



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 18:1-27

1. The Climax of John’s Gospel

- *“There are similarities in the passion narratives of John & the Synoptics [betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, & burial]...[Y]et there are also **significant differences**...[S]ome can be attributed to the theological emphases of each Gospel...**The Johannine story of Jesus’ death is the story of Jesus’ hour**...(2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 13:1). When read in this light, it becomes clear that the traditional nomenclature of ‘**passion narrative**’ is **actually a misnomer for the story of Jesus’ death in the Fourth Gospel**. ‘Passion’ refers to Jesus’ suffering & in the Fourth Gospel, **Jesus is not presented as the one who suffers**. Rather,...Jesus’ death is the hour of his exaltation (3:13-14; 8:28; 12:32) & glorification (12:23; 13:31-32; 17:1). **Jesus goes to his death willingly** (10:17-18; 15:13), **not as the suffering victim, but as the one in control**. Jesus’ control over the events of his hour is one of the central themes of each episode in John 18-19.” (Gail O’Day, *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary: John*, p. 684)*

2. Jesus Took his Disciples to the Garden (Jn. 18:1-3)

a. The garden was just outside Jerusalem to the east (v. 1)

- *“At 18:1 the narrative focus **turns from Jesus’ interpretation of the hour (Jn. 13-17) to the events of the hour**, & the pace of the story accelerates...Once the hour is underway, there is no narrative pause for explanation.” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 685)*

b. Jesus took his disciples there often (v. 2)

c. Judas took Roman soldiers & Temple police to arrest Jesus (v. 3)

- *“The Gospel of John alone among the Gospels portrays **both Roman & Jewish soldiers** at the arrest. The Greek word translated ‘**detachment of soldiers**’ always refers in the NT to Roman soldiers, **either a ‘cohort’ (600 soldiers) or a ‘maniple’ (200 soldiers)**.” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 686)*
- *“A cohort’ The word ??????? (speiran) is a technical term for a Roman cohort, normally a force of 600 men (one-tenth of a legion)...Because of **the improbability of an entire cohort being sent to arrest a single man, some have suggested that ??????? here refers only to a maniple, a force of 200**. But the use of the word here does not necessarily mean the entire cohort was present on this mission, but*

only that it was the cohort which performed the task (for example, saying the fire department put out the fire does not mean that every fireman belonging to the department was on the scene at the time).

These Roman soldiers must have been ordered to accompany the servants of the chief priests & Pharisees by Pilate...It is not difficult to understand why Pilate would have been willing to assist the Jewish authorities in such a way. With a huge crowd of pilgrims in Jerusalem for the Passover, the Romans would have been especially nervous about an uprising of some sort. No doubt the chief priests & Pharisees had informed Pilate that this man Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, or in the terms Pilate would understand, king of Israel.” (NET)

- **“They had carefully chosen the time & place. They wanted to arrest Jesus away from the people, so there would be no riot, but they were prepared for the worst.”** (Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word: John*, p. 379)

d. Why is there no Gethsemane prayer in John 18? (Jn. 12:27-28)

- **“The contrast between the prayer at Gethsemane on the eve of his death & [the prayer in Jn. 17] is stark; the Johannine Jesus experiences no ‘agony’ at his hour, because he recognizes the hour as the ultimate purpose of his work & the completion of his revelation of God.”** (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 673)

a. The Son exists in constant communion with the Father

- **“In John’s Gospel, the Son exists in communion with God [the Father...This] communion is apparent in the absence of a Gethsemane scene in this Gospel. There’s a kind of [Gethsemane] scene earlier in John, but it takes place in the public sphere following the arrival of the Greeks...(12:27-33). Here [John’s] Jesus does not struggle with the will of God as does the Synoptic Jesus (Mk 14:32–42). When he experiences distress & agitation, recognizing the signs of the Passion drawing near, Jesus is not tempted, as in the Synoptic account, to ask for the hour to pass him by or to have the cup removed (Mk 14:35–36). He raises the possibility but almost at once rejects it (Jn 12:27b) &, later at the arrest, confirms his readiness to drink the cup (18:11). His response to the coming of the hour (12:23) expresses the oneness of heart which renders such a request [to remove the cup] unnecessary, a oneness that allows no breach in the affiliation of Son & Father. Instead, the prayer moves in a uniquely Johannine direction that expresses immediate acquiescence, born of unwavering love & trust, a prayer that is immediately answered: ‘Father, glorify your name!’ (12:28–29).”** (Dorothy A. Lee, *Jesus’ Spirituality of Affiliation in the 4th Gospel*, Religions, Vol. 13, #647 (2022) pp. 2-3)

b. Obedience & piety vs dread & fear

- **“John ‘explicitly rejects a portrayal of Jesus who trembles at death & asks to be delivered from it (Mk. 14; Mt. 26; Lk. 22). John ponders this scene from the other Gospels...rejects it in advance, makes the... prayer of Jn. 17 into his substitute for the Gethsemane prayer.”** (M.E. Boring, FB. Craddock, *People’s NT*, p. 329)
- **“In John...commitment...marks Jesus’ obedience & piety, not...dread & fear...The agony is...present... but it does not lead to a prayer for being relieved; on the contrary, he prays for ‘glorification’ [Jn. 12:27-28]...Jesus’ response to this consideration is...simply...‘no’. Jesus contemplates praying [that prayer], but ends up precluding it as an option...In John’s Gospel, ‘there’s no room for a Gethsemane scene where Jesus asks the Father to take away the bitter cup of painful death’** (Kasper B. Larsen).” (Karl O. Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses on...Gethsemane*, pp. 183-4)

c. So the garden scene can center on the arrest

- **“The Synoptic designation for the locale to which Jesus & his disciples went after the Last Supper is Gethsemane &/or the Mount of Olives. John speaks of Jesus crossing the winter-flowing Kidron to a garden. The prayer to the Father about being delivered from the hour (Mk. 14:35), occurred earlier in John (12:27-28), so that the whole Johannine scene centers on the arrest, with Jesus eager to drink the cup the Father has given him (Mk. 14:36).”** (Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 356)

3. Jesus’ Great Power: “I Am” is in Complete Control (Jn. 18:4-14, 19-24)

- **“As in the other Gospels it is the events surrounding the crucifixion & resurrection that form the climax of the whole book. John has his own way of handling these events, a way that stresses the divine overruling. Thus his account of the arrest emphasizes Jesus’ complete mastery of the situation, & touches like the “It is finished” of the dying Savior indicate plainly that the outcome was completely in God’s control.”** (Leon Morris, *NICNT: John*, p. 659)

a. Jesus knew what was about to happen (v. 4a)

- **“Jesus’ supernatural knowledge of persons & events has been repeatedly emphasized throughout the Gospel (1:47-49; 2:24; 4:17; 6:6, 64). Verse 4 leaves no doubt as to who is in control of Jesus’ arrest; hundreds of soldiers have approached the walled garden that Jesus & his disciples entered, &**

Jesus exits the enclosure to meet the soldiers...**Jesus’ actions in verse 4 fulfill his words in 10:18, ‘No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.’**” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 686)

- **“Jesus’ complete knowledge of the situation dictates his action (2:24; 4:18). John...shows Jesus’ complete control of the situation. Jesus knows all the things that are coming upon him, & in the light of this knowledge goes out to meet the soldiers. He is not ‘arrested’ at all. He has the initiative & he gives himself up.**” (Leon Morris, *Op cit*, p. 661)

b. Jesus walked out of the garden to meet Judas & the mob (v. 4b)

- **“...[W]hat concerns John is the majesty of Jesus...John is making it clear that Jesus’ behavior was most unusual; unarmed people being arrested habitually showed fear in the presence of armed might. Jesus did not.**” (Leon Morris, *Op cit*, p. 662)

c. Jesus interrogates Judas & the mob (vv. 4c-9)

- **“In the Synoptic Gospels, the garden is seen as a place of grief & distress (Matt. 26:36-44; Mk. 14:32-39; Lk. 22:41-44). But in John’s account Jesus confidently left the enclosure to confront His attackers, suggesting conviction & control. Jesus, not Judas, initiated the dialogue, interrogating the posse as to whom they sought (18:4; cf. Mark 14:43-46).”** (Tom Thatcher, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153, *Jesus, Judas & Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel*, p. 444)
- **“Jesus’ reaction to the appearance of Judas & the armed men is the key moment of the story. In it, Jesus manifests his glory just as he is being deprived of his freedom. Here again the Evangelist appeals to Jesus’ foreknowledge...‘Jesus, knowing everything that would happen to him, came forward & said to them, ‘Who are you looking for?’ He is not, of course, asking them what he does not already know. The question has its place in a situation of apparently complete inequality of power, but it is not they but he who takes charge & asks for clarification.”** (H. Ridderbos, *A Theological Commentary: John*, p. 430)

a. Jesus: “Who is it that you are seeking?” (v. 4b)

- **“Our Lord, instead of waiting to be found, went forward to meet the armed crowd. In response to their question, he openly identified himself. Their reaction was to fall to the ground. John represents their response as a miracle. They did not fall down when he asked them what they wanted, but only after he said, “I am.” ...Jesus answered in the style of deity, using the divine title, I AM, going back to the burning bush of Exodus 3:14 when God said, “I AM WHO I AM.” Jesus’ response was the last exercise of the power by which he calmed the seas, stilled the winds, & healed the sick.”** (Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word: John*, p. 379)
- **“Verse 5 further highlights Jesus’ initiative in his arrest...The aside about Judas in verse 5B also reinforces Jesus’ initiative. Unlike the synoptic Gospels, where Judas initiates the arrest by kissing Jesus (Matt. 26:47-50; Mk. 14:43-46; Lk. 22:47-48), in John’s Gospel Judas stands inactively with the arresting forces.”** (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 686)

b. Jesus: “I Am” (v. 5b)

- **“The centerpiece of verses 5-6 is the ‘I Am’ with which Jesus responds to the soldiers...The repetition of the ‘I Am’ & the description of its effects on the soldiers in v. 6b show that these words are much more than a formula of self-identification. They should be interpreted, like the ‘I Am’ at 4:26; 6:20; & 8:28, as another instance of Jesus’ use of the absolute ‘I Am’ formula. That is, with these words Jesus identifies himself, not simply as the one for whom the soldiers seek, but with the divine name ‘I Am’ (Isa. 43:25; 51:12; 52:6).”** (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, 686-7)
- **“In John’s Gospel Jesus uses the ‘I Am’ of himself...the idea is that the one true God meets people in Jesus. The responses people make when Jesus utters the ‘I Am’ reflect the sense of an encounter with God. When the soldiers come to arrest Jesus in the garden, he asks whom they are looking for. They say, ‘Jesus of Nazareth,’ & he replies ‘I Am.’ Although the words are often translated ‘I am he’ or ‘It is I,’ the heavily armed troops draw back & fall to the ground as one might do in the presence of God.”** (Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, pp. 103-4)
- **“The soldiers had come out secretly to arrest a fleeing peasant. In the gloom they find themselves confronted by a commanding figure, who so far from running away comes out to meet them & speaks to them in the very language of deity.”** (Leon Morris, *Op cit*, p. 661)

c. Judas, the soldiers & temple police fall to the ground (v. 6) – the ‘ruler of world’ has no power over Jesus (Jn. 12:31-33; 14:30-31)

- **“When Jesus finally leaves the supper & arrives in the garden, he is met by Judas & a group of Roman soldiers & Jewish police, who serve as agents of the ruler of this world. Jesus seizes the initiative by asking whom they are seeking. When they reply ‘Jesus of Nazareth,’ he says ‘I Am,’ using words that recall the name of God; & Judas & the soldiers draw back & fall to the ground. The episode bears out that the ruler of this world has no power over Jesus.”** (Craig. Koester, *Op cit*, p. 118)

- “Our Lord chose to give them this **proof of his infinite power**, that they might know that their power could not prevail against him if he chose to exert his might, seeing that **the very breath of his mouth confounded, drove back, & struck them down to the earth.**” (Clarke)
- “**To fall prostrate on the ground is a conventional response to a theophany** (Eze. 1:28; Dan. 10:9; Acts 9:3-4; Rev. 1:17). The soldiers’ response may also be a **reminder of their powerlessness before the power of God** (Psa. 27:2; 56:9).” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, pp. 687)

d. Jesus: “Who is it that you are seeking?” (v. 7a)

e. Jesus: “I Am” (v. 8a)

- “Judas stood blatantly opposite Jesus with those who were knocked to the ground by Jesus’ identification, ‘I Am’ (v. 6). **Jesus would allow Judas to fulfill his intention, but only on His terms.** These are defined after the second ‘I Am’, indicating Jesus’ desire & ability to protect His disciples even when He must not protect Himself (v. 8). **Having secured their release, Jesus was ready to turn Himself over.**” (Tom Thatcher, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153, *Jesus, Judas & Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 444-5)

f. Jesus protects his disciples: “Let these men go.” (v. 8b)

- “Verses 7-8a repeat v. 5, emphasizing once again Jesus’ control & initiative. **In Jesus’ request that the soldiers let his disciples go** (v. 8b), **Jesus shows that he is the good shepherd who will lay down his life for his sheep** (10:11, 15).” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 687)
- “**The Good Shepherd takes thought for his sheep at the very hour in which he faces arrest, trial, & death.** It may be that this is behind his request for them to repeat that it is “Jesus of Nazareth” that they are looking for. **Out of their own mouth he leads them to declare twice that their business is with him, which means that it is not with the disciples.**” (Leon Morris, *Op cit*, p. 662)

d. Jesus corrects Peter’s failure (vv. 10-11)

a. Peter’s violent act

- “Except for Simon Peter’s misguided outburst of violence, which serves only to emphasize by contrast that Jesus is freely undertaking this work, there is no violence in the scene.” (Sandra M. Schneiders, *Jesus Risen*, p. 171)
- “**Peter demonstrates in this one act the height of his misunderstanding of Jesus’ mission: whereas Peter wants to defend Jesus through violence, Jesus will defend Peter (& the rest of the 12) succumbing to violence in his death...** Peter acts...to circumvent that very hour to which Jesus’ entire career has been driving. He has betrayed the very essence of Jesus’ mission...**His actions go against the grain of Jesus’ very mission.**” (Jason S. Sturdevant, *Adaptable Jesus of the 4th Gospel*, p. 194)

b. “Put your sword away!”

c. “Am I not to drink the cup my Father has given me?”

- “Jesus’ commitment to ‘drink the cup’ prepared for him by his Father calls to mind Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane (Mt. 26:39, 42; Mk. 14:36; Jn. 12:27–28), though **the emphasis here—firm resolution to accept what the Father gives him—better reflects the outcome of the prayer in Gethsemane** (‘not my will, but yours be done’) than the agonizing supplication that secured it.” (D. A. Carson, *Op cit*, p. 456)
- Commentators agree “that **[John 18:11] recalls the Gethsemane episode...**[in] the Synoptic Gospels...John 18:11 is ‘reminiscent of Gethsemane’ (G. Beasley-Murray).” (Karl O. Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses on... Gethsemane*, p. 176)
- “**The rhetorical question is...to be answered affirmatively.** Jesus will certainly ‘empty the cup’...he is in complete accord...with his Father’s will...Emptying the cup & his Father’s will are inseparable... **Any attempt to escape from this is tantamount to questioning the divine will or plan for salvation.**” (Karl O. Sandnes, *Op cit*, p. 175)

e. Jesus is led away to Annas, but controls the conversation (Jn. 18:12-14, 19-24)

- “All the Gospels have the arresting party deliver Jesus to the Jewish high priest’s court/palace to be interrogated by that authority – an interrogation that is accompanied by accounts of an abuse/mockery of Jesus & of Peter’s three denials. **In John alone there is no session of the Sanhedrin to decide on Jesus’ death (that took place earlier: 11:45-53);** & although Caiaphas is mentioned, Annas conducts the inquiry.” (Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 357)
- “Matthew, Mark, & Luke depict two trials of Jesus leading up to the crucifixion – one trial before the [Jewish] Sanhedrin, & one before Pilate. There is **in John no formal trial before the Sanhedrin.** Jesus certainly addresses the High Priest in John (18:19-24). There is a similar episode. But it is not a trial...‘There are no witnesses, no judges, no interrogation about the sanctuary [temple], or about Jesus’...identity, no charge of blasphemy & no sentence’ (Brown)...**Jesus’ trial before the leaders of Israel [has been] displaced & the entire life [ministry] of Jesus becomes a legal contest before**

the leaders of Israel... it frames the Fourth Gospel from start to finish.” (George L. Parsenius, ... *Johannine Lawsuit Motif*, pp. 1-2)

- **“John...unlike...the Synoptics, has no account of a Jewish trial before the Sanhedrin. Instead, throughout his public ministry, Jesus has been viewed as on trial before Israel & its leaders.”** (Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial*, 23)

a. Jesus tells him to question those who’ve heard him speaking publicly (vv. 20-21)

- **“We should not misunderstand what Jesus says about teaching in secret. He does not mean that he had nothing to say to his followers when they were away from the crowds. All four Gospels disprove this. What he means is that he did not have two kinds of teaching, a harmless one for the general public & a very different one for the secret revolutionaries.”** (Leon Morris, *Op cit*, p. 669)
- **“Jesus’ formal legal relationship with the Jewish authorities had been concluded at 11:47-53. The Sanhedrin had already met & passed the death sentence against Jesus at 11:53; to repeat that decision now would be anti-climactic...[&] Jesus’ formal questioning by the Jewish leadership had been incorporated into the narration of Jesus’ ministry (5:16-18; 10:22-39).”** (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 690)
- **“First, in the context of Jesus’ hour, ‘world’ cannot simply be read as a synonym for ‘everywhere’. Rather, Jesus is claiming to have spoken publicly even among those who did not receive him &, indeed, who hated him (15:18-20). Second, Jesus summarizes his teaching ministry by pointing to those occasions when he is taught in the official sites of Judaism (Jn. 5, 7-10, 6:25-59).”** (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 692)

b. Jesus refuses to take back his words even when slapped (vv. 22-24)

c. Intercalation (sandwich) structure in Jesus’ trial before the High Priest (Mk. 14; Jn. 18)

- **“In both [Mark’s & John’s] renditions, the story breaks off with Peter warming himself (Mk. 14:54; Jn. 18:18) in order to develop the scene of Jesus’ trial [before the High Priest/Sanhedrin] (Mk. 14:55-65; Jn. 18:25), then resumes with Peter warming himself (Mk. 14:66-7; Jn. 18:25)...Their combination represents a desire to indicate simultaneity. In both accounts, the ‘sandwich’ pattern is A-B-A’-B’...[But with] a number of differences...In John, Jesus doesn’t seem to [be before] the whole assembly of the Sanhedrin, but only [the High Priest]... All three denials of Peter form the climactic finale in Mark, but John has the first [denial] separated from the others...[So,] it seems...[that] Mark & John independently drew in similar tradition, though...John was familiar with additional material.”** (Joel B. Green, *Death of Jesus*, pp. 126-7)
- **“Sandwiching the hearing [before the High Priest] between the two parts of Peter’s denials invites the reader to view what is happening inside [with Jesus] in the light of what is happening outside, [with Peter] especially in John where Peter has already denied Jesus once.”** (R. Alan Culpepper, *John*, 223)
- **When John records “such episodes as the denial [by Peter] & trial [before Annas]... the typical Johannine irony shines through...While Jesus is being arraigned before the representative of Jewish authority [the High Priest], his chief disciple [Peter] is outside busily denying him. Jesus was handed over by one of his disciples [Judas], denied by another [Peter], & abandoned by all.”** (D. Moody Smith, *John*, 338)
- **“All four Gospels describe the arraignment of Jesus before the Jewish authorities presided over by the high priest. All four closely associate this interrogation of Jesus with a simultaneous interrogation of Peter on the part of servants of the household, in the course of which Peter three times denies any association with Jesus...The [4th] evangelist gives equal if not greater prominence to Peter’s interrogation & denial by placing the interrogation of Jesus (18:19-24) between the first (18:15-18) & the final two denials (18:25-27). The interweaving heightens the contrast between Jesus’ openness & Peter’s dissembling to great dramatic effect.”** (Brendan Byrne, *Life Abounding... John’s Gospel*, p. 296)
- **“As in the Synoptics, [John’s] story of Peter’s denial is interwoven with the account of Jesus’ appearance before the high priest(s). The narrative ‘camera’ shifts back & forth from Jesus to Peter.”** (M. E. Boring, F. Craddock, *Peoples’ NT Commentary*, p. 348)
- **“Peter’s denial is told in 2 scenes interspersed during the narration of the religious hearing [before Annas]... As a result, [Peter’s] cowardice is posed against Jesus’ unswerving defense.”** (Robert Kysar, *John*, 62)

4. Peter’s Denials: “I am not” (Jn. 18:15-18, 25-27)

- **“The words of Peter’s denial, ‘I am not’ are the antithesis of Jesus’ words of self-identification & revelation from 18:1-12, ‘I am’.”** (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 692)
- **“All four Gospels relate Peter’s sad lapse. The point is not the raw fact that Peter disowned his Lord, but that he did so as a disciple, an intimate disciple.”** (D. A. Carson, *Op cit*, p. 458)
- **The “contrast between Jesus & Peter is skillfully presented in the passion story. Jesus goes forward at the garden identifying himself twice with ‘I AM’ to the Roman soldiers & the officers from the chief priests & the Pharisees (18:3, 8). Peter on the other hand, denies Jesus twice, saying ‘I am not’ Jesus’ disciple (18:17, 25, cf. 27). When Jesus is being interrogated**

*before the Jewish authorities **inside the house**, Peter is standing **outside the house**. Jesus **speaks the truth**, whereas Peter **speaks untruth** (18:15-38). **Jesus is assaulted** during the interrogation, whereas **Peter assaults** a servant of the high priest...” (Riku P. Tuppurainen, *Prologue to Studies in the 4th Gospel*, p. 355)*

- a. Denies Jesus to a servant girl (v. 17)
 - *“The question may not have been hostile so much as cynical. But **Peter, cowed by his surroundings, & threatened by his own memory of the fact that he was the only disciple who had struck a servant of the high priest (v. 10), begins his shameful descent**. He may have viewed this first instance of self-distancing from the Master as a rite of admission to the courtyard; but once performed, it was easy to repeat, with rising vehemence.” (D. A. Carson, *Op cit*, p. 458)*
 - b. Denies Jesus to those warming themselves around the fire (v. 25)
 - c. Denies Jesus to a relative of the man whose ear he cut off (vv. 26-27a)
 - d. A rooster crowed (v. 27b)
5. Baptism: “I Am” vs “I am not”
6. Jesus’ Limitless Love
- a. Two models of love
 - *“The Fourth Evangelist...places before the reader **two models of how the faithful can meet adversity & trial: the model of Jesus, who holds nothing back for the sake of those he loves, & the model of Peter, who holds everything back for his own sake...**[T]hese two models provide fresh access to Jesus’ commandment to love one another as he has loved us (13:34-35). The fullest embodiment of that commandment is to lay down one’s life for another (15:12), a promise Peter foolishly & lightly made at 13:36-38. But in John 18:13-27, the reader is given a **painful glimpse of the limits of Peter’s love & yet one more demonstration of the limitlessness of Jesus’ love.**” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 694)*
 - *“John 18:1-27,...presents the reader with **two contrasting images**. One is the image of **Jesus, who willingly offers himself** to those who come to arrest him & boldly answers those who interrogate him. The other is the image of **Jesus’ disciples who betray & deny** the one who so freely gives his life for them.” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, pp. 693-4)*
 - b. Our love tested
 - *“In the **context** in which the Fourth Evangelist wrote, of **community oppression & persecution because of one’s faith** (16:1-4), Peter’s denials clearly show **how easy it is to lose heart, how easy it is to remove oneself from the embrace of Jesus’ love**. In the **contemporary...setting**, in a social context far removed from that of the Johannine Jewish Christian, the temptation to deny one’s place with Jesus remains real & perhaps even more insidious. **Under what social & personal pressure will one turn one’s back on Jesus’ love, will one equivocate about discipleship?...**’Are you one of his disciples?...I am not.’ For most christians, the moment of betrayal of Jesus’ love does not come in the dramatic announcement, ‘Crucify him!’ but in **the more subtle denial of allegiance to the one who gives his life for us, of infidelity to the ever faithful love of Jesus.**” (Gail O’Day, *Op cit*, p. 694)*