



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of March 20, 2022 (John 18:12-27)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Compassionate God, we give thanks for fallible saints and flawed heroes, and for the honesty of the Bible writers who told their stories. If there is hope for Simon Peter, after his three-fold denial, then perhaps there is hope for us. If he could learn from his failures and grow in the process, perhaps we can do the same. If you still had a use for him, a purpose that he could not have fulfilled without his having failed and being forgiven, then perhaps you can use us too, in the only mission that ever mattered: to love in your name.

We pray for those who have suffered the deep hurt of being let down by someone whom they loved and trusted. May they find courage to trust and love again. We pray for those who live under the shadow of shame for failures imagined, or all too real. May they learn to love and trust themselves again.

We pray for those who do not feel safe enough to be who they really are; what they believe; whom they love. Help us to create safe places in our homes, in our churches, in our communities, and our schools.

We pray for those who have had to witness the suffering of people whom they love...

Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource

The Story: John 18:12-27



Context: While we don't skip over a lot of time this week, we do skip a whole heap of content. Last week we left off with the scene where Jesus washes the disciples' feet, and where Judas leaves, thereby betraying Jesus. But this is just the beginning of five full chapters of what is called "The Farewell Discourse", that is, Jesus' goodbye to his disciples.

In chapter 14 we will get the famous words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled, do not be afraid", as well as the promise of "many rooms" in Jesus' Father's house, