
Responding to the Christ

John 18:1-27

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Introduction

How would you finish this sentence? “You know people by how they...”

- Treat their mom
- Pay their taxes
- Work when nobody is around
- Dress
- Drive
- Burp
- Care for their lawn
- Conduct themselves on Super bowl Sunday
- Vote
- Eat
- Hold up under pressure
- Use money and time
- Etc.

You know people by how they... How would you finish the sentence?

This morning we will get to know people. In this morning’s message there are five people with whom we will get acquainted.

I will let you know up front how we get acquainted with them but it will not be until about 10:20am will we find out why this is so vital to our lives (cf. Jn.1:12-13).

In John 18:1-27 we see that: *people are recognized for who they truly are by how they respond to Jesus Christ.*

- You know people by how they respond to Jesus
- With Jesus what we do is who we are

John in his 18th chapter is focusing on the response of people around Christ as Jesus comes to the hour of His death. We will watch Jesus through his betrayal and arrest. We will notice five people noticing Jesus. I pray that you will come away with insight into Jesus the Christ and then notice your own identity; who you truly are. – to this end let’s pray.

In these first events leading to Christ's execution, we see Jesus' betrayal by Judas and arrest in the garden that leads him to the High Priest Annas. In this part of the story we notice the chaotic nature of what is happening as if we were actually there as an eyewitness. Take a look as I read for you John 18:1-27.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one." Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

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.

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?" He said, "I am not." 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.

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 synagogues and in the temple, where all 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 hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" 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?" Annas 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?" Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

Jesus – the Christ

First notice with me the main character; Jesus the Christ, the son of God. Just an hour or so from a brutal and torturous execution on a Roman cross notice who he is and what he came to do.

His Identity (who He is)

First, his identity.

All-knowing

In v2-4 we get the information that Judas also knew the place where Jesus and the disciples were going (2). The point is simple. Jesus was not hiding. His routine didn't change due to danger. He wanted them to find him. And **v3-4** we come to a band of soldiers and how Jesus responds. The term "band" is a Roman term for a military unit upwards to 600 soldiers. What we are to see here is a mob of trained soldiers with weapons hunting down and pressing in on one carpenter without a weapon. What will Jesus do? We come to the phrase "knowing all that would happen to him" (4). Who is this man in front of us? He is One who has foreknowledge. He knows things before they happen. And what does he do with this power? We get the answer at the end of v4. He "*came forward*". He did not run away. We are to see that nobody is finding him and overtaking him. He is in full control. He is turning himself in. He takes the initiative in the arrest and in effect says, "Here I am, take me". Jesus' use of his power to help in the arrest points to his identity. Who is this man?

All-powerful

In v5-8 we are blown away (or should I say the band of soldiers is blown away). When Jesus revealed his identity he used a special name (I AM) to reveal himself as divine in flesh; the self-existent, self-sufficient, inexhaustible fountain of being and blessing. He is the unchangeable; never extinguishable who had no beginning and will have no end. Our opinions of Him do not change Him. He is changeless. He is eternal. He is unapproachable. Whether we want Him to be there or not, He is. Whether we like His reality or not, it is. He just is in His multi-majestic form and function. I suppose the only reasonable position to take before the great Jesus is seen in this passage – on your face.

What, you may ask, is his identity? Behold – Jesus the Christ, the Son of God!

His Mission (what he came to do)

With this magnificent and breathtaking view of Jesus' identity, we must ask – what did he come to do? We see him betrayed. We see him arrested. We see him taken away. And yet, we see him as divine. What's he doing? Notice:

All-loving

V 9 All his actions and all his plans point to this agenda. "I have lost not one" (cf. 17:12; 6:39). His intention and ability to keep his own to the end are put on display for us to marvel at. His mission was to come and receive all the Father has given him. And what the Father gives him will never be lost. How will he accomplish this mission? Notice the last part of v11 and the last part of v14.

The Cross

v11b,14b We come to two phrases that could keep us here discussing the fullness of them for the rest of the day (nay; lifetime). They are "drink the cup that the Father has given me" (propitiation) and "one man should die for the people" (substitutionary atonement). These two phrases point to Christ's mission. He came to die on the cross to absorb the fullness of God's wrath against our sin, to die in our place so that we could go

free; to die the death we should have died so that we might be declared right before God and follow Jesus with loyalty and freedom and love and sacrifice and courage and compassion and you fill in the blank. (preach a bit on the cup/cross/substitution).

One could summarize this section by saying...

By making no effort to save himself, Jesus saved his people.

What, you may ask, is his mission? Behold – Jesus the Christ, the Son of God!

Behold Jesus the Christ who is fully God and who came to be the perfect man and die the substitutionary death to take God's justice and bring God's love.

Now for the remaining part of our time this morning let's look at these five people who were in the presence of Jesus. Notice their actions – how they responded to him.

The first person we come to is Judas – v1-9

Judas - Betrayer (v.1-9)

Who was Judas? Notice how he responded to Jesus. He was one of the twelve. He was an insider. He held a position as treasurer. He went undetected by the other disciples (they didn't know who was to betray Jesus (cf. 13:21ff). And now we see. Judas sells his soul as he sells his Master. There was no love for Jesus. There was love for what Jesus provided but no love for the person of Jesus. He loved money. He loved power. He loved position. But he did not love Jesus. So he betrays him for money and then eventually goes out and kills himself

You know people by how they respond to Jesus. Behold - Judas the Betrayer.

Peter - Defender (v. 10-11)

Next we come to Peter in v10-11. He too is one of the Twelve. He has been with Jesus for over 3 yrs. He demonstrated much loyalty to and love for him (cf. 6:68; 21:15). Who is Peter? His response to Jesus is in a form of defense. He will protect Jesus from this mob by unsheathing his sword and trying to kill the first person in front of him. Passionate and misguided are his efforts. His response tells the reader that he does not fully understand the cross. Peter thinks he has a better plan. He wants to save Jesus from the cross and yet, Jesus wants to save Peter by the cross.

You know people by how they respond to Jesus. Behold – Peter the Defender.

Caiaphas - Plotter (v. 12-14)

Next we come to Caiaphas; a high-powered religious man whose power was used to help crucify Jesus. Now I say we "come to him" in the text not because the action takes Jesus literally to him now. Rather it is due to the fact that the writer of the gospel points back to an earlier text in John (ch.11:49-50) that talks about the plot to kill Jesus. Caiaphas said "you know nothing at all. 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". What we are to

see in this passage is that these events (events of betrayal, arrest, mock trial, condemned, crucifixion and burial) these events are the culmination of the plot by Caiaphas.

You know people by how they respond to Jesus – Behold Caiaphas the Plotter.

John - Follower (v. 15-18)

Next we come to John the disciple. He is not identified by name due to his humility and purpose in writing the gospel. He does not want to talk about himself. He wants to talk about Jesus. Notice his response to Jesus in v15-18. He entered the dangerous court WITH JESUS. He looks around and notices that Peter was not able to come in to the courtyard. He uses his clout to go get Peter and bring him into the courtyard closer to Jesus. He stays close to Jesus and helps bring Jesus' followers closer to Jesus even in dangerous times.

You know people by how they respond to Jesus – Behold John the Follower.

Annas - Accuser (v. 19-24)

Next we come to Annas; the former high priest whose power and influence kept him in a position as the patriarch of the high priestly family in the first century. He is not a follower of Jesus. He is not an insider to Jesus' disciples. He is one of the most powerful religious persons of the day. He uses this power to detain Jesus illegally. He uses this power to question and accuse Jesus. Here we see a man who arrogantly questions Jesus rather than humbly having questions for Jesus. Here we see a man who helps escort Jesus to a "kangaroo court" and eventually helps him receive the unjust, undeserved and inaccurate sentence of guilt and death.

You know people by how they respond to Jesus – Behold Annas the Accuser.

Peter - Denier (v.17-18, 25-27)

And finally, back to Peter as seen in v17-18, 25-27. We see him not with Jesus but with the servants and officers (18). We see him providing warmth for himself by the fire because it was cold outside. We see him protecting himself through a series of denials of Jesus because it was dangerous outside (even a little servant girl frightened him). Can you recall not more than couple of hours ago Peter said, "I will lay my life down for you" Jesus (cf 13:37). Good intentions made boldly in a warm room with good food and friends do not seem so attractive in a dark and cold courtyard with a frightening mob around. Brash, cowardly follower of Jesus whose life got humbled by a rooster.

You know people by how they respond to Jesus. Behold Peter – the Denier.

Conclusion

You know people by how they respond to Jesus has been the theme this morning. We've looked at Jesus and noticed his identity and mission. We then watched as 5 people responded to Jesus. In light of their response, we learned about them.

I want to close this message by asking “so what”? What difference does all this make to you? Is the aim of the message to help you look at first century people? Or is it something much more personal going on this morning than that? Could it be that these people in the Bible are functioning as a mirror for you? Can you see yourself in one of them? When Jesus reveals Himself and you begin to understand who He is and why He came to earth –

When Jesus is in view what do you do?

Reflect and Respond

Here are three mirrors taken from these 5 people and their responses. Look at them until you see yourself.

Mirror #1 – Doesn't follow Jesus (3-fold description)

Mirror #2 – Follows Jesus but... (3-fold description)

Mirror #3 – Follows Jesus and... (3-fold description)

The point of all this is not self-exposure and then leave it. It is to help you see your need for the gospel. Listen to this prayer and may it be yours.

*Jesus you used your majesty to give me mercy. You used your purity to purify me. You died a criminal's death for a criminal like me. You rose from the dead to tell me this is all true. Oh, how I have played the fool and gone my own way pretending to be close to you while being far from You. I repent of my unbelief. I turn from my selfish ways. I return to you as my ruler and redeemer. I renew my love for others by believing in You in an obeying way.
Grace me now as I trust in You.*