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The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering

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John 18:12-27

October 18, 2015

Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to the 18th chapter of John, the 18th chapter of John's Gospel. The title of the message this morning is 'The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering'. Last week, the title was 'The Greatness of Our Savior', and this morning the title is 'The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering'. To be honest, I think that the greatness of our Savior is seen, among other ways, in the greatness of His suffering. So it is 'The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering', but as we look at that, we're looking at the greatness of Christ, the greatness of His work. So the title 'The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering'.

Our text is John 18:12-27, which really begins to unpack for us one of the key themes in John's Gospel, which is the magnitude of Jesus' suffering. As all the Gospel-writers do, they focus on the cross, the passion. Someone has said that the Gospels are basically passion narratives with long introductions. They are basically all about the cross, that is the message, and there is just a long introduction to that. And John is certainly that way when you consider that Chapters 13-21, those last nine chapters, cover just the last 24 hours of Jesus' earthly life and ministry before the crucifixion. So 'The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering'.

We saw in Isaiah that the prophet Isaiah was given the revelation by God that the Messiah would be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. That what would mark Him out from every other man would be the magnitude of His suffering, the greatness of His sorrow. I want to make a couple of preliminary observations. The outline is going to be two points like last week. Sometimes I find a good outline, I just keep running it, and the outline, looking at narrative, it is always a dilemma. I try to preach a sermon that honors the flow of the text, and so when you preach from a narrative, it ought to be a little different than if you are teaching from an epistle. The form of the sermon I mean. So the two points are going to be *Observe the Action* and *Consider the Implications*. Those are the two major points.

Now we're going to have a couple of preliminary observations before we get there because what we want to do is we want to observe carefully the dramatic flow as John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, recounts for us what happened that night. He is selective in the details that he includes. As every author is, or as every person who tells a story is, there is always a process of selection. You leave some things out,

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you include some details because of the message, or the effect you are trying to have. And that is certainly true of all of the writers of Scripture and we see this in John. So we want to observe carefully how he paints the picture of what actually happened that night. What are the details that the Spirit inspires him to remember and record for us? So that we can see what the message, the driving thrust of this narrative, this story, is.

But there are a couple of preliminary observations I want to make first because we are going to see that the main point of what he is doing is he is magnifying, or highlighting for us the magnitude of Jesus' suffering, the greatness of our Savior's suffering. That is his main point, I think, in these verses. But it brings up an important point from the larger perspective of Scripture, the sufferings of Christ. To understand them correctly we need to think of them in terms of the extent and the magnitude. These are preliminary observations. We haven't gotten to the outline yet. Before we *Observe the Action* and *Consider the Implications*, we want to talk about these two preliminary observations. One is *The Extent of Jesus' Sufferings*, and the second is *The Magnitude of His Sufferings* as presented in the entire New Testament, including the Old Testament prophecies that we read earlier. Really in all of Scripture, the extent and the magnitude.

The Extent of Jesus' Sufferings

Now the extent, when I'm talking about the extent of His suffering, what I'm talking about is the fact how far did His suffering reach? What we see when we read the Bible is that the suffering of the God-man, the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ, extended to every part of His humanity. It wasn't just His physical suffering that is emphasized in the Scriptures. Jesus was fully man, He wasn't a divine spirit inhabiting just a human body. He was fully man. He had a human soul along with His human body. He had a human mind, human emotions, a human will, and a human spirit, as the part of the spiritual part of man that relates to God. He was fully man, and fully God, and He remains fully man, and fully God, though glorified now in Heaven. And in that sense, when He came to bear our sins, His suffering touched every aspect of His humanity—His entire soul, His entire person, He suffered in every part. He experienced extreme mental anguish, He experienced intense emotional distress, He experienced indescribable, volitional suffering. The pain of bending His will, that is volition, the will. Mind, will, and emotions, the soul, and so every part there was pain and agony, and He experienced unspeakable spiritual agony when hanging on the cross. The Father turns His back upon Him.

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Now I say that because we have a tendency to major on the wrong things, and it is not that we shouldn't marvel at the physical agony of Christ. We should, and we're going to see as we go through this passage, that it is brought out for us, and we have to describe it, and consider it, the beating, and the crucifixion. But the physical, when you look at the Gospels, the physical agony, and the physical suffering, is not overplayed. It is just a part of the overall suffering of Jesus.

Now why did I say that? About maybe 12, 15 years ago, there was a movie called 'The Passion of the Christ', do you remember that? Mel Gibson made it and I think his intent was noble. He took a lot of heat for that, to make a movie about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Gibson, being a devout Catholic, missed the biblical balance, and the biblical meaning of who Jesus is, and what Jesus did, because he himself does not understand it, because he has taken hook, line, and sinker the false doctrines of the Catholic Church. And if you saw that movie, I saw it, it was powerful, it was moving in an extreme sense, and I appreciate his intent, a lot of it. I'm not trying to stand in judgment, I'm just trying to point out that had he read his Bible more carefully, he would not have magnified to the extent he did the physical agony of Christ, because the text doesn't. The text does not, for instance, say, "And they crucified Him, and they put the nails in His hands, and you hear the pounding of the nails, over, and over, and over again." The Bible doesn't do that. Why? That is the question that a good student of Scripture ought to ask. Why?

Apparently the Lord knows that we have a preoccupation of getting, or we have a tendency to get preoccupied with the wrong things. The physical agony is hard to imagine, hard to fathom, the reality of crucifixion is incredible, and it does need to be considered. The 1st Century readers didn't need some of that description because they knew what it was like. But when you step back from it though, what you see is that the spotlight is more on the emotional, and intellectual, and spiritual agony of the Savior. That is what God wanted us to focus on.

So when we look at this passage that we're looking at now, there is a lot more detail. What we are going to see, the crucifixion, let me just point this out. We are going to come here, and we're going to talk about it in John 19:18, ...***there they crucified Him***,... That is the description of them nailing Him to the cross, very brief and short. Now the readers understood that, and we'll get to that. We'll have to expand it a little bit because we don't know what that is. I mean, we don't see that in our everyday life.

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But the point is this, that the suffering of Jesus, the physical suffering is a part of what He did. It is an astonishing sacrifice, the hardest way to die physically that has ever been invented. Yes, amazing, that our Savior loved us like that, but when you really look at it properly in context, the greater suffering was the emotional agony that He lived with every day. The intellectual agony of being misunderstood, mischaracterized, misjudged, every day of His life, and the spiritual agony of bearing our sins! That was what made Jesus cry out to His Father three times, “Father if there be any other way, let this cup pass from Me,” the cup of the wrath of God, the spiritual agony. So the extent of His suffering, it touches every area.

The Magnitude of Jesus’ Suffering

Now, the magnitude, this is the second preliminary observation, *The Magnitude of His Suffering*, we would say rightly that He has suffered in every area of human existence—mind, will, emotions, spiritual, our spiritual nature, and the physical body. He has suffered more in every area than anyone else can ever suffer, and therefore, He is a truly sympathetic and glorious Savior, a marvelous high priest who has been made perfect.

Now, having said that, now let’s look at, we’re going to see the intellectual and emotional suffering of the Savior unfolded before us in this passage. The intense suffering of our Savior that shows that the greatness of our Savior’s suffering shows the greatness of our Savior. Let’s read beginning at Verse 12.

John 18:12-27 ~ So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him, 13 and led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. 14 Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. 15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, 16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in. 17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door *said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He *said, “I am not.” 18 Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having

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made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching. 20 Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. 21 Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said." 22 When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that the way You answer the high priest?" 23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?" 24 So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

*25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not." 26 One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" 27 Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.*

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, we ask that You might now open our spiritual minds, and our hearts, that we might see and understand wonderful things from Your law. That our hearts might be transformed, and our lives might be more pleasing to You. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

'The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering', what we want to do is *Observe the Action*, and then *Consider the Implications*.

1) Observe the Action:

These 16 verses basically you can, as you are reading along, you see there are four basic scenes in these 16 verses. The first scene is from Verse 12-14, which describes, again, Jesus being arrested and led to Annas, the high priest. Then in Verse 15-18, the camera shifts, as it were, and you look not at Jesus before Annas, but you look at Peter, and another disciple, who were standing at the gate of the high priest's courtyard. Then you go back, in Verses 19-24, to Jesus before the

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priest. And then it shifts back again, in Verses 25-27, to Peter and that other disciple. What is going on here? What is happening? Why is it told this way?

