

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 18:12-28

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning church. It is a joy and a pleasure to be able to get to share with you guys this morning. As Scott shared my wife and I, it's been about a year now. We're coming up. It's about a month out that we've been here. And when we got here you guys had just started a series on the book of John and here about a year later we're approaching the end of that runway. We only have a few weeks left, a couple chapters to go through. And when we gathered last time what we looked at was the story of where one of Jesus's disciple ultimately betrays him over to the Pharisees. And today we're gonna be picking up right where we left off last time. So if you will turn with me today we're gonna be in John chapter 18 starting in verse 12. And as you turn there, just to give us a little bit of a reminder and some context as to where we are at in the biblical narrative, at this point in time in Jesus's ministry, he's been on the road for about three years now spreading the gospel, healing the sick, raising the dead. And all along this journey Jesus has had 12 disciples that he has gathered and brought with him along the way. These disciples have been with him pretty much since day one. And all over the course of these three years these disciples have got to see the inner life of Jesus. They have walked with him, dined with him, witnessed every great thing that Jesus has ever done. And yet what we saw last time we were here is that one of those disciples for a mere bag of 30 silver, a month's wage, ultimately ends up betraying Jesus, turning him over to the Pharisees, the very people that sought to kill him. And in the Gospel of Mark and his retelling of this story, what he tells us is that not only did Judas betray Jesus, but also all of Jesus's disciples at the time of Jesus's arrest, all of them abandoned him. And today this is where our text picks up, where all of these disciples flee from Jesus except for Peter and one other disciple. So if you will read with me the word of the Lord, John chapter 18 starting in verse 12. So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested

Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Anas for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people. Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple who was known to the high priest went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door and brought Peter in. The servant girl at the door said to Peter, you also are not one of this man's disciples are you? And he said, I am not. Now the servants and the officers had made a charcoal fire because it was cold and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them standing and warming himself. The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them. They know what I said. When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hands saying, is that how you answer the high priest? And Jesus answered him, if what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong, but if what I said is right, why do you strike me? Anas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself, so they said to him, you also are not one of his disciples are you? He denied it and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off asked, did I not see you in the garden with him? And again, Peter denied it and at once a rooster crowed. This text historically speaking is probably the most famous example of a denial of Jesus. Not only is it the most famous example, I think this is one of the darkest and saddest moments in history. Here Peter, who got to do life with Jesus for three years, one of the inner three disciples, one of the ones that got to go up on the mountain and see the transfiguration of Jesus. Here now Peter himself, even though he is following after Jesus, he

has not abandoned him like the others. And yet what we see with Peter is that because of his fear, he's saying, please do not associate me with that man. I think oftentimes when we read this passage, and especially for myself this week, when I first approached this chapter, in my mind I kept thinking, Peter, how could you deny the Lord three times? And I think rightfully so, we often in this text, we will put ourselves in the shoes of Peter and say, would I deny the Lord? And I think all of us would hope to say, Lord, I hope not. And this is where the Lord though convicted even my heart this week, is because what we see here with

Peter in his denial of Jesus, his denial of Jesus is not one of a denial of faith. It's not Peter saying, Jesus, I don't believe in who you are. It's not Peter saying, I don't think that you were the Messiah. But rather when asked if Peter is associated with Jesus, what Peter does is he keeps his faith a secret.

He says, no, no, no, I'm not one of his disciples. I don't know that man. And at least for myself, and actually I imagine for many, if not all of us, oftentimes when confronted with fear, like Peter, we often hide our devotion to Jesus. And so today, as we look at this text, what I want us to wrestle with is the idea that to love Jesus is to follow him. But to follow him is to proclaim him. In verse 12, to lay the scene for us here as to what is ultimately happening in this passage, Jesus has just been arrested. It is likely 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. in the morning.

[7:11] And the reason for this is because it is a small group of Pharisees who absolutely hate Jesus. They want to put him to death. This is their plan. And yet these Pharisees know that due process with the law requires is that Jesus be arrested, but then stand trial before the Sanhedrin. In other words, stand trial before a jury that would ultimately have to decide if Jesus has broken any laws.

