

Brokenness And Integrity

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0:00] As one of my pastorly or fatherly duties this past week, the kids said, hey dad, it's kind of hot outside. Can you please put up the pool? Now, I have to understand it's one of those Walmart! Specials, okay? And I think they designed them intentionally so that in a year or two of use, they'll need to be either completely replaced or repaired to such a degree you get frustrated and you throw up your hands and you say, I'm done with this. Well, the pool that we have is like that experience where two years ago was the last time that we actually used this pool when we were living in Chillicothe and last summer, as you remember, we were kind of in transition as a family and still living in Chillicothe but looking to move a little closer to Maranatha and that pool was sitting in our shed there in Chillicothe kind of awaiting this special week of being able to set it up and swim. As I was pulling it out of the box and helping to kind of stretch things out, I noticed that a rodent had made it a special snack at some point along the time in the last two years and what

I was hoping would be a great time of refreshment turned into a little bit of work initially. As we were kind of looking at it and inspecting it initially, I said, hey, you know, six or eight holes, no big deal. Man, you guys are so smart! You know exactly where this story is going.

Well, you set up the pool and you start patching holes and fortunately we had another pool that we could kind of cut material out of and, you know, it's a 12-foot bottom pool and we could kind of cut some material out of that and stick it on the current pool. Well, six holes turned into 26.

But that's okay. That's okay. We got it. We got it repaired. We put the patches on. We started turning on the water. We had to wait for 24 hours because it takes 24 hours for the bond to set and we want to make sure all this hard work was not going to yield zilcho for us. So we waited for the time and we started filling up the pool and we started noticing little trickles of water.

Now, in the grass, it probably wouldn't be a big deal, but we decided we didn't want to kill the grass, so we put it in the patio area next to our home. And so it's really important that the water doesn't leak because then it gets next to the foundation and things start to buckle and no, it's not going to be a good deal. So we had to make sure that the holes were fixed. Well, somebody had the bright idea that we would put the trampoline, or excuse me, the pool on top of our trampoline so that we could kind of see where the water was leaking. That actually didn't turn out to be so bad.

[3:13] Okay. So we saw, oh, you know, this patch, it was okay, but not great. And this, oh, we didn't notice that there were some other holes over here. And so we kind of identified the holes, we circled them, and we put it back on the patio and we did some more patching. Now we're up to about 40 patches on the inside of the pool and on the exterior. 24 hours goes by, we're feeling satisfied.

We knew we got the, we had identified at least the area where the leaks were because at least we had this part elevated and there weren't any, wasn't any more water coming towards the house. Well, we hadn't identified all the leaks. There was more patching to do. And as the sun kind of shone through the bottom of the area that was elevated, we noticed several more punctures and several more pinholes and there was more patching to do. Well, here we are on Sunday morning and I'm happy to report to you, there's more leaks in the pool. But we've given up at this point and we're swimming anyway.

Fixing a pool this week reminded me of the significance of integrity. It reminded me of the, of the importance of soundness and wholeness in a life, in a pool. You can't have 99.9% of the surface area of a pool having good integrity and expect that you're not going to have any problems with that 0.1%. Just one or two small punctures or leaks in the pool are going to result in catastrophe.

Especially when you're talking about 3,800 gallons of water sitting right next to your house. It's not a recipe for, for, for good things. It's a recipe for disaster.

This morning as we, as we take a look at our passage in John chapter 18, we, we, we take another step on the journey to the cross. And through our time together, as, as we're looking at Jesus and, and moving through this narrative, as John is developing this for us, he seeks to bring to the forefront the clear character of Jesus. We're going to see front and center this morning, Jesus, a man of integrity. Contrasted by Peter in this narrative, who is a man of insecurity. And we'll take a look at that later on. Now, on this morning, Father's Day, as we look at these two bright examples of manhood in the New Testament, certainly Jesus shining with unmatched brilliance in terms of manhood in the New Testament, we can't help but notice that, that Peter was quite useful and fruitful in the book of Acts in helping to establish the New Testament church. It was Peter to whom Jesus says, on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not be able to stand against it.

[6:48] Now, certainly when Jesus was referring to Peter, he was, he was referring to the truth of the scripture. He was referring to the, the words that Jesus would, or that Peter would share in relationship to the person of Christ. But all coming together and, and helping to, to fit together with the leadership that Peter brought to the New Testament church. The leadership that he brought there to this new church era that takes place throughout the book of Acts. And as you look at the end picture of the end picture of the life of Peter, you say, this is a man's man. This is a person to be like.

And yet what we'll see today is the, the way of the cross is not just the way of integrity. What we'll see this morning is the way of the cross is the way of brokenness.

It's the way of being exposed. It's the way of coming to grips with the underlying issues of a life. Now, now my swimming pool wasn't going to be any help unless I had identified the issues and fixed the issues. And any of you men here this morning who, who want to be a leader in your home, any of you men here this morning who want to be effective in the sphere in which God has placed you, whether you're in some sort of field of occupation or, or you wield some area of responsibility and leadership. If you want to be effective, if you want to be fruitful, you need to be broken.

Peter comes front and center with that message as we work our way through the, the next several verses of John chapter 18. John helps us in this narrative to, to really, uh, come between and see the contrast, the significance of an integrity in brokenness as he, as he introduces us to some new players and as he helps us to see new features of, of old characters, characters we've come to love and appreciate through our study of the gospel of John. Let me read for us just the, the first verse, John chapter 18. We'll be looking this morning at verses 12 to 27, but beginning in verse 12. It says this, So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. First, they led him to Annas for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was 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. Now this morning, as we take a look at this, at the events of this narrative, I, I want to introduce you to the story. And I, I want you to, to understand the, the interchange of the individuals in this passage. And then towards the end, we'll, we'll begin to make some points about what we see here playing out before us. So first of all, I just want to give us an introduction to the high priest. Maybe you've never heard the name Annas before. Certainly we've been introduced to the person of Caiaphas. But who was this man Annas? And, and why is he introduced to us in this chain of events? Why would the soldiers and the officers of the temple lead Jesus to Annas first? Well, Annas was, was the father-in-law to Caiaphas. Annas was the high priest from AD 6 to AD 15. He was deposed by the previous governor, the, the, the man who was the governor before Pilate, because this Roman governor found him deplorable, found him detestable. So he, so he removed Annas from his office and he gave it to Caiaphas. Well, there are a number of things that made Annas intolerable.

[11:09] Little to mention his relationship with the Roman government, but, but he was a person of greed. He was a person who, who was proud. A person who thought only of himself. And although he had been a high priest before, it was normally something that, uh, once a high priest, always a high priest.

But in that day and age, similar to what we find here in, in the United States, once you have a title of honor, like the president of the United States, it's a, it's a title that, that people address you with for the rest of your life. Well, Annas, as having served as a high priest before and then wielding a tremendous amount of influence in this culture, continues to maintain a level of authority in that day and age. Annas was ambitious and, as I said, notoriously greedy. This would have been a

particularly lucrative time for Annas during this Passover feast, the festivities happening during this week. During this week, Annas would have received some of the, the proceeds of, of the animals that were sold there in the temple square. As people came to offer their money and purchase an animal for sacrifice, not being able to bring it with them on this long journey, particularly from Galilee, Annas would have, would have benefited from the proceeds of, of that exchange. And then as these, as these people come into Jerusalem and they're bringing their, their currency from, from their own region, the Jews had determined that the only currency that would work in Jerusalem was Jewish currency. So the exchange had to be made. And, and the exchange rates were set very high. Again, as a taxation to the people and as a way to line the pockets of this high priest. So greedy was this man that the, that the, that the, the place where the transactions took place was known as the, as the bazaar of Annas. This was a lucrative time for him. And Jesus was a threat, not only to his ability to continue to line his pockets, but, but he saw Jesus, remember Jesus coming in after the triumphal entry and cleaning house in the temple. Jesus was a threat to Annas directly. We find here that, that Jesus is brought to Annas' house. We can make that assumption based upon a couple of things. First, we see that, that guarding the door in this later part of this narrative is, is a servant girl who is essentially checking this face recognition of the, of the first century, checking people as they make their way into this courtyard. Peter didn't make the cut. But the fact that a, that a girl was guarding the door indicates this was not happening on the temple square, the temple grounds, what was happening in the private residence of Annas, probably shared with his son-in-law, Caiaphas.

Now, Caiaphas was the official high priest during that year. Again, it was an office that they would, that they would have and maintain through the course of their life, unless an authority stepped in and changed the game. But here, Caiaphas is, is the spokesman and, and really the, the major player in, in all that is taking place. And we find his account in, in, in the other gospel records. Caiaphas will see Jesus directly after the time with Annas. John has already introduced us to this man, Caiaphas. He's, he's mentioned his name back in John chapter 11. Now, now remember what was happening in John chapter 11 was, that was when Lazarus was raised from the dead. And during that time, many of the Jews, especially those who, who, who were part of the religious establishment, were, were beginning to wonder, is Jesus really the person that he claims to be? And as a result of this amazing miracle that Jesus performs, many in this, the, the upper echelon of Jewish leadership were, were believing in Jesus.

Caiaphas, Caiaphas saw this as a threat. Caiaphas understood that this was significant in terms of, of drawing the, the people's hearts away from the priests themselves. And he makes a statement in John chapter 11. He says, he says to, to the, to the people who are gathering with him, you know nothing at all, he says, nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish. Caiaphas is trying to rally the troops.

He recognizes that the, that the, that the, the rising prominence of Jesus in Jerusalem is not only becoming a threat, but might just be the opportunity he's looking for. Perhaps he can rally the rest of the Jews to, to come to appreciate that, that then the nation of Israel was, was now at risk. As Rome saw a potential threat to, to their power and Jesus' rising prominence in the city, perhaps he could use that as a way to turn that against Jesus and actually get the Roman government to put him to death.

[17 : 03] But why the important details of Annas and of Caiaphas here at the start of this story? It's to help us understand that, that the resistance and rejection of Jesus happened at the highest levels of Israel's spirituality. At the highest levels of those who, who should have helped the people recognize their Messiah, the spiritual leaders within their own system, they are the ones, the very ones, not only to reject Messiah, but to initiate this process of bringing him to death. Now John changes scenes from the general depiction of what is taking place and, and the situation where, where all of this is happening now looking at the details where we see the interest of Peter and John. And that's our second point this morning, the interest of Peter and John in verses 15 to 18. It says, 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 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 the man's disciples, are you? He said, I am not. Now the servant 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.

I want us to see the interest of Peter and John now as they become players in this story. Simon Peter says, follow Jesus. And as we find from the other gospel accounts that he followed him, but he did so at a distance. He kind of trailed in the shadows, on the fringe, to make sure, that he wouldn't be discovered. But you've got to appreciate the loyalty of Peter and John at this point. Jesus had predicted hours before that the man would scatter, his disciples would scatter at the first sign of trouble. Jesus had told them emphatically, all of you will be made to stumble because of me this night. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. And certainly that is what happened. Jesus is arrested, the disciples flee, and now after some time has been taken to settle in their hearts and kind of wipe away a bit of the fear, Peter and John now are making their way, following at a distance, to see, as Matthew says, what would be the end of Jesus. A bit of loyalty, a bit of curiosity, and here they are following on the fringe. I don't know if you're aware of this, but on at least two occasions on this night,

Peter states emphatically, Jesus, I don't care what you say about the other disciples, they might abandon you, but I will never abandon you. Once at the dinner table, and if you turn over with me to John chapter 13, a couple of pages, you'll see this for yourself. In John chapter 13, verses 36 to 38, notice what it says. They're still at the dinner table. They have not yet left the upper room. That doesn't happen until the end of chapter 14, where Jesus says, rise, let us go from here.

They're still at the table, and Peter and Jesus have this interchange, beginning in verse 36. Simon Peter says to him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered him, where I'm going, you cannot follow, but you will follow afterward. 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.

[21 : 47] It happens once at the dinner table. It also happens once they're in the garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives. There it happens again, as we find in Matthew chapter 26, verses 33 to 34.

Matthew 26, 33 to 34 says, Peter answers, even if all are made to stumble because of you, I will never be made to stumble. I am stronger than that, Lord. I can do it. I can make it happen. I will follow you. Even if these guys tuck tail and run, I will stay true to you. His bravado and arrogance would be accentuated by the fact that it happens not just once that night, but twice in the same night. He comes against the very words of Jesus, his Savior, his God, and rejects the testimony of Christ, saying, I will do this on my own strength.

I will make it happen. We find here in the details of this narrative, John is able to make his way right in through the gate.

Somehow he has some connection with the high priest and the high priest family. Peter is made to stand on the outside without the ability to come in until John comes and and welcomes him through the gate. And that is the first time of trouble for him.

Servant girl at the door says to Peter in verse 17, you also are not one of this man's disciples, are you? He says, Peter says, what are those words there? Look at them.

[23 : 45] Maybe even underline them. He says, I am not. Those words are meant to be highlighted and featured for us.

We've been working our way through the gospel of John and on at least seven occasions we have heard Jesus state, I am. I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the good shepherd. Seven times Jesus says, I am.

And in the preceding, the moments that just preceded this account, Jesus says, I am on at least two other occasions. On one of those occasions, the crowd falls to the ground.

Not. And here Peter says, I am not. John wants us to see the contrast of Peter and Christ coming to the surface.

[24 : 57] Rising right to the forefront. There is a stark contrast. And Peter is not just denying his relationship to Jesus.

Peter is denying Jesus himself. One commentator says this, boasting of our abilities is an invitation to failure.

Peter, that is exactly what Peter discovered. To him who thinks he stands, take heed lest you fall. Peter needed to come front and center with his own weakness. Jesus gives him that opportunity or God gives him that opportunity here in the moments leading up to Jesus' crucifixion.

Peter, who had stated emphatically, I will never betray you, here in this moment, denies Jesus for the first time. We find in verse 18, Now the servants and officials made a fire because it was cold. [26:06] Peter was also with them standing and warming himself. Perhaps hoping that he could escape the situation a little bit and find some comfort in the fire, makes his way over to another group of individuals who are warming themselves by the fire.

And what is not inherent in this story, but we come to see punctuated later on in the story, is that at this particular point of time, in the Passover time in Jerusalem, the daytime would have been warm, just the nighttime would have been cold.

It helps us to understand and supports the idea, as we'll see later on, that all of these proceedings were happening in the dead of night. All of these things were happening during the cover of darkness.

The significance of this, as we'll look at a little later, is that these proceedings from the very beginning were illegal according to Jewish law. They never should have happened in the secrecy or the cover of night.

That's exactly when we find this taking place. We're providing another contrast to the shining integrity to Jesus. We now move to verses 19 and 24.

[27:27] We see Jesus' blazing integrity coming to the surface again. It says in 19, The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

Jesus answered him, I've spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogues and in the temple. Where all the Jews have come together, I have said nothing in secret.

Here, the high priest is questioning Jesus. Annas is questioning Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

Now, when I read through that the first time, it just struck me, why question about the disciples? What's the issue there? Why is that a big deal?

Now, certainly questions had come Jesus' way through the entirety of his ministry. The scribes and the Pharisees were the leading contenders in terms of challenging Jesus' ministry.

[28:29] We find at the very beginning, they question his ability or his authority to forgive sin. They question his activities on the Sabbath day. They question his association with sinners and tax collectors.

At every point, Jesus silenced them and there was no way for them to respond. Certainly, there was nothing worthy of death in Jesus' life.

But here, Annas begins to question Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. And underlying those questions is the implication or the insinuation that what Jesus is teaching is leading to a rebellion in the hearts of the people who are following after him.

They couldn't find fault in Jesus in terms of his character. They couldn't find fault in Jesus in terms of his teaching itself. They had challenged him numerous occasions and Jesus had proven to be able to refute their questions.

But maybe, maybe, just maybe, we can capitalize on his growing popularity. Remember, just a few days before, Jesus walks in or rides in to the city of Jerusalem.

[29:55] This triumphal entry back in John chapter 11, John chapter 12. The crowds are enthusiastically coming with Jesus into the city and they're saying, Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel. Maybe, they could capitalize on the electricity of the people.

Their enthusiasm for the Messiah. Here, Jesus has been teaching day after day in the temple.

People are getting up early and going to bed late, waiting for Jesus to teach there in the temple grounds day after day, Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday.

And maybe now, they could catch Jesus in some plot to become king. That might just be just enough to take to the Roman government, the Roman authorities, and put this man to death.

This would be the feature that even Pilate would focus on. If you look here in verse 33 of chapter 18, what is the leading question that Pilate poses to Jesus?

[31:17] Jesus, are you the king of the Jews? They had thought to question Jesus and to trap him in some sort of sentences or statements that he would make so they could take that to the Roman authorities and have their ability to finally put Jesus to death.

But everything about these proceedings was illegal from start to finish. As I mentioned, the cover of night was illegal in terms of the Jewish law.

The Jewish law demanded that witnesses be tried during the day in public view rather than the secrecy of the night. It was illegal that a verdict should be reached before a trial was actually made. And it's clear during these proceedings that a verdict had already been reached by Annas and Caiaphas and they were just trying to work their way to a conclusion, to an indictment. That's why John is bringing this statement to us in the first few verses, especially there in verse 14. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

[32 : 35] They had already made their determination. It was just how they could get Jesus to incriminate himself. But the strongest indication that we see here is the lack of testimony.

In a formal Jewish hearing in the first century, it was illegal to question the defendant, but that the evidence should rest, the weight of the testimony should rest on the witnesses who were brought. But there are no witnesses. And Jesus is careful to point that out. He says that here in verse 21. Why do you ask me?

Ask those who have heard me what I said to them. They know what I have said. Jesus wants to draw attention to the fact that everything that he has spoken throughout his earthly ministry has been spoken in an open and public way.

whether he was in Galilee or Judea, the start of his ministry and now at the conclusion, to the great crowds in the wilderness and those who gathered there in the temple, in the public and also the private forums that Jesus taught, in the common places, but also the renowned places.

[34 : 02] Jesus states, I have lived my life in the open. I have existed in the public eye. You've seen me. I've not been hiding in the shadows.

I have nothing to hide from you. I have a life of integrity. And the crowd, they can tell you what I've said.

Where are they? The person who now begins to be on trial is not Jesus. But Jesus helps Annas and the rest of those who are overseeing this mock trial to recognize they're the ones who are really on trial.

It's their integrity that's at question. It's these proceedings that identify and again stand against in contrast with the purity and the integrity of Jesus himself.

No one can respond to this except in frustration as an officer strikes him with the back of his hand. Annas is speechless, unable to say a word and in frustration sends Jesus on to his son-in-law Caiaphas.

[35 : 15] Hopefully Caiaphas will be able to do something with this man because he certainly was unable to get Jesus to confess to anything. And now the scene transitions back to Peter.

We've seen the integrity of Jesus and now we can see the insecurity of Peter in verses 25 to 27. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself so they said to him you also are not one of his disciples are you?

Familiar question? Familiar statement? 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?

Peter again denied it and at once a rooster crowed. And to fill out what takes place directly following this event Luke in chapter 22 verse 61 says the Lord turned and looked at Peter in that moment then Peter remembered the word of the Lord how he had said to him before the rooster crows you will deny me three times so Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Fear gripped Peter's heart this confidence disintegrated to insecurity this sense of loyalty to Christ evaporated into loyalty to self we have to ask ourselves the question anytime we read something in scripture why is this included?

[37 : 05] Why does the gospel writer decide to put this here? And not only in the gospel of John but also in the gospel of Matthew and Mark and Luke for all the world anyone who comes to Christ in faith and has a copy of the scriptures in hand will read for themselves the failure of this man Peter why would God decide to put this account here for us to read this morning?

I believe the reason is this it's because to reinforce the fact the way of the cross is the way of brokenness the way of the cross is the way of humility the way of the cross is the way of coming to grips with your own frailty so that you can embrace the strength of your savior Peter was not going to be the rock until Peter was broken Peter was not going to be the leader in Acts chapter 1 of these disciples and those who gathered in the early church until Peter came to grips with his frailty and

came to depend and rely on the strength of God himself the blazing testimony of Jesus his integrity interwoven in the story with Peter now stands as a backdrop to Peter's insecurity of his denial the bold public ministry of Jesus sets itself against the private and fearful heart of Peter

Peter's denial was not just a fulfillment of scripture it was certainly a fulfillment of scripture Peter's denial was not just to indicate personal weakness in his life which certainly it did not just a picture of human frailty but it was an illustration of what God must do to make us useful do you want to be useful for the savior today do you want to be fruitful and effective for God in the ministry in your family in the workplace you need to be surrendered to the breaking power of God to expose the holes in your life so that he can bring repair so that he can bring integrity so he can bring usefulness to your life up to that point

Jewishness was about striving it was about obtaining it was about performing now Jewishness would be about submitting and abiding in the indwelling strength of the spirit all things which Jesus had faithfully recounted during this night to his disciples and Peter had to come to the end of himself so he could come face to face with his need for divine strength and then be useful as the one who would be used by God to help begin the new church era well fortunately for Peter and fortunately for us Peter's story doesn't end here in John chapter 18 verse 27 the narrative of Peter continues and we see especially towards the end of the gospel of John we see that there is a restoration for this man there is forgiveness there is cleansing there is wholeness there is indwelling of the spirit and there is abundant fruit that comes through his life

Peter's story can be your story if you're willing to be broken today I know as men and as fathers we want our families to think we've got it all together we've got it all figured out we don't need anyone's help but the message for us as we look at the life of Peter we come to understand that if we're going to really be people men and fathers and mothers and children who are fruitful for the kingdom we will be people who are willing to be broken for the kingdom the way of Christ was the way of sweet sustained dependence on the father that's what led to a life of integrity and consistency and purity in Jesus that's what leads to integrity and consistency and fruitfulness in you dependence on the father just hours before Jesus had stated to his disciples abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit without the vine for apart from me you can do nothing just like our pool we'll never uncover all the leaks but by

[42:46] God's grace as we allow ourselves to be exposed as we open ourselves up to the careful and tender inspection of our savior he will identify the areas of our life that need to be corrected and he will make us useful and redeemed and forgiven even in spite of the frailty that we bring to the table that is good news today let's pray lord this morning as we come to this passage where we praise you for the blazing integrity of our savior Jesus who actually turns the tables on those who are interrogating him and helps him understand the corruption of the whole proceedings that were taking place thank you for the purity and holiness and integrity of our God and Lord thank you for the example of Peter a man who was so useful for you towards the end of his life but had to be broken in order to be fruitful and Lord this morning wherever we might be we pray that you would do that work for us that there would be receptivity on our end a willingness to be exposed a willingness to come out of the shadows a willingness for you to reveal to our own hearts the areas where we need your help so that we can be fruitful and useful and effective for you

God we praise you for your faithful mercy that is new every morning and we praise you for these things in Jesus name amen amen amen amen amen amen MINMINMINMINMIN