I think one of the things that is happening is there is a contrast being painted between Jesus and Peter. Both are questioned, and behold the difference in their responses. That is one of the things that is happening here, and what that does is it shows us again the greatness of our Savior in the way He responds, and it shows the greatness of His suffering in the way Peter responds. But you also have, and basically what you have is two parallel themes running along at the same time. Beside that contrast, there are some other things that are happening, and you see in Scene 1 and Scene 3, when we are looking at Jesus before Annas, the high priest, we see basically Jesus suffering in the appalling attacks of His enemies. That is what I would subtitle this first point, *Scene 1: The Appalling Attacks of His Enemies*, and Scene 3 is going to have the same thing—*The Appalling Attacks of His Enemies, Continued*. Scene 2 and Scene 4 would be, *The Breathtaking Betrayal of His Friends*. That is Scene 2, Verses 15-18, and Scene 4, Verse 25-27.

So we are going to walk through Scene 1 and Scene 2, then Scene 3, then Scene 4, but you realize that Scene 1 and Scene 3 are connected, and Scene 2 and Scene 4, so that we have this setting, these two things, because they happened that way, but the way John tells us, he could have told us differently. He could have told us about Jesus' interview before the high priest and then said, "This is what was happening meanwhile," and tell us just about Peter. But he chose us to tell us as it was happening, looking back and forth.

Scene 1: The Appalling Attack of His Enemies:

Now, *Scene 1: The Appalling Attack of His Enemies*. Here we have, in Verses 12-14, our first scene, we're *Observing the Action*, remember? And we have four scenes. In Verse 12, we are reminded of the Roman cohort, which we said last week, a cohort normally was 600 soldiers. We believe probably, it is likely that this was reduced to a subset of 200 Roman soldiers, along with the commander of the entire unit, the kiliarch, who would be the commander of a thousand, symbolizing the entire unit, the 600 foot soldiers plus cavalry. He is with them, with a selected detachment of soldiers, between 200 and 600. Some scholars think it was all 600, either way it was a lot of soldiers, a lot of armed Roman soldiers, an extraordinary amount. We said last time, they were probably there with him in part, they were with Judas, and the temple officials, to keep a riot from breaking out. It was crowd control because dozens of temple officials are also there, armed temple officers. So

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in total, probably a crowd of at least 300 men, to arrest 12, Jesus and the 11. Or, to come arrest one, who is only with 11 other people. But what we are told is He is arrested, look at the verbs here.

He is arrested, they arrested Jesus, they bound Him, and they led Him. Arrested like a criminal, bound, His hands are tied together. It was like you would see someone in handcuffs. There is a certain indignity just about being bound, and the Savior, who we have said just moments before, when He said, “Whom do you seek?” and they said, “Jesus, the Nazarene,” and He said, “I am,” and they fell to the ground, we saw in the last scene. Just moments before that has happened, and now they are binding Him with handcuffs, and they are leading Him. They led Him to Annas.

Now let me explain something here, what you have here is the fact that Annas is the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Caiaphas is technically the high priest this year, but in Jewish society under the domination of Rome, in the 1st Century, there was a lot of resentment for a lot of different reasons. And one of the reasons there was resentment was the Romans basically controlled the high priest elections, and Annas had been the high priest, and he was deposed by Pilate’s predecessor. And so in many of the Jews’ minds, they still looked to Annas as the legitimate high priest. And in one sense, he was also, though the Romans deposed Annas, they did allow his sons to be high priests, and he, Annas, had five sons who served as high priests, and one son-in-law, Caiaphas. So in many ways, he was looked to as the spiritual leader of the nation.

So they take Him, and John is the only one who tells us about this, they took Him to Annas first, before Caiaphas. Now why does John tell us and nobody else tells us? Well, Caiaphas is the one who has the legal authority to turn Him over to Pilate. That is why Annas, after questioning Him, sends Him to Caiaphas. Caiaphas is the high priest that Rome recognizes, and so He’s got to come from Caiaphas if Rome is going to do anything about it. So it ends up with him sending Him on. But what you see in the very beginning, I think one of the reasons John tells us about the interview with Annas, the father-in-law, is that even though the Jews may have thought that He was the spiritual father of the nation, legally he was not the one entrusted with the authority to judge Jesus. So right at the beginning, they are not following protocol, they are not following the right way to handle this. And then when he mentions Caiaphas, it is interesting, Verse 13, he says:

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John 18:13 ~ ...for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

See, John tells us, “Yes, Caiaphas was high priest that year.” Now Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people. You remember after Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, John records for us the response of the Sanhedrin when they are told about it, the Pharisees, the temple, the high priests, and the leaders of the people. And Caiaphas was the one who spoke in John 11:50, he makes this amazing statement. Actually if you look at John 11, start at Verse 48, one of the men says:

John 11:48-49 ~ If we let Him go on like this, (Talking about Jesus. Now He has just raised a man from the dead.) all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,...

I love that. He was obviously a confident guy.

John 11:49-50 ~ “You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.”

He is saying, “Listen, we’ve got to put Him to death so that the whole nation is not destroyed by Rome. You guys don’t know anything. What we’ve got to do is kill Him because it is better for one man to die, than that the whole nation perish.” Now look what John said after that, his editorial comment on Verse 51.

John 18:51 ~ Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation,

John said because of his position, his authority, even though he was an ungodly and wicked man who wanted to do harm to the glorious Savior of the world, he wanted to put Him to death, John said when he spoke he spoke with the blessing, and even God uses, if He could speak to Balaam through a jackass, He can speak through the Jewish high priest, and He did. And He has him say exactly what He wanted them to say, “Do you not understand that it is expedient for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish?” That is the Gospel, one man dying so that those who believe in Him do not perish. Now John reminds us though, it is

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important to realize, he takes the time to remind us in John 18, as he is telling us his picture, he includes that. “Listen, don’t forget. This is the guy who advised the Jews it was expedient for one man to die on behalf of the people.” Now why does he do that?

I think, first of all, to remind us of the sinister plot that has been going on behind the scenes, ever since the resurrection of Lazarus, they have been absolutely all out to destroy Jesus, and he is reminding us of that. He’s also reminding us that Caiaphas was the one who rightly had the authority to judge, and casting some doubt on the whole procedure, why they lead Him to Annas, and also he is showing us the sovereignty of God. That even as evil men rage, and do their will, and Satan is raging, and working to do what he wants, which is to destroy the Son of God, that nothing is happening that the Father has not predetermined and planned with absolute perfect precision. That is the glory of our great God, His sovereignty is so much bigger than we imagine.

Scene 2: The Breathtaking Betrayal of His Friends:

So this appalling attack though, begun in Verse 12-14, is now interrupted. We take the focus off of it to look at Simon Peter who was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. We are under *Observe the Action* now, second sub-point, Scene 2, Verses 15-18. He was following Jesus and so was another disciple. The first question that jumps out to me is, who was the other disciple? Doesn’t that jump out to you? Is it Thomas? Who is it? Well, most scholars believe, and Bible interpreters throughout church history have believed that this was another one of John’s referring to himself in the third person, to sort of diminish his role, and fade into the background.

You know, he has described himself never in the Gospel by his own name. Earlier he refers to himself as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’. So another disciple seems to be a reference to John himself, and the closeness of Peter and John argues for that. So I think it is clearly John, and John apparently had a relationship through his family with the high priest, and the high priest knew him, and the slaves in the high priest’s household knew him. So he was able to walk right in because they recognized him, and they let him in, but Peter they don’t know, so Peter has to stay outside. So when he is standing outside, and John realizes, “Peter is outside and I’m inside,” he goes to the person at the door and says, “Listen, he is a friend of mine,” and he brings him in.

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John 18:17 ~ Then the slave-girl who kept the door *said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He *said, “I am not.”

You know when you really put this in context, it makes it even more astonishing, more breathtaking. I said this is *The Breathtaking Betrayal of Jesus’ Friends*. He is not only being attacked, viciously attacked in the most appalling way by His enemies, but He is being betrayed by His friends. When you put this in context, remember that just before this we’ve been told that Judas is the one who betrayed Him. I’m going to take a moment to just remind you of that. In Verse 2, we noted this last week, but I didn’t spend much time on it. He said, John 18:2, Jesus enters the garden with His disciples, Verse 1.

