence here in the courtyard.

John 18:19-40 Trials and Rejection of Jesus - Josiah

- The high priest Annas then interrogates Jesus, hoping to find incriminating evidence that they can leverage against Him.
 - Jesus simply responds that His ministry is public, and they simply need to ask someone who has heard Him preach, and they will reveal His teachings.
 - This section reveals that the Pharisees are becoming desperate. We have seen before in John that in a Jewish court of law, at least two witnesses must be present to testify for/against someone to convict/exempt them of a crime.
 - Annas declines to try Jesus fairly, by doing this, he breaks his own law. Furthermore, Jesus holds fast to this law in his rebuke, addressing that He does have witnesses and that His ministry remains in the light/open.
 - The following interaction only further confirms the Pharisees' position and desperation as enemies of the truth.
 - Jesus appeals to His witnesses and to the truth, and the Pharisees continue to operate as blind to the truth and completely hardened to the truth and identity of Jesus, despite the validity of His words.
 - The root of the situation:
 - The Pharisees were persecuting Jesus not because they did not reason through His claims. Rather, they did not have the capacity to believe because they worshipped themselves. In nature, the Pharisees were predisposed to deny Jesus and His message because they did not want a savior who called people to put themselves last, submit themselves, and serve. Ultimately, this is the nature of everyone who is outside of Christ.
- Peter denies Christ twice more.
 - Similarly, Peter is standing outside and is asked twice more if he is one of the disciples of Jesus, and again, Peter denies Christ each time. In Matthew 25, it is even recorded that on the third denial, he begins cursing and swearing that he is not one of Jesus' disciples.
 - This situation reveals a dark truth about the nature of humans and the nature of sin. We saw in the last section that the Pharisees operated as completely opposed to Christ. In Peter's situation, we see a striking similarity; Peter vehemently denies Christ 3 times.

Yet, we know that Peter is a devoted follower of Christ in faith. How could a Christian do such a thing, some may ask.

- Unfortunately, even Christians struggle with sin in a reality which we would call the Saint/Sinner reality. As believers, we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and we are born again, yet we will still carry our dead corpse.
 - This is clearly played out in this situation, Peter commits a terrible sin and denies Christ 3 times, yet there remains a difference between Peter and the Pharisees. Peter is completely cleansed by the blood of Christ, and his sins are atoned for, and through the process of sanctification and the work of Jesus in his life, he will mature through trials and tribulations.
 - **What else might this reveal about sin and its cyclical nature? What does it reveal about how we combat this?**
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- First irony: The Pharisees then brought Jesus to the house of Pilate so that they would not break their law.
 - They would break the law by entering a gentile's house.
 - Never originally in their sacred law, but rather a Jewish tradition that was made up as a roadblock to breaking the law.
 - They could not directly kill someone under their law; Rome held the authority of capital punishment.
 - The irony lies here: in an attempt to keep the commandments of God, they give up the Son of God to die.
 - Jesus in front of Pilate.
 - Pilate questions Him, asking, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus responds vaguely for a handful of reasons.
 - He submits Himself to the sovereign plan that the Father has set before Him. Jesus is the truth, and He has all power from the Father to not only acquit himself at that very moment but to free Himself from every earthly trial.
 - Pilate and Jesus are speaking categorically, on different terms.
 - If Jesus were to speak plainly and concisely, He could merely answer Pilate with a resounding "yes." Yet, underneath the surface, there would be a terrible misunderstanding. Jesus would speak of a spiritual kingdom that He reigns over, yet Pilate would be speaking of an earthly, political kingdom.

- This brings me to the second irony of this passage.
 - Jesus explains the purpose of His ministry in that He bears witness to the truth, and Pilate responds, “What is truth?”
 - While there is debate over the meaning of Pilate’s question, the question itself remains ironic. He says, “What is truth?” to the embodiment of truth itself.
 - Pilate does not understand Jesus’ words because he fails to recognize that truth is found in a man.
- Pilate does not find any guilt in Jesus worthy of the punishment that the Jews are looking for, yet to appease the crowd of angry Jews, he offers Jesus up for another prisoner.
 - The Jews pounce on this opportunity and decide to release a thief and an insurrectionist instead of Jesus.
 - This brings me to the final irony of this passage.
 - Barabbas: Bar - Abba...Child of God. His name in the original language meant Child of God, yet this man was a convicted thief and still was set free because of Jesus, the God of the universe.
 - Does this not paint a clear picture of our reality? We have done nothing on our own power but sin and rebel against the God who created and redeemed us. Yet, He takes our place on the seat of punishment and takes the wrath and death that we deserve. Yet, despite all this, like Peter, we continually deny Him, and yet we are called children of God, continually redeemed by his blood and mercy.
- **Throughout this whole passage, how have we seen the sovereignty of God play out in both the small details and large events? What does that mean for us?**

Upcoming Events:

- **American Gospel Night - April 12th at WBC**
- **Worship Night End of Year - April 21st at WBC**

Other Helpful Resources:

- He Must Increase Podcast by Connor Shady & Adam Tredeau (Official Podcast of 3:30!)
- Waukesha Bible Church John 18 Sermons on YouTube

Other Reminders:

- Get involved with a church - **Specifically WBC!**
 - **Connor and Adam are teaching: 9 AM Class on the Book of Romans at WBC prior to service.**
 - WBC service is at 10:00 AM every Sunday!
 - Check out our Website: Threethirtyministry.com
 - Join the 3:30 GroupMe or WhatsApp chat to stay up to date on everything 3:30 Ministry.
 - Also check us out on Instagram: @three.thirty.ministries and @three.thirty.mens.ministry
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The Gospel: **We Can't, God Can, Jesus Did!**

- **Sin.** None of us can escape it. Because of it, we are spiritually dead and in need of life. Our debt before God is insurmountable. It is the biggest problem any of us has, since there is nothing we can do ourselves to pay that debt. God's standard is perfection, so no amount of good works or religious activities is enough.
 - 1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (Ephesians 2:1-3)
- **But God...** These two words are some of the most powerful words in the Bible. God is merciful and loving. He did what we could never do in and of ourselves. He saved us by grace alone and gave us new life in Christ.
 - 4 **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-7)
- **Jesus saves.** He is God's gift to us. He paid our debt before the Father. And through his death and resurrection, we are raised to eternal life. There is nothing we can do to earn it. It is only through Christ that we live a life pleasing to God.
 - 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)