

John Chapter 18

Notice how willing Jesus is to walk right into the trap that has been set for him. He does not fear even the darkest of evils, because he trusts the Father's will.

This is something Peter has not yet learned to accept. When the soldiers step forward to arrest Jesus, Peter jumps in and cuts off one of their ears to protect him. This is not what Jesus wants his disciples to do right now. Instead, Jesus tells him to back off. He's not mad at Peter for acting, but he doesn't want him to get in the way of the plan that is already in motion.

How often do you think Jesus looks at the things Christians do in order to make a stand and protect him today, and just wants to tell us to stop? How often do Christians overstep the roles Jesus has for us and attack people with our words or actions? We think we are defending Jesus when we are really just getting in the way of the plans he already has for people around us.

There are so many times that Christians lash out at the world for sinful behavior or decisions that are opposed to God. In these times, Jesus just might be saying, "put your sword in its sheath, this is not how we do things."

It is interesting that, through multiple conversations, nobody has any real accusations to bring against Jesus. After telling the high priest that everything he has said and done has been open to the public, Jesus is hit by an officer. But, when he asks him for an explanation about what was wrong in what he said, the officer cannot respond.

Next, we see Jesus answering Pilate. Pilate tries to ask the crowd why they have brought Jesus to him, but they can't articulate it either. They can only say they wouldn't have brought him if he didn't deserve it. Again though, no accusation is brought forward.

Regardless of what reason they have for wanting Jesus dead, one thing is for sure, the crowd would rather free an actual criminal than back down from having Jesus executed by the Romans. They have already come this far and they're not going to turn back now. Even if they cannot cite a reason.

Remember this the next time you decide to try and argue someone into believing what you believe, truth and reason does not always dictate how people behave or make decisions.

Do you remember back in chapter 13 when Peter told Jesus he would lay down his life, and Jesus told him he would deny him three times? Now, as Jesus is being questioned by the rulers, Peter has his chance to prove him wrong.

Notice that Peter is surrounded by people who don't think very highly of Jesus. It seems so easy from this side of history, but in the moment, Peter's fear of death is strong, stronger than his ability to live as Jesus had taught him. Peter cannot represent Christ here because of his fear.

But this series of events also shows that Peter is actually very brave. This is often neglected, but how many disciples are even willing to come this far with Jesus? Only two! Peter is committed enough to go into a dangerous situation for Jesus, but he does so without being fully prepared for what he is now experiencing.

Maybe you can remember when you first started trying to live on mission with Jesus. Or maybe you are just now beginning to experiment with a missional lifestyle.

I can almost guarantee you are going to find yourself entering into situations that you could not possibly have prepared for. Just know that Jesus is there with you in those times. And, even if you walk away thinking you were a failure, you will have gained an experience that will help you as you move forward. Knowing what Peter accomplished serving Christ in the years following this difficult day should be an encouragement after those times we were unable to stand strong.

Do you trust the Holy Spirit enough to go into situations that you know you are unprepared for? Can you trust God enough to allow him to strengthen you and help you grow, even when you don't know how it will happen?