A Long Night

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Date: 01 November 2026

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[0:00] Amen. Kiddos, you are now excused to your King's Kids class. If you would open up your Bibles to John 18. Have you ever had a long night?

Over to my right, I heard, yeah, yes. When we talk about long nights, we're not talking about a night that somehow has more time in it. We're talking about a long night, and it's long because you're not asleep.
You're awake. It's a sleepless night. A long night caring for a sick child or a scared child.
A long night waiting in the ER. A long night of anxious toil. What's going to happen?
A long night of travel. I remember sleeping for 45 minutes on the ground of Miami International Airport. Some of our long nights are particularly memorable.
[1:27] They're historic because what happened during that long night was life-changing. And this morning, John, who is the author of the Gospel of John, details for us the long night Jesus experienced before his crucifixion.

It was his last night. It was a long, sleepless night. And what we're going to see, it was an evening filled with irony.
Filled with contrasts. An evening of multiple fulfillments of the very words of God. This long night was historic for all of humanity.
For all of us. What John shows us in this scene is life-changing for those who believe it actually happened.
There are three scenes I'm going to walk you through. Scene one takes place in a garden. Scene two happens in a house. And scene three wraps up in a Roman headquarters known as a praetorium.
[2:43] Now, the question that we've got to ask is this. How does this long night for Jesus that took place nearly 2,000 years ago, how does that make a difference in our lives today?

Because you could say, well, Jesus had a hard night. I've had hard, long nights too. Wah! But what you're going to see is that this long night of Jesus, things are revealed about him that are awe-inspiring.
And the one application I want you to leave with, I'm telling you up front, is to be amazed by Jesus. So, let's start.
First scene, scene one in a garden. And this is chapter 18, 1 through 11. Because we've got a bunch of real estate we've got to cover, I'm just going to summarize the passages.
And so, the disciples have recently observed the Last Supper. Jesus has washed their feet. He has explained to his disciples that he's departing and that the Holy Spirit is coming and that they need to abide in him.
[3:55] He's the vine. They need to bear much fruit. In chapter 17, he has this extended prayer. And then in chapter 18, verse 1, Jesus crosses over the valley of Kidron where the Brook Kidron is and he comes outside of Jerusalem and goes into this garden.

And the garden has a name. Gethsemane. And it's in the garden of Gethsemane that Judas, the betrayer, comes back on the stage of the story.
Remember, he had left after the supper. He went out into the darkness. Well, he comes back onto the scene here. And then what transpires is that Judas is leading this military unit of Roman soldiers as well as temple guards and they're there to get Jesus.
But Jesus has a little Q&A with him. Jesus initiates it. And then this account wraps up with Simon Peter going Peter on a guy named Malchus and cleaves off his ear.
It's an interesting little account in a garden. Let me point out some irony here. What happens in the garden is ironic in one sense because it's a reunion.

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[5:24] The 11 disciples have come with Jesus back to the garden. We learn in 18.2, now Judas who betrayed him also knew the place. He was familiar with Gethsemane for Jesus often met there with his disciples.

Jesus had spent time there with Jesus and the other disciples. This is a kind of like reunion of the original disciples. But it's very ironic because Judas is not there to follow Jesus.
Judas is there to betray Jesus and it's visible. If you look at chapter 18 verses 4 and 5, it's who Judas is standing with. He is standing opposed to Jesus with these armed soldiers.
This is a bit of a twist. Now imagine you're not familiar with the story and you're reading this account for the first time. You would be like, what? Judas is there?
It's a twist. Ironic twist. And there's fulfillment to this. Jesus said that he would be betrayed by Judas.
[6:51] And he said that back in chapter 13 verse 21. I'll just read it for you. After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

And then the one who was leaning against Jesus in verse 25 said, Lord, who is it? And then Jesus answered, it is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.
So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. You see, what's happening here is fulfillment of prophecy. The fulfillment of Jesus' very words.
There's also another kind of fulfillment. And that comes a little later where Jesus says, in verse 8, Jesus answered, I told you that I am he, so if you seek me, let these men go.
This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken of those whom you gave me. I have lost not one.
That's from the prayer he just prayed in chapter 17. This is full of fulfillment.
[8:01] This is all coming together. This is God's plan all coming together. There is nothing random about what's happening here, which means this.

The betrayal is part of God's plan for our salvation. It's all according to plan. fulfillment. And then there's a contrast.
You can make a number of different contrasts here, but what I want you to notice is the contrast between Jesus and Peter. Notice this. In verse 4, this Judas' crew comes out and Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, he knows what's about to happen.
He came forward and said to them, Jesus initiates. He's not running away. He says, whom do you seek?
They answered him, this guy, his name is Jesus, you know, the Jesus from Nazareth, that Jesus, that dude. And then Jesus said to them, it's in Greek, it's ego eimi.
[9:18] Eimi. Before Abraham was, ego eimi. I am. When Jesus said to them, verse 6, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground.

Now that's really strange. What's that all about? Well, Jesus is saying something extraordinary. We know who he is as the readers.
We know he's the great I am incarnate. And so when they say, we're looking for Jesus of Nazareth, the man, Jesus says, I am.
And what he's saying is, I am the man and I am the I am. It's an affirmation of both fullness of humanity, fullness of deity.
And that's why I believe these guys were knocked down. He repeats it. Verse 7, so he asked them again, whom do you seek?
[10:30] And they said, Jesus of Nazareth, the guy. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he. Ego emi. So if you seek me, let these men go. Again, that fulfilled prophecy.

So Jesus is, he's courageous. He's not backing down. He knows everything that's about to happen to him. And he stands before them and he's like, I am.
Period. Contrast that with Peter. Peter doesn't know everything. Peter's a hothead.
Not that anyone in the room would be able to relate with Peter. Peter. And what Peter does, not knowing what is happening here, he pulls out like an 18-inch sword and he cuts off Malchus' left ear.
Now, that should make you realize something. This is an eyewitness account. When you have a name like that with detail like that, this is an eyewitness account. He flips.
[11:50] He's not, doesn't have his head about him, not like Jesus. He's not controlled like Jesus. He's not initiating, he's resisting what's going on where Jesus is allowing what's going on.

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Jesus is permitting this to happen. I mean, why would the great I am let these soldiers come and arrest him?
Jesus is allowing this to happen. Peter resists. And Jesus says to him, shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?
The cup is a reference to Psalm 75. It's the cup of God's wrath. John 3, 36. Jesus knows why he's there.
He's there. This long night is going to culminate in him going to the cross where he will bear all of God's wrath for anyone who would believe in him.
[13:03] So in this scene, we have irony, we have fulfillment, we have contrast. And what we're seeing in Jesus is, despite the stress, Jesus is cool. He's controlled.

And God's plan is coming together. In surprising ways, we move from this garden to a house.
In verses 12 through 14, this band of soldiers who have come out for him, they arrest Jesus and bound him.
So Jesus allows himself to be arrested and bound. They have no idea who they have arrested and bound. And they bring him to Annas, the high priest.
Just a little background because there's a couple references to high priests here and it can be a little confusing. Annas is the father-in-law of Caiaphas.
[14:09] And Caiaphas, at this time, was the acting high priest. He was the high priest. Annas was a former high priest. And so it's kind of like presidents. You know how we reference like President Bush or President Obama.

They're not really the acting president, but they were the president, so you call them president.
That's what's going on here. It was Annas, the high priest. He was the former high priest. And now he's just doing like an information gathering session with Jesus to see if he should go to see Caiaphas.
And there's a remarkable contrast here. You guys ready for this? Here's what happens. You have two interrogations happening in Annas' house simultaneously.
John has very purposefully interwoven these so you can see the contrast. The first interrogation I want to help you to see is the interrogation of Peter.
There were two disciples who were following Jesus when he was arrested and brought to Annas' house. We see this in verses 15 and 16 and 17. And it was Peter and this other disciple who's most likely John and most likely has some kind of familial connection with Annas' household.
[15:32] And so John gets in. And then he finds a way. He talks to the servant girl doorkeeper and says, let Peter in too. So Peter kind of comes in to the doorway and that's where the interrogation starts.

So Peter's outside at the door. She's brought in in verse 16. In verse 17 the servant girl at the door said to Peter, you also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?
Weren't you with him? Aren't you one of his disciples? This is a servant girl. She's an image bearer of God. She has intrinsic value and worth but she's not Pilate.
She's not Annas. She's not Caiaphas. And what does Peter do? I am not.
It is the exact opposite of what Jesus said. I am. He's like, I am not. Nope. Not me. You're mixing us up.
[16:43] And in verse 18 then he just, he just wants to blend in with the crowd. He goes, finds the fire and he's hanging out now with kind of like getting warm with the other guys around the fire and that's where this little scene ends.

Peter next to the fire with these soldiers. And then what John does next is he puts in 1924, it's the interrogation of Jesus, but then in verses 25 and 27 through 27, he comes back to the fire.
Look at verse 25. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself by the fire. So John comes back to that scene and those by the fire, they said to him, you also are not one of his disciples, are you?
He denied it and said, I am not. It's like identical to what happened with the servant girl. They're not named. These are like low-level soldiers. He's like, there's no way.
Nope, you got it wrong. And then one of the servants, verse 26, of the high priest, a relative of Malchus. This is where it gets a little hot, even hotter.
[18:01] He's like, hey, didn't I see you in the garden? Weren't you there too? Peter denies it.
These are two bookends, interrogative bookends, to what happens to Jesus.

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Now let's look at that. In verses 25, excuse me, 19 through 24, 19, Annas questions Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.
And in verse 20 through 21, Jesus says this. And it sounds a little rude at first, but hear it out. He answered, I have spoken openly to the world.
I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews came together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask? Ask those who have heard me what I said, have heard me what I said to them.
They know what I said. And so it sounds kind of like, well, Jesus, you're kind of being kind of being kind of a little rude there. What he's doing is he's appealing to due process.
[19:16] He's appealing to facts. He's appealing to just the normal way you go to figure out if someone said something to be true or not.

He's like, there are witnesses, you can talk to them. You know what I've said. And so what Jesus is doing here, he's keeping his head, he's cool, but he's also saying, hey, there's a process here.
And so, he says in 21, ask those who have heard me what I said to them. They know what I said.
And then, an officer slaps him.
We're not told if it's a backhand. We're not told if it's a forehand. But what the officer then says is, is that how you answer the high priest?
You see what's going on here? This is not an issue of right or wrong. This is not an issue of what was said or not said. This is an issue of who's in control, who's being given respect.
[20:35] He has no idea that he just slapped the face of God incarnate. Very ironic. No idea.

And then Jesus comes back in verse 23, and again, he doesn't react in kind. He says, if what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong.
Show me. But if what I said is right, why do you strike me? And they don't even answer him. Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.
Oh yeah, you need to go see the high priest. He's not even given an answer. This contrast is between Peter's denials, the bookends, and Jesus' truthfulness.
He remains true. The contrast is between Peter Peter caving and Jesus being courageous.
[21:54] It's about being faithful. And the irony is that Peter, in order to avoid the consequences of being associated with Jesus, denies Jesus to a bunch of nobodies.

Where Jesus, accepting the consequences, he knows what's going to happen to him. He stands his ground to men who can kill him.
And one's named Annas. And then Caiaphas' name is dropped. There's a lot going on here in this house.
There's also fulfillment. There's a bit of an ironic fulfillment in that it was Caiaphas back in chapter 11 after Lazarus has been raised from the dead and the Jewish leaders are left scrambling to figure out how to keep this under wraps.
It's Caiaphas who says that it's better for one person to die for the country, for the nation. And here it is coming to pass. But it's also the fulfillment of chapter 13 verse 38.
[23:22] Simon Peter said to him, this is 36, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered, where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterwards. Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now?

I will lay down my life for you. Jesus answered, will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.
Did everybody see? Where is it? the cock-a-doodle-doo? Peter again denied it and at once a rooster crowed verse 27.
You see, there's nothing random about this night. Jesus absolutely knows what's going on. Everything's coming to pass as God ordained it.
there's fulfillment, there's irony, there's contrast. And now we move to the last scene. Roman HQ, the praetorium in verses 28 through 40.
[24:40] Something interesting happens in verse 28. Verse 28 says, then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. What's interesting is, there's no account of what happened at Caiaphas' house.

We go from the end of that second scene with Annas, he sends him to Caiaphas and then this last scene picks up with, now Jesus is sent from Caiaphas' house to the praetorium.

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And what it basically means is Caiaphas found him guilty. And now we've got to send him to Pilate. We've got to send him to the praetorium.
And what's interesting about this last scene, it actually has three acts to it. Act one takes place outside the praetorium. Act two takes place inside the praetorium.
And act three is back outside the praetorium. So act one is verses 28 through 32. And what happens here is it's early morning, it's been a long night, they show up to the Roman praetorium and they don't go in.
[26:02] Pilate comes out and Pilate asks them what accusation do you bring against this man? What's the charge? And the Jews who have brought him there, they say, trust us, he's done evil, okay?

We don't need to make this a big deal. Just put your stamp on this. 31, Pilate says, take him yourselves, judge him by your own law, and then the truth comes out.
the Jews said to him, it's not lawful for us to put anyone to death. At this time in Jerusalem, Rome was in control and there was no way that Rome would allow people like the Jews to be able to put a criminal to death.
That was Roman business only. And so the reason why the Jews are there with Jesus is to get his okay to put Jesus to death. So Caiaphas found him guilty of some kind of crime that was worthy of death.
And then Pilate wants to know for himself. So we move to the second act of the scene. We go from being outside the praetorium, the Jews wanting Pilate to kill him and then Pilate's like, okay, I gotta get the facts.
[27:34] Let me talk to this fellow myself. And so verses 33 through 38, he brings him into the praetorium and so it's just Jesus and Pilate having this conversation and Pilate begins in the most interesting of ways.

33, are you the king of the Jews? It's an interesting way to start a conversation. You see, he is not interested.
He's not interested in whether Jesus is the Jewish Messiah. He's not interested in what the Bible says about Jesus. He's not interested in what these Jews are trying to claim about Jesus.
He, representing Rome, is interested in whether or not this man poses a threat to Rome. Is he some kind of insurrectionist? Is he going to lead some kind of coup?
Is he going to lead some kind of revolt? That's why he's now going to talk to him. He's going to find out for himself if he really needs to be put to death. Jesus then says, hey, do you say this of your own accord or did others say it about me?
[28:46] 34 is basically, is this coming from you or do you just hear this? To which Pilate says, verse 35, am I a Jew?

What, you think I'm Jewish? You think I care? This is scoffing. It's like, why are you asking me that? And then he says, your own nation and chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done? you see, Jesus is trying to get onto what do you believe about me?
And Pilate's kind of like, what, am I a Jew? I don't care. Do you not realize that you've been delivered to me? Your people delivered you to me?
What have you done? at this moment, the reader can think, oh man, Pilate's in control. What's going to happen? But that's the irony of this moment.
[29:56] What do we know? What we know is, yes, he has been delivered over to Pilate by these Jewish leaders, but this is God at work.

this is God behind the scenes bringing to pass his will. And then when he says, what have you done? We know our Lord has been obedient.
He's been faithful. He's done nothing wrong. He's allowed himself to be slapped and mocked and brought to this place.
That's what we know. Jesus says, my kingdom is not of this world.
If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting. At this point, I'm guessing he's like, kind of except Peter, kind of a thing, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews, but my kingdom is not from this world.
[31:03] Twice he says, my kingdom is not from this world. And here's what he's getting at. My kingdom, my reign didn't originate from the world. It originated from heaven.

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That's why I was sent. In fact, those citizens of mine are called out from the world. They've been made new. They've been born again.
They're no longer of this world. To which Pilate says, so you are a king. Kingdom, you must be a king. Jesus says, you say so.
And then we learn something. In verse 37, Jesus says, for this purpose I was born, and for this person I've come into the world.
This is my reason for coming. He's telling Pilate this. Who is holding the authority to kill him? He says, I've been born of this, this is what I was born for, what I've come for, to bear witness to the truth.
[32:14] To proclaim that God has sent me his Messiah to die in the place of sinners under God's wrath. To bring them new life, eternal life.

To bring about a whole new kingdom. This is him, what he's talking about, to bear witness to the truth. And then he says, everyone who is of the truth listens to me.
Remember back in John 10 where Jesus talks about my sheep hear my voice and follow me? You hear Jesus witness to the truth and you're like, yeah, I'm following him.
I'm in. in. Interestingly enough, Pilate said to him, what is truth?
This is not Pilate having an honest philosophical question about the chorus upon its theory of truth. Jesus, now that I got you for a minute, can you kind of explain to me the philosophical tenets of this?
[33:25] I just don't understand truth. That's not what he's doing. This is more along the lines of what he said in verse 35. What, am I a Jew? It's like, what is truth?

It's a scoff. What are you talking about? Truth. At this moment, I think Pilate has come to the realization that Jesus is just some kind of idealistic leader of a Jewish sect and poses no threat to the Roman nation.
What is truth? Ironically, he is speaking to I am the way, the truth, and the life. He's talking to truth incarnate.
So, in the middle of verse 38, the scene changes, the act changes. It goes from being in the praetorium now back outside. Pilate has made his decision, and he says, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, I find no guilt in him.
That's a contrast. The Jews find him guilty, and Pilate finds him not guilty. Pilate has an idea.
[34:54] Say, hey, I don't find him guilty, but I think we can work a deal here. You know that tradition we do where every Passover I release a criminal?

How about we do that with the king of the Jews? I'll release him to you. So what's being put back on the Jews is an opportunity for them to choose who will be released. And they say, not this man. Give us Barabbas, a robber, a real insurrectionist. It's ironic that an insurrectionist, one who has no legal claim, one who's leading a revolt of violence, is chosen over the one who's the true king, who's bringing a kingdom of life.
the God's God's It's a pretty amazing scene. And there's fulfillment.
The fulfillment is from John chapter 12 where Jesus talks about that he must be lifted up. The only way that Jesus could be lifted up on a cross is if he was condemned by Pilate.
[36:32] It's Roman execution. It had to happen. There's nothing random about this. In fact, one of the greatest ironies of this section is why Pilate is outside.

The Jews, if you look at verse 28, they themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters so that they would not be defiled or could eat the Passover.
they are willing to put to death an innocent man and yet, you know, in order to eat this meal, we've got to stay outside.
Isn't that ridiculous? They have no idea who this is. This is full of contrasts. Jesus, who's innocent, is being swapped out for Barabbas, who is guilty.
It's ironic. It's full of fulfillment. So, it's a long night. These three scenes put together represent one long night, the last night of Jesus.
[37:50] It's filled with irony. It's filled with contrast. It's filled with the fulfillment of God's word. Don't miss it. It's most of Jesus' words being fulfilled here because he's God.

John is showing us how God is bringing his plan of salvation all together at just the right time. There's nothing random about what is happening on that long night. all is according to plan. Ain't no stopping God.

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When we see Judas and Peter and Annas and Pilate, we know these are sinful men. The human race is full of sinful men and women.
Maybe you can relate with Pilate. Maybe you're like, can I trust, is this true? Is this Christianity thing true?
[38:59] Is this Jesus guy true? Or maybe you can relate more with Peter. Maybe you're not inclined to chop off people's ears.

Maybe you're more inclined just to cut off people and conversations. Christians. Or maybe you're more like Peter who doesn't have enough courage to confess Jesus in front of a servant girl.
Maybe you can relate with that. You just want to blend in by the fire with everybody else. this passage exposes some things in us.
We're all sinful. Only Jesus is both the man of Nazareth and the great I am incarnate. Only Jesus is that.
He is the guiltless one. He is the one that is innocent. In fact, if you're not a Christian in the room, could it be that you are in the middle of God's great plan for the fullness of time?
[40:30] And that He actually wants you to be in a relationship with Him? Because of your sin, He sent Jesus to die for you.

To bear His wrath for your sin, Jesus died in your place. That's extraordinary. If you realize how sinful you are and what God has done for you in Christ, that's a life-changing moment.
What does this long night, almost 2,000 years ago, what difference does it make in our lives? this long night resulted in salvation.
The piece though that I really want you to walk out of here with is this. It is life-changing to see Jesus in chapter 18.
He knows everything, but He doesn't run away. He's courageous. He allows Himself to be arrested.
[41:41] He allows Himself to be slapped and mocked and disrespected, cut off. Why doesn't Jesus just thump everybody?

He didn't cave like Peter. He didn't cave before Annas or Caiaphas or Pilate. He's sinless.
He has no guilt. His kingdom would outlast Rome. His kingdom is going to outlast the United States. His kingdom is going to outlast the United Nations. Do you know what I find most compelling about this passage?
Every scene, Jesus is cool, collected, determined. And one is left stepping away and saying, hold on a second here.
[42:50] Who's in control? Who's in control? Every scene, Jesus is controlling the scene. Every scene.

There's no stopping Him. And when you start to see that Jesus is not a sissy, He's not a pushover, war, but He is allowing all this stuff to happen in order to save you and me from the wrath of God? That this was God's plan so that He would end up on a Roman cross? When you start realizing that, it is life changing. This is our King.
His ways are not the ways of the world. He allowed Himself to be brought through this in order to accomplish our salvation.
His long night, His last night, resulted in our salvation. And if you believe this long night happened, if you believe that Jesus willingly went to the cross to die for you, if you believe that, you've been saved.
[44:15] It's life changing. This long night, you know what it should result in?

A deep love in your heart for Jesus that He would do this for you and do this for me. So the next time you have a long night, maybe you're toiling at 2 a.m., remember this long night that Jesus willingly endured to make you His own.
It was all according to plan. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, thank You thank You. Thank You for what You've endured for us.
Thank You that You have no regrets. You enjoy seeing the cross.
You willingly went forward Lord for us. Thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

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