

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN
Lesson 17 – Study Questions
John 18:1-40

DAY ONE

1. What thoughts from last week's Spiritual Reflection or commentary spoke to you this week? Record some thoughts here to share with your group.

Read John 18:1-6

2a. In last week's lesson Jesus spoke His last words of prayer to His Father in Heaven for His beloved followers in the Upper Room. After that where did Jesus go and with whom according to verse 1?

b. Review Matthew 26:36-46. In your own words briefly describe where they were, the time of day, who was with Jesus, what they were doing and what Jesus said at the end of verse 45.

3. According to verse 2, who else knew the place, and for what reason?

NOTE: The Kidron Valley lies to the East of the city of Jerusalem. The distance between the Upper Room (site of the Last Supper) and the Garden of Gethsemane can be walked in about one-half hour.

4a. Verse 3 includes an interesting statement: Judas "got" a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees. From the end of that verse, what did they bring with them?

b. For what reason do you think the soldiers and guards needed to bring weapons?

5a. Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him (beginning of verse 4). Reread the verses from Matthew (see question 2b above) and select one that you think particularly reflects Jesus' foreknowledge and the reason you chose it.

b. Jesus went out to the soldiers and guards and directly addressed them (verse 4). What does this say about Jesus' courage and faith? How might you have felt as a disciple watching Him?

6a. Jesus asked them "Whom are you looking for?" (end of verse 4). What was their answer and Jesus' dignified response in verse 5?

THINK: With the statement of "I AM" John sets the confusion of the arresting party against Jesus' divine majesty. (NABRE notes) Take a moment to meditate on the great "I AM" and offer praise to our Lord.

b. John points out again that Judas was with the guards and soldiers. Record their amazing reaction upon hearing Jesus' reply (verse 6) and comment on whether you think Judas might have had the same reaction. Why or why not?

7. CONNECTION: Jesus knew what was going to happen and prepared Himself by going with His most beloved disciples to Gethsemane to pray. Like Jesus, when we know something difficult lies ahead for us, we, too, need time apart with our Father. Is there a special garden (or place) where you feel closest to God, and where you can be revived in mind, body or heart? If so, describe that place and a recent time when being there gave you the opportunity to renew your spiritual or physical strength. Share a few details on what you do while you are there.

A sweet old hymn reflects on the peace of walking with God in the garden. Read the following and find time today to "come to the garden" with God.

I come to the garden alone while the dew is still on the roses and the voice I hear falling on my ear the Son of God discloses. And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own; And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

DAY TWO

Read John 18:7-14

8a. In verse 7 Jesus again asked the soldiers and guards “whom are you looking for?” and they again responded “Jesus the Nazorean.” In verse 8 Jesus answered “I told you that I AM.” What else did He tell them in verse 8?

b. This was to fulfill what Jesus had said, “I have not lost any of those you gave me.” Select and record one of the following passages to which He may have referred:

John 6:39

John 10:28

John 17:12

9a. Simon Peter reacted to the conversation between Jesus and the soldiers. What did Peter do in verse 10 and to whom?

b. Jesus told Peter: “Put your sword back into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?” (verse 11). What do you think Jesus meant by “drink the cup”?

10. What did the band of soldiers, tribune and the Jewish guards do to Jesus according to verse 12?

11. Jesus was taken to Annas the former high priest and the father-in law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. How is Caiaphas described in verse 14?

12. CONNECTION: Simon Peter loved Jesus. He must have been angry and frightened to impulsively draw his sword and strike off the high priest’s slave’s ear. We, too, can be impulsive, letting our emotions run ahead of what Jesus would want us to do. Sometimes we realize that, like Peter, we have acted or spoken hastily, causing hurt feelings or a broken relationship. Give an example of a time when Jesus helped you mend damage caused by thoughtless words or actions. Has this experience changed you in any way?

Read and record Proverbs 14:1 and begin your prayer asking for a kind and thoughtful spirit.

DAY THREE
Read John 18:15-18

13a. As today's lesson begins Jesus had been brought to Annas. According to the first part of verse 15, who followed Jesus?

NOTE: John refers to Annas as the high priest even though his son in law Caiaphas was actually the high priest. Annas had been removed by the Romans against Jewish law and the Jews still held him in high regard. This is the only Gospel that refers to him.

b. In the second part of verse 15, what else do we learn about the "other disciple" and who do you think he was?

14. Peter remained standing outside at the gate. What did the "other disciple" do and what was the result (verse 16)?

15a. When the woman who guarded the gate saw Peter, she asked him if he was one of Jesus' disciples. Record Peter's response (verse 17).

b. A denial can be as simple as remaining silent instead of speaking up. Compare Peter's cowardly response to Jesus' forthright declaration of His divinity: I AM (verses 5 and 8). What does Peter's denial suggest or reaffirm about mankind?

16a. From the first part of verse 18, what were the slaves and guards doing?

b. Verse 18 ends with Peter standing and keeping warm with the very ones who had arrested Jesus. From John's detailed description we can almost feel the warmth of the fire and Peter's fear. Many great artists have painted this scene. See if you can find an example to share with your group and comment on the different emotions you see in the painting.

17. CONNECTION: In today's passage Peter followed Jesus after His arrest, but only at a distance. Peter denied Jesus by pretending not to know Him. When we are concerned about what other people think, we sometimes fail to speak up to defend the truth. Was there a time when you wish you had stepped forward rather than hanging back and "warming your hands by the fire?" Were there repercussions? Share some reflections with your group.

Read and record James 4:17 and pray today to our Lord to give you the courage to do the right thing.

DAY FOUR

Read John 18:19-24

18. As today's lesson begins, Annas the high priest began to question Jesus. About what two things did he ask Him (verse 19)?

19. Jesus answered by explaining that He had always spoken in public and never in secret (verse 20). What did He suggest Annas do (verse 21)?

20. According to verse 22, one of the temple guards struck Jesus. What did he ask Jesus and what do you think he was trying to accomplish?

21. Complete Jesus' calm and rational answer to the guard (verse 23).

If I have spoken wrongly,

But if I have spoken rightly,

22. After questioning Jesus, where did Annas send Jesus and in what condition (verse 24)?

23. CONNECTION: How shocking that when Jesus answered Annas truthfully, the guard struck Him in the face; yet, how amazing that Jesus refused to condemn the man but calmly and kindly instructed him how to act. Sadly, sometimes we encounter those who are waiting to twist our words or to interpret them in the worst light. Sometimes they are even our friends or loved ones! What can you do to remain calm and positive? Do you try to find humor in the situation? What other alternatives are there to follow Jesus' example?

Read and record Matthew 5:39 and let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY FIVE

Read John 18:25-32

24a. As today's lesson begins, Simon Peter was still standing and warming himself at the fire (verse 25). Once again he was asked if He was one of Jesus' disciples. What did Peter do for the second time?

b. One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the slave whose ear Peter had cut off, asked again “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him” (verse 26)? What did Peter do for the third time and what happened immediately after (verse 27)?

25. Envision Peter bowed over with grief and remorse because he has denied his friend and Savior 3 times. For every sin of commission or omission we, too, deny Christ. Write a short prayer asking forgiveness for your sins or record the Act of Contrition and take a few moments to pray.

26. In the first part of verse 28, where was Jesus taken, and what time of the day did this take place?

27a. The Jewish leadership took Jesus to the praetorium, to the house of Pilate, the Roman governor in Jerusalem. Why did they decide not to enter (verse 28)?

b. What do you find interesting about their concern with defilement?

28a. Pilate came out to the Jews. What was his first question (verse 29)?

b. How did the crowd answer in verse 30?

29a. Pilate told the Jews to take Jesus and judge Him according to their law. What was their response in verse 31?

b. The explanation given by John in verse 32 is that this was to fulfill what Jesus said when He indicated the kind of death He was to die. Record one of the following passages in which Jesus prophesied that He would be lifted up on the cross.

John 3:14

John 8:28

John 12:32-33

30. CONNECTION: It would be easy for us to judge Peter harshly. He witnessed the miraculous works of Jesus, but now Jesus appears to have lost all power and is bound in ropes. Peter is also bound, but by despair, fear, disappointment, and guilt. Jesus knew that Peter's failure would help prepare his heart to become the shepherd of His flock. What do you think enabled Peter to withstand the despair and grief that must have accompanied his betrayal? How do you relate to Peter?

Read and record Matthew 16:18. Let thoughts about Peter's faith journey lead you into prayer.

DAY SIX

Read John 18:33-40

31. As today's lesson begins, Pilate went back into the praetorium, summoned Jesus, and asked Him, "Are you the King of the Jews" (verse 33)? What was Jesus' response in verse 34?

32. In your own words, how did Pilate answer in verse 35?

33. Jesus answered Pilate in verse 36 with a powerful message about His kingdom. Complete Jesus' reply to Pilate.

My kingdom does not belong to this world.

my attendants (would) be fighting to

But as it is,

34a. Pilate again asked Jesus if He was a king in verse 37, to which Jesus replied "You say that I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Has Jesus declared Himself a king, and if so, what is His kingdom and who are His subjects?

b. In verse 38 Pilate asked what appears to be a cynical question, "What is truth?" in response to Jesus' answer. Do you think this question is ironic, and if so, for what reason?

NOTE: Jesus explained His kingship in terms of His heavenly identity and mission as the incarnate Word: He came into the world to testify to the truth. Jesus exercises His kingly power by bearing witness to the truth in love, by giving His life on the cross and by so doing, he has “conquered the world.” (Martin & Wright)

35a. Pilate went out to the Jews, told them that he found no case against Jesus, and offered to release Him. To what custom does the Gospel refer regarding this offer (verse 39)?

b. The crowd shouted in reply: “Not this one but Barabbas (verse 40).” How is Barabbas described and how do you think the world of Barabbas contrasts with that of Jesus?

36. CONNECTION: Pilate asked Jesus ‘What is truth?’ Although Pilate may have wanted to know the truth and recognized Jesus’ innocence, he succumbed to pressure from the crowd. In Jesus we have a standard for truth and for moral behavior. Hollywood and the media have encouraged society to base their actions on how they “feel” rather than on God’s Word. Cite some examples in today’s society where truth is seen in relative terms and how you combat this malady in your own life.

Read Zechariah 8:16-17 and record one of the commands as part of your prayer today.

Read Lesson 17 John 18:1-40 in the *Meditation and Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Rev. Alfred McBride, O. Praem. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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