And the Pharisees here that ultimately arrest Jesus have no confidence in the fact that they would be able to prosecute Jesus. And so what they do is that they arrest him in the middle of the night, in the wee hours of the morning.

And what verse 12 says, it says, so the band of soldiers and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and they bound him. And first they led him to Annas for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the high priest that year. And it was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people. And so notice here as the Jews arrest Jesus, they are bringing him to the very people that have said, hey, it would be expedient if one man could die for all of our people to quash all of this rebellion that is going on in Jerusalem. And notice here though when Jesus is led away, he is led to this huge compound. It's a complex, it's the high priestly house. But it's more of a giant government building at this point. And as Jesus is led here, he is brought in and what we're told is that he first stands trial before Annas. And what's interesting here is that what the text tells us though is that Annas is not the high priest, but rather the father-in-law to the high priest. And so what's happening here is that Annas, while he was the high priest about 15 years prior to this, over those subsequent 15 years up to this point, five of his children or relatives have now served in the office of the high priest, the highest office in the Jewish religion. Right? And so even though Annas is not the high priest, he is viewed as the patriarch of the family of the high priestly family. And so really it is viewed as him that has the most authority or power or sway over the Roman government and is most likely able to get Jesus put to death without going through a proper trial. And then immediately after this what we're told in verse 15 is that Simon Peter is following after Jesus. And I want you for a second to put yourself in the shoes of Peter. Jesus has just been arrested and what we know of Peter is that just prior to this, what did Peter do? When he doesn't feel fear, when he feels safe, he had just taken a sword and struck a servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And yet now when things are uncertain, now when Jesus is not right by his side, Peter is saying, let me follow at a distance. And what we're told is that as he comes up to this compound, this complex where Jesus is being kept, at this point it seems like there's quite a crowd gathered. So much so that what we're told is that at the door in verse 16 says, but Peter stood outside at the door so that the other disciple who is unnamed, who is known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who is keeping watch at the door. So here at this complex there is but this servant girl in the text, this word for the girl means an immature girl, likely under the age of 14 at this point. And so here we have this little girl and her job is merely only to let those that have association to Jesus or this trial into this complex.

There's too many people. We only want those that are relevant to this case to come in. This girl has no authority. She has no power. She is merely the door holder. And yet what we're told is that as

Peter is standing outside, this other disciple sees him. This other disciple that we're told is known to be a disciple of Jesus and thus is allowed on the inside. Notice here even the imagery that John lays out for us here. Peter here on the outside not wanting to associate and rather the one on the inside close to Jesus is this unnamed disciple. I think it's interesting that this disciple is not named because ultimately it's not about who he is, it's about what he represents. He represents faithfulness to the Lord. And though the text doesn't tell us what I imagine here is happening is that Peter is standing outside, this disciple sees him and comes out to get him. And I imagine Peter here is struck with fear of saying, no please I'm okay you don't have to come get me. I'll stay out here because it's more comfortable out here. I don't know what lies beyond that door, that door of uncertainty. I think Peter here is afraid for his own life. Peter is afraid what is ultimately going to happen to him. And so what we're told is that as this disciple comes and grabs Peter, the servant girl merely asks the question that she's probably been asking everyone else that has been coming through this door merely to discover if he is associated with Jesus, if she should even let him in. And she merely asks the question in verse 17, the servant girl at the door said to Peter, you also are not one of this man's disciples are you? And here Peter says I am not. Three words, I am not. And again notice here the nature of Peter's denial. He's not making any type of statement about who he thinks Jesus is. He's not making any type of statement about his belief or his faith. He's merely saying I'm not associated with him. I think for

Peter here what's probably going on is that in his mind he justifies this. Right? I still have my belief in God. I still have my belief in Jesus. In fact I saw my devotion to him. I came after him. Did I not? I think for many of us that's actually not too far off from where we often find ourselves as we go about the world, as we go about our lives. I think we like Peter often deny Jesus because we are also uncertain about what will happen if we proclaim him, if we make him known. Prior to joining you guys here at 4th Memorial, I was teaching part time at GNU here and at Moody Bible Institute. But my primary source of income is that I was working at Olive Garden just north of here for 12 years. And then actually many of you guys I've gotten to serve over the years and yet out of the 12 years that I served there. And over those 12 years I went through seminary.

[15:05] I was teaching at a Christian college. I had a good relationship with the Lord and yet for nine out of those 12 years I never once proclaimed Jesus in my workplace. Never once. And in my mind I'm thinking okay well what are the two things that we never talk about at work? Well politics and religion right?

And don't get me wrong in my mind I'm saying well I don't want to offend or I'm thinking well maybe if I have opportunity God just make it clear right if someone asks me about Jesus well sure I'll share it with them. But for nine years I never share Jesus with anyone. I'm just like Peter here I'm keeping my faith a secret. And to the outside world they have no idea of my association with him. And after nine years what ended up happening is that in my pride one night I was angry I was upset. I remember just praying to the Lord I said Lord I have a master's degree in philosophy and yet here I am working at Olive Garden right the classic philosopher job right bartending on the weekends right? But immediately and it was in my pride that I did this but immediately the Lord convicted my heart and he said Cole you asked to go to the lost. You asked to go to those that don't know me and for the last four years at this point at Olive Garden I'd been bartending. And for those of you that have either spent any amount of time in a bar or a bartended yourself were really cheap therapists right? And so people come right and they like to drink and then just tell me all of their problems. But for so many years right my question

I would as a good bartender does I'd always ask the question well how are you doing today? And all the time I would just get spewed on unloaded with all of their life problems. And for years my response was I'm sorry to hear that what are you drinking today? Right? It's funny but it is so sad. It is so sad. And so that next day after that night right where the Lord convicted my heart right? I remember I parked my car right and I'm walking across the parking lot getting ready to go into Olive Garden and I merely said a prayer to the Lord and there's still some pride in this. I said okay Lord then give me opportunity.

Right? As if he hadn't. Right? In my mind I'm thinking fine Lord do you want me to do it? Then give me opportunity. I kid you not the very first person that sat at my bar that day. I asked that question how you doing today and they respond with man it's been a hard day. Notice here at this point I'm at crossroads because in the back of my heart I feel the Lord saying hey here's your opportunity. Here it is. Are you gonna proclaim me or are you gonna disassociate with me? And it was hard. Don't get

me wrong in that moment I'm going through everything that I think we all do well well my boss might get mad right what if he reports me a boss I might lose my job I don't know this man's situation I don't know his life I don't know if he's a believer what if he gets offended what if he starts yelling at me what if I don't know what to say all of these things but what the Lord wasn't looking for was my ability what he was looking for was my obedience he's saying are you gonna trust me in this and pray is the Lord I took that step of faith in that moment and I merely asked the man a question of saying can I pray for you right I had no idea what was going on and so he kind of told me what was going on and and I remember when I asked him hey can I pray for you he just kind of looked at me at first kind of like what like what was I just asked but then his expression softened and he said yeah actually that'd be great and I gotta pray for them and I've got to lift that man's problems up before the Lord I gotta ask the Lord to do a work in his heart to reveal himself to this man and I didn't get that man to the foot of the cross so what the Lord placed me there to do was merely a pebble in that man's shoe and yet as that man left I never saw him again I don't know what the Lord's doing in that man's life but I gotta proclaim the Lord that day and I kid you not I worked there for probably about three or four more years after that point and every day I would say that same prayer going into work and no longer with a sense of pride though but rather with a sense of expectation the Lord give me opportunity today give me opportunity and I kid you not not one week went by where I didn't get the opportunity to pray for someone you know what went wrong there were still many times where I gave into my fear many times I gave in into uncertainty because I think for all of us when we're presented with that opportunity to share the gospel there will be fear there will be uncertainty but in those moments what faith looks like is not looking at the destination it's not looking at okay what's at the end of this it's a middle- okay what's the next step look like what are you calling me into this next moment so I want to ask each of you today when Jesus calls you to proclaim him is your job that's Scott's job that's Jay's job that's those that have been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained that's

[23 : 35] you've been trained you've been trained that's you've been trained that's you've been trained Starting in verse 18.

So after Peter goes inside, what we're told it says, now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire because it was cold and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them standing and warming himself.

And so notice here right off the bat what's Peter doing. Peter now has gone to the very people that have arrested Jesus and here he is finding comfort by the fire. When Peter enters into this domain rather than seeking out Jesus and to stand by his side, Peter's first pursuit is let me find comfort. So Peter actually goes now and identifies himself among the very people that arrested Jesus. And now what John does in 19-24 is he paints another picture.

He's going to show us here's what's happening with Jesus but at the exact same time Peter warming himself by the fire I want you to keep that imagery in your head because these two are happening simultaneously.

[25 : 06] And John is trying to draw our attention here as to the words of Jesus versus the actions of Peter. And so notice here what Jesus says in this next passage starting in verse 19.

It says the high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teachings. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple where all Jews come together.

I have said nothing in secret. Let's pause there for a sec. Notice here the divide here between what Jesus says and what Peter is doing. Jesus, I have always spoken openly. I keep nothing a secret.

Peter here is keeping that his closest kept secret. I can't talk about Jesus. Not here.

But Jesus goes on and he really doubles down here verse 21. He says, why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me. What I said to them, they know what I said.

[26 : 11] Let me rephrase what Jesus just said. Ask Peter. He knows. And then pull up that imagery, right?

That I ask you to keep in your mind what's Peter doing? He's sitting and comforting himself by the fire with the very people that just arrested Jesus.

Going on it says, and when he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand saying, is that how you answer the high priest?

Not knowing that guard, not knowing that actually he had just struck the high priest. Then Jesus answered him, if what I said is wrong bear witness about the wrong.

But what if I said is right? Why do you strike me? Anas then sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. And so here now we have Jesus leaving the scene.

[27 : 10] And now John reorients our attention back to Peter in verse 25. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself.

And so they likely the guards said to him, you also are not one of his disciples. Are you? Again, notice here is not a question about Peter's belief.

It's not a question about who Peter thinks Jesus is. It's a question of association. Are you one of this man's followers? And again, Peter says, I am not.

We get Peter's second denial here. And I think characterized through this particular point, but really through this whole text here what we see ultimately in Peter is a fear of man.

He's afraid. Here Peter is sitting with the guards, right? The very people that have the authority also to arrest him to put him on trial.

[28 : 15] And so when he's confronted with this question, are you or do you follow this man? I hate Peter gives into his fear and he says, no, no, no, no, not associated with him.

And I think so. Then the question then naturally for us and as well is when Jesus calls you to proclaim him, is it a fear of man that stops you?

And I think for many of us, there's a few reasons as to why this happens. I think for some of us it's a fear of rejection. Right? If I share it with them, what if they reject me?

What if they get upset? A lot of those fears I had even at Olive Garden, that story I shared. For some of us we're afraid of offending. We live in a culture where we don't want to offend and what we're told, what we see on media all the time is that Christianity and its beliefs and what it's told is incredibly offensive.

And therefore, keep it to yourself. I remember one time being told by a co-worker, hey, I'm really glad that Jesus works for you, but that doesn't work for me.

[29 : 22] Please keep that to yourself. But I think that's often our mindset, honestly. And then lastly, and this is probably the one that even myself I am most guilty of, I think I give into the fear of man and that I'm afraid of ruining relationships with people.

Don't get me wrong, I think it's a good thing to say oftentimes I want to build a relationship with a person with the intent eventually to share the gospel with them. That's a good thing.

The Lord often calls us into. But I think there's often a Christian pitfall here that we kind of try to paint it with Christian lacquer. Right? We can paint it with our Christian ease, but really it's just sin. Because we keep saying, oh, well, eventually, we'll eventually, I just need to build that relationship a little bit longer. I need to get a little bit closer. Right? And then years go by and we still have never yet shared the gospel with them.

In my own life, there are family and friends who I've lived with, some for all 30 years of my life, and yet I still have never shared the gospel with them.

[30 : 33] And if I'm honest, if I take a second to step back and ask why it truly is, well, I'm afraid, I'm afraid I'm going to lose them. I'm afraid if I share it with them, it's going to change things. Things are going to be different.

And so notice here what I'm doing here. I'm doing what Peter does here. I'm giving into my fear rather than saying, Lord, I don't understand. I don't know what's going to happen, but I trust you.

And so oftentimes what we do, because of our fear of man, because of fear of rejection, of offending, of ruining relationships, what we tend to do is we compartmentalize God into areas of our lives.

For most of us in this room, myself included, as we gather here on a Sunday, I don't think most of us have a problem talking about Jesus. For those of you that are in a men's huddle, a women's Bible study, in youth group and young adults, we have our spheres or our areas where we're like, this is a safe space for me to share the gospel.

And usually if you're like me, those places are places where everyone is a follower and a believer of Jesus. And doing what I'm doing, that's good. We want to share the gospel. We want to proclaim Jesus there.

[31 : 45] So what Jesus calls and beckons us to do is to go to all nations. In other words, as you are going in all areas of your life, there should be no area that is separated from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And if there is that sin in our life, and that's where we just need to lay that out before the Lord and say, God, change this. Do a work here in my heart, in my life, and in this area of my life.

But Peter still is not done here. Picking up in verse 26, one of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off asked, did I not see you in the garden with him? You're again denied it. And at once a rooster crows. And that rooster crows to fulfill the prophecy where Jesus ultimately tells Peter just not even 25 hours before this of saying, you're going to deny me three times.

And again, I think often in our minds, when we hear that, we think of denial as an turn away from our faith, not believed, but really the denial that Jesus is laying out for Peter.

[33 : 03] You're not going to associate with me. And yeah, don't get me wrong, Peter is in an incredibly hard situation, probably harder than most of us will ever be in, in terms of testifying to our faith.

But even here, this is viewed as Peter falling. This is sin. This is probably the lowest point in all of Peter's life.

I think here in the last one, in this last denial, and again, it can be characteristic really of all three of these denials of the final pitfall of fear that we see. So right, the two pitfalls that we've seen before is the fear of uncertainty, the fear of man.

And I think this final pitfall that we see with Peter is not feeling equipped. He's afraid. I'm not ready, I'm not prepared. When Jesus was beside Peter, he struck a man, cut off his ear.

He felt prepared. He felt ready. He felt strong. When Jesus, when things are uncertain now, when Jesus is arrested, when he's in a place, he's in this complex, the place of the high priest, the highest position in all of Judaism, and here he is, asking if he'll testify to Jesus.

[34 : 27] And I think here ultimately Peter denies Jesus three times because he doesn't feel equipped. He didn't know this was coming in, so he didn't feel ready for it.

But I think like us, oftentimes, right, in our minds, we think like, okay, if the situation is just right, if it's kind of perfect, if it all lines up, and if I'm prepared, if I'm ready, if I know it's coming, then I'll share it. I don't know about you, but almost every time in my life, that's not the case. It's always by chance. When those opportunities arise, I don't know the future. I don't even know if I'm promised tomorrow. Bartender Research released a poll, and they pulled a section of Christians and just asked them, why do you not, what's stopping you from sharing the gospel?

There was a lot of answers, but the vast majority, the overwhelming majority of Christians said because of fear. Because in some form or another, I'm afraid. I'm afraid because I'm not prepared.

[35 : 29] I'm afraid because I don't know how they're going to respond. I'm afraid because I don't know what I'm going to say. In that same poll, they also pulled non-Christians in America.

Right? Because I think we often think of America where like, oh, well, this is a Christian nation, right? That's often the characteristic we give of it. I think for many of us, we think, well, if I'm going to share the gospel, I've got to go overseas.

I've got to go to the unreached. Here's what these, this poll showed. When they asked non-Christians, seven out of ten of them said that they have never had a Christian share the gospel with them or tell them to how to have a relationship with Jesus.

Seven out of ten have never been told. We're not lacking opportunity.

The question is, will you have faith? Will you take that step? Will you be obedient to the Lord? About a month ago, we were at the youth camp. It was a wonderful time.

[36 : 34] Then on the final night, I was with the high school boys and we just had a really heart-to-heart kind of time. One thing I'm always aware of when it comes to summer camps or things like that is oftentimes they can be what we call the camp high experience.

To be honest, I really want to avoid those. I don't want merely these moments that are high. Then we go back to our mundane lives and everything just feels the same again. We're just waiting until the next year to get there or maybe to make it more contextually for us.

I'm just waiting until the next Sunday. That's where I'm going to feel my spiritual moment, my spiritual time. The rest of the week is kind of this downward path until I can get back there again.

I'm so encouraged by these high school boys because two weeks after we got back, we're in a group text and they all say, you know what? The Lord really convicted my heart. I want to share the gospel.

I don't know how to do it, but I want to share the gospel. What we did is we drove up a group of 12 of us. We drove up to North Town Mall.

[37 : 33] These boys just went around to strangers and asking the question, hey, do you know who Jesus is? Or the question we asked the most was, hey, can I pray for you?

Is there anything I can just be praying for you for? Then I kid you, all 12 of these boys got to pray for a bunch of people. Don't get me wrong, along the way, many of them, we got a lot of no's.

We also got a lot of people, almost none of them believers, who said, yeah, actually, that would be great. I really appreciate that.

I think oftentimes we can get in our head excuses as to why we feel unprepared. I'm too young. I'm too old.

I don't know enough. But all of us are called, but very few respond to it. But I want to give you today just two really practical ways, I think, even this week, that you can share the gospel.

[38 : 34] And again, I think two areas that the Lord has equipped every single person in here, regardless of how long you have been a believer, regardless of how old you are, or regardless of your education. I think the first and probably the most powerful is your testimony, your story.

And your testimony is merely your story of saying, here's what my life was like before Jesus. Here's how Jesus transformed my life, and here's what the Lord is doing now.

And I just encourage you to share that with others. Just merely ask, hey, can I share my story with you? And notice here, when you share your story, they can't deny it. It's your story.

The second area that I think the Lord has equipped all of us with is one that I've already referenced to today is prayer. Just saying, hey, whatever is going on in your life, can I lift it up before the Lord on your behalf?

Can I ask the Lord to meet you in this? And notice here, when you do that, and don't get wrong, it's hard, right? You get to that moment where the Lord's kind of laid down your heart, and you get that opportunity, and you're going to have a choice to make of saying, okay, am I going to take that one step of faith and obedience?

[39 : 43] And again, just focus on the next step, or are you going to give into the fear and say, whatever excuse comes to mind, and you'll have a hundred of them. But when you pray for someone, here's the beauty that you get a follow-up with.

After you pray, you're already at the gospel, you're already at Jesus. Hey, who is Jesus to you? I'd love to tell you about him. And so here's my challenge for some of you today.

Some of you are going to go out to brunch after this, right? And you'll have a waiter or a waitress, right? Now I want you to pray and, again, seek the Lord if he's laying it on your heart.

But as you interact with that waiter or waitress, just ask him that simple, hey, is there something I can be praying for you for today? And when you ask that, if you get to that point, that's the hardest step is to ask it.

There's going to be a follow-up one and a moment of tension. You're going to be tempted to say, okay, I'll pray for you later in my mind, with my family. But I want to encourage you in that moment to say, hey, can we lift that up to the Lord actually right now?

[40 : 46] Can I pray for you right now? And just see what happens. Trust the Lord in it. Take that step. And as I wrap up today, everything that I've told you, everything that we've looked at, right, this idea of following the Lord, don't give into your fear, I'll be honest, if you do it, try to do it merely on your own.

If you just try to say, right, pick yourself up by your own bootstraps and say, I'm just going to conquer my fear and get over it, you're going to fail. In fact, much of what I've given you today is an impossible task by yourself.

You can't do it. But here is the beauty of the gospel. Will you flip forward just a couple pages and go to John chapter 21 with me?