John 18:2 ~ Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place,...

We noted that last week, that ***who was betraying Him*** seems somewhat gratuitous. We know who Judas is, because you’ve been paying attention. If you haven’t fallen asleep as you’re reading, you know who Judas is. You don’t need the ***who was betraying Him***, but there it is. And then look at Verse 5. When Jesus said, “Whom do you seek?” in Verse 4, they answered Him:

John 18:5 ~ ...“Jesus the Nazarene.” He *said to them, “I am He.” And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

Now that one’s definitely gratuitous, unnecessary, and yet it’s necessary because of the emphasis. Don’t forget Jesus is being delivered over by the one that shared His bread. He’s being delivered over by the one that has been His friend and He’s been a friend to since the beginning. In John 6:64, we’re told at that point that Jesus knew from the beginning who would not believe, and from the beginning who would betray Him. His whole ministry He’s known that Judas was the one who would betray Him, and He’s lived with the pain of that rejection day, after day, after day, culminating that night when He washed Judas’ filthy feet. That’s the love of the Savior. So you have that backdrop, and now we go from Judas to Peter. It’s always helpful to try as you’re reading Scripture to step back and think, “If I were reading this for the first time and I didn’t already know what happens, what would the impact be?” And if you’re reading it that way, if you haven’t read through it before and you don’t know what’s that’s going to happen, and you read, “Simon Peter was following Jesus and so was another disciple,” do you know what I’m thinking at that point? “Go Peter, and go another disciple. I think that’s John. Man, you guys are awesome.” Peter is doing what he said he was going to do, because in

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John 13:36-38, Jesus said He was going away and they couldn't follow where He was going, and Peter said, "Why can't I follow You now? I'll lay down my life for You. I'll do anything to follow You." And here he is fulfilling his word, he thinks, and we think, in Verse 15. So Peter was following Jesus. Where are the other nine guys? They're nowhere to be seen. So Peter's courage seems admirable, and so was another disciple John.

Remember, Peter, John, and James were Jesus' closest friends. They were the three that were with Him closest in the garden. The other Gospel writers tell us, when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, they were the three that He walked farther away with. "Come with Me. Pray for Me." Those three—Peter, James, and John, they were the three that often were at the special places in Jesus' earthly ministry and life. At the Mount of Transfiguration it was those three—Peter, James, and John. They were His closest friends, because He was true man. He had friends, and Peter was regarded as the leader. He was the most likely to succeed of the disciples. He was the president, though they did kind of argue at times about who was the greatest. Still they knew. Peter was always the one jumping out leading. And so here he is, Jesus' closest friend, and he comes in, John gets him in the door, and then when the slave girl says, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" he said, "I am not." I didn't realize this until just this week, the significance of that word *also*. "***You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?***" The high priest's slaves know John, they know the other disciple, and they know he's a disciple of Jesus. And so when John lets in his friend, it's the natural question, "You're not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" I mean, the girl is not impressed by the fact that John's a disciple, and there's certainly disdain in the question, but John is there and it's open that he's a disciple. And when you understand that—you're not also one of His disciples—it's more astonishing to hear Peter say, "I am not." Then Verse 18:

John 18:18 ~ Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves; and Peter was also with them, standing and warming himself.

Now, why this detail? John is the only one that tells us about a charcoal fire, that they were warming themselves. What is John telling us? He's telling us very clearly that it was night. He's reminding his 1st century readers—remember he's writing to Jews and Jewish proselytes whom he wants to believe in Jesus the Messiah. These are people who know the Jewish customs and the Jewish laws. He's writing and he's reminding them in a somewhat understated way, more of an

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implicit way than an explicit way. He doesn't say, "It was night," but implicitly he makes it clear. Jesus is being tried by Annas, not Caiaphas, and Jesus is being tried at night. They were warming themselves by the charcoal fire at night because it's cold. And the 1st century Jew knew that this was not lawful. Nobody who has upright purposes tries someone in the dead of night. Justice is supposed to be blind, and be open, and transparent, but this shows the nefarious purposes of the enemies of Jesus.

They will do anything to get rid of Him. They will accuse Him of violating the law, and all the time they attack Him and maliciously seek to destroy Him, they themselves are violating the law again, and again, and again. It's as if they're taking the law and beating Him with it. So John gives us that detail in Scene 3. The breathtaking betrayal of His friends is there, and in Verse 18 he transitions back in to Scene 1, the appalling attack of His enemies.