And we're going to be looking at this passage here in just a couple weeks. And so we're not going to spend a lot of time here. But look at 21 verse 15. I just want to read this for us really quick.

And this is after Jesus' resurrection. And what's happening here is that Jesus and the disciples were told they're sitting around a fire.

[42 : 00] And I think the imagery here first off is just beautiful because when was the last time Peter was sitting around a fire? So when he was identifying with those Roman soldiers. And now here he sits with Jesus.

And this is what the word of the Lord says. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

He said, feed my lambs. He said to him a second time, Simon son of John, do you love me? And he said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. And he said to him, tend my sheep.

And he said to him a third time, Simon son of John, do you love me? And Peter was grieved because he said to him for a third time, do you love me?

And he said to him, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you. And Jesus said to him, feed my sheep. Truly, truly I say to you when you were young, you used to dress yourself in a walk wherever you wanted.

[42 : 59] But when you were old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. And in 19 it says this was done to show the kind of death that Peter would do to glorify God.

And after saying this, Jesus said to him, follow me. So notice here, Peter denies Jesus three times. And yet after Jesus' resurrection, Jesus comes to Peter.

And I imagine when Peter encounters Jesus here, he probably doesn't know how Jesus is even going to respond to him. Because the very last time that he saw Jesus, he was denying any association with him. And yet Jesus three times reinstates Peter here.

For every time Peter denied him three times, Jesus asked him, do you love me? Do you love me?

And he says, feed my sheep, tend my lambs.

And then after this, Jesus immediately gives a prophecy. And it says to show the kind of death that Peter would die. And history tells us that Peter was ultimately crucified for his faith.

[44 : 04] But notice here, the kind of death I imagine that Peter was led up to, to that point, took a lot of faith. It took a lot of overcoming that fear. And I don't think Peter could do it by himself. In fact, what we just saw in this last passage is when Peter tried to do it on himself, man, he failed.

And that was the softball comparing to what was ahead of him. And all of this, Jesus wraps up here with those final words in verse 19.

It says after saying all of this, Jesus says to Peter, he says, follow me. If you're convicted today and you're saying, man, I want to proclaim it, but I don't know.

I give it to my fear. I do too. The key is not to just try to do better, try harder. The key is to follow Jesus. And what does that look like? I think that's a daily commitment to saying, Lord, today I'm going to choose to follow you.

God, today give me the strength to be obedient. God, today make me aware. Show me those opportunities. And when my fear comes, Lord, I pray that you meet me in that.

[45 : 10] Instead of looking 10 years down the road or a year or a week, it's merely saying, okay, when that fear arises, Lord, help me to take the next step and focus on that.

And then when you've taken that, Lord, help me to take the next step. Help me to be obedient today. And then when tomorrow becomes today, help me to be obedient today.

And so if you find yourself saying, yes, I want to do this, lay yourself out before the Lord. Even today as you go home, take some time in prayer and say, God, this is the desire of my heart.

I want to follow you. I want to be your disciple. And the beautiful thing about all of this is that Jesus is faithful to transform us as long as we turn ourselves and follow after him, not your ability, not your strength, not your own courage, just following after him.

And if you do that, he will make all of us faithful disciples. For those of you that were at camp last week, Bud challenged us and he said, man, if you are in a small group of us, we're to go out and share the gospel.

[46 : 32] Imagine how different Spokane could look. I think that's really true. To love Jesus is to follow him, to follow him is to proclaim him.

Let's pray. Lord, we come before you today. And God, you know where each of us find ourselves. You know where each of our hearts are at. Lord, I pray that you do a work in each one of us, God. Help us to follow after you.

Lord, I pray for opportunity this week and an awareness of those opportunities for each of us in this room. Lord, I pray that when we come up against that fear, it not be the fear that overwhelms us, but God, it be faith in you.

It be your grace and your mercy. Your discipleship to you is a radical lifestyle.

[47 : 41] And so God for us in here, I pray that we would want that. And God trust in, I pray that we would trust you and know that you are faithful to do that enough.

Lord, today we give you today and we ask you to make us your disciples and help us to follow you today.