Scene 3: The Appalling Attack of His Enemies:

John 18:19 ~ The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

John tells us what the high priest asks Him about, His disciples. I think John's definitely contrasting here the disciple is asked about His teacher, and the teacher is asked about His disciples, and look at the difference. Jesus is asked about His disciples. What's going on here? Annas is basically asking Him, "Tell me about Your disciples. We want to basically follow up and get all of them." Jesus ignores that wicked request, and instead addresses the issues of His teaching. He continues to protect His sheep. He protects Peter even as Peter throws Him under the bus. This is Annas here, and John's using the title, because he in a sense has that figurative position, though it's not right, he's referring to him that way.

John 18:20 ~ Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and I spoke nothing in secret. 21 Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said."

What's going on here? To really understand it, we have to have an understanding of 1st century Jewish legal practice. And actually, it's not that different than our own. When someone is being tried for a crime, the accused has the right not to be

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questioned. They're questioned by the police, or whatever, but then the trial is going on, they sit over here, and who is questioned? The witnesses are questioned. And it was Jewish established legal precedent that you would not question the man that's accused. You would be talking to witnesses, and there are no witnesses. And so Jesus is pointing out to him the unlawfulness of what is happening here. "Why are you questioning Me? If you're going to try to try Me for teaching falsely, you need to talk to the people who heard Me teach, and I've been teaching everywhere openly." So He's calling into question their practice, and again their motives, the injustice of the proceedings. And how do they respond? One of them sitting there slaps Him. That's what the word *struck* means. It means to hit with an open hand. They slapped Him across the face.

John 18:22 ... "Is that the way You answer the high priest?"

Isn't that astonishing? The very hand the man used to slap the One who made the hand.

John 18:23 ~ Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

Some folks mistakenly compare this to, remember when Paul was talking to the high priest in Acts, and he says to the high priest, "You whitewashed sepulcher." I don't know if that was his exact wording, but basically he said, "You whitewashed tomb," and the people rebuked Paul and said, "That's no way to talk to the high priest." And Paul said, "I'm sorry, I didn't realize he was the high priest, and it wasn't appropriate for me to say that." They say, "Well, Paul apologized, but Jesus didn't." Well, Jesus didn't do anything wrong, of course. This is the one Person that never needs to apologize. There's nobody else that's ever lived that doesn't need to apologize, by the way, in spite of the political cycles and all that kind of nonsense. All of us sin and need to confess it, but Jesus hasn't done what Paul did. Paul attacked the person of the high priest. Jesus is basically pointing out the error and ungodliness of the action of the high priest.

John 18:23 ~ Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?"

Annas can't say anything, and he's thinking, "Obviously I'm exposed," and says, "I'm going to send You to Caiaphas now."

John 18:24 ~ So Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

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John adds the word there *bound*. The indignity of all of this. You come to Scene 4. Again, the breathtaking betrayal of His friends, Verse 25 to 27.

Scene 4: The Breathtaking Betrayal of His Friends:

John 18:25 ~ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?” He denied it, and said, “I am not.”

That was the second time.

John 18:26 ~ One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” 27 Peter then denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.

The first thing to notice is the repetition of the word *denied*. In Verse 25 when he says, “I am not,” this time he adds the word, “He denied it.” In Verse 27: ***Peter then denied it again...*** The word *deny* means to disown, disavow. He’s completely disowning Jesus. It’s a strong word. So is the word Jesus uses when He says, “If you would be My disciple, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me.” You have to disown yourself. You have to repudiate yourself. Peter is disowning Jesus, disavowing Jesus, repudiating Jesus, and he does it three times. That’s certainly not insignificant. Anytime something happens three times, anytime something’s said three times in the Scripture, the biblical revelation, that raises it to the superlative degree, the highest degree. So Peter’s denial is of the highest magnitude, his disavowing of Jesus. This closest and dearest friend deals Him the deepest and most difficult wound. Even as He’s getting ready to bear the weight of our sins, Peter adds to that agony, the intense, emotional, relational agony of being disavowed, disowned, and despised in action.

One thing I want to point out to you too that’s not as obvious in the text, if you have the New American Standard, this is one of the reasons I love this translation is it has a little star if you’ve got an updated version of it. If you look at Verse 26 when it says:

John 18:26 ~ John 18:26 ~ One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off, *said,...

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And there's a little light star. Does anybody have that in your Bible? That star tells you that the word *said* is actually a present tense Greek verb translated here as a past tense verb to make it sound good in English. That's the beauty of it. That's what I like about the NAS. They are acknowledging the text here. We're translating it *said*, but it really actually says ...*says*... or ...*is saying*... What you have here is a dramatic present. You have that in a couple other places in the passage, but in our passage, in one other place. It's in Verse 17.

John 18:17 ~ Then the slave-girl who kept the door *said to Peter,...

There again that star is with the word said, and it means ...*says*... or ...*is saying*...

***John 18:17 ~ ...“You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?”
He *said,...***

There's the star again. Three times the dramatic present is used, and the effect of it is, it's like you're telling a story, and to get the listener into the story, what you say is like, “I went to the store, and I was looking for milk, and I walked down the aisle, and I asked the person there...” You should know where milk is, but anyway, looking for a spice, something more complicated than that. Usually milk is easy to find. But anyway, I'm looking for some spice I've never seen before. Patti's got something on my list and I've got no idea what it is. It's just this and I ask the person. Okay, I walk in and I go to the person, and I ask them, and he says to me. Do you see that, the change of tense? I went to the store, I walked down the aisle, I was looking, and I ask. What's happening is the speed of the narrative is slowing down to real time, and it's like highlighting and focusing in on that moment. Do you see that? That's the dramatic present. So when John uses that, he uses it to focus us in. In Verse 17, “The slave-girl is saying to Peter,” and John quotes her exactly:

John 18:17 ~ ...“You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?”

And then:

John 18:17 ~ He *said (is saying), “I am not.”

It's the same thing in Verse 26:

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John 18:26 ~ One of the slaves of the high priest, being a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off,...

This guy would remember. He was obviously with him, and maybe the light of the fire gets a little brighter, and he sees him, and then, “Wait a minute. I know you, I think. You’re the one who cut the ear off of my friend.” “...and says to him...” So what’s happening is that’s really being highlighted by the word choice of the apostle. The dramatic present, the use of the repetition of the word *denial* all to intensify the agony that Jesus was feeling as time was slowing down. You know when you’re in pain how five minutes can seem like an incredibly long period of time. When you’re hurting, you take some pain medication. “How long has it been since I took this? It’s supposed to help in how long? Twenty minutes? How long has it been? It feels as if it’s been an hour. It’s only been ten minutes.”

So Jesus is experiencing that kind of suffering, and He is aware of what’s happening, because the other Gospel writers tell us when Peter says it the third time, he saw Jesus locked eyes with him, and the rooster crowed. But here the emphasis is not so much on Peter’s pain as the other Gospel writers show, for him to see Jesus. The rooster crows, and the other Gospel writers tell us that he then wept bitterly, but John’s emphasis isn’t about what’s happening to Peter. It’s about what’s happening to Jesus. So those four scenes show us the appalling attacks of His enemies, and the breathtaking betrayal of His friends. Now let’s consider the implications. We’ve observed the action. Let’s quickly consider the implications.

2) Consider the Implications:

The first implication, of course, is the suffering of the Savior, the greatness of His suffering. The extent, we said, is physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. I mentioned earlier that the prophet Isaiah said He’s a man of sorrows, that His life is characterized by sorrow. That’s the nature of the man Christ Jesus. His whole life was agony and pain. To be spotless and sinless, and to live in a sinful world was perpetual pain. Do you know how you feel sometimes when you see the ugliness of sin paraded? You see something happen, you hear about some tragic circumstance, some wicked, despicable act, and your heart is grieved. We feel something of what we’re told that righteous Lot felt in Sodom, grieved by the sin around him. If you and I can feel that, how much more the perfect, spotless Son of God, the agony of the wickedness around Him? And then there’s the agony of the mental anguish. Do you not feel frustrated at times? It seems like as things get darker and darker, I’d just sometimes like to slap everybody. I don’t mean like

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really. Just, “Wake up! What’s wrong with you all? What are you thinking?” You talk about some issue and it’s just so clear this is right. This is true. And particularly when you come to spiritual things, the Gospel is so clear, isn’t it? The fact that God created the world in six days, that evolution when you really look at it, doesn’t make sense. It’s becoming clearer, and clearer, and clearer, and yet they won’t believe. Why? We feel intense mental anguish in moments where people we care about will not come around. The Son of God felt that unfathomably more every day. The injustice of being mistreated, have you been falsely accused? Have you had people that you care about and love you misjudge you, mischaracterize you, charge you, judge you, sentence you without even hearing you? Isn’t that so painful? How much more has the Son of God experienced that? What you see is in that He’s a man of sorrows, that He suffered in every part of His human self, and He suffered at a greater depth and greater magnitude in every single area, He is truly able to minister to you no matter where you find yourself.

What I quoted last week, I think, was Corrie ten Boom, remember? The lady in the concentration camp whose sister died, her brother, her father died in the concentration camp. They weren’t Jews. They were Christians who were helping Jews, and the Germans interned them, and most of them died in the horror and agony of those they tried to protect. But Corrie ten Boom was released, and she lived to tell us the story, and her sister said, “Corrie, we must go everywhere and tell people all over the world that no matter how deep the pit you find yourself, Jesus is deeper still.” The reason He is deeper still is because He has suffered to a greater extent. This is exactly what the author of Hebrews is saying when he says:

Hebrews 2:14 ~ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,...

Look at Verse 17:

Hebrews 2:17 ~ Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Because He has suffered like you are suffering, He’s able to come to your aid. In Hebrews 4:15, the writer of Hebrews says:

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Hebrews 4:15 ~ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

He can sympathize. He can feel what you feel.

Hebrews 5:7 ~ In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

He understands. That's the suffering of the Savior, and then you also see in this passage, though, the sovereignty of God, the second implication. The first implication is the suffering of the Savior. The second implication is the sovereignty of the Savior.

It's clearest in Verse 27. He's the one that said, "Peter, you'll deny Me three times before the rooster crows. Even though it looks like all of this injustice is happening, this wickedness is happening, I am reigning. Never forget I am on the throne," is what Jesus is saying. What a blessing that is. We have a Savior that's on the throne, and yet still able to come and sympathize with us in our agony. And then finally, the necessity of the Savior. The three implications are the suffering of the Savior, the sovereignty of the Savior, and the necessity of the Savior. One of the things I think that John is doing for us is he's teaching us this. D. A. Carson said this in his commentary. He's making clear by the way he unfolds the narrative this fact. Peter cannot follow Jesus until Jesus dies for Peter. Remember Verse 15 of Chapter 18. Simon Peter was following Jesus. In John 13, I said earlier, remember when Jesus said, "I'm going somewhere. Where I'm going, you cannot follow." Peter said, "Why can't I follow You now? Right now I'll lay down my life for You." Peter wants to follow Jesus, but he cannot follow Jesus until Jesus dies for Peter, and that's good news. You and I cannot be what we're supposed to be apart from the death, the triumph of the cross and the resurrection. We have a Savior who has suffered everything that you or I could ever suffer, so that He can be our dear friend. He's sovereign, and He knows that we need His grace to the full. When Peter said, "I'll die for You. I'll lay down my life for You," He said, "Will you lay down your life for Me? I tell you, before the rooster crows, you'll deny Me three times." We need to learn from that. Don't do it in your own strength. Always cast yourself upon the sufficiency of the Savior, a Savior who has suffered, and bled, and died, that everyone who repents and believes can be His forever.

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Let's go to the Lord in prayer...

Our Father, we give You praise. Lord Jesus, we marvel at the great Savior that You are, that You have done everything necessary to purchase dirty, filthy sinners like us, people who like sheep are always going astray. You have taken our sins out of the way by being an offering for our sins. We marvel. We pray that we would continue by Your grace to understand more of the great price that You paid every day, that it would become more astonishing, more amazing, and more glorious every day of our lives until we leave this world or You come back for us, for we know that in eternity, every moment throughout all eternity we will celebrate with deeper awareness and joy, the wonder of what you've done for us. We praise Your Name, oh great Savior. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

"The Greatness of Our Savior's Suffering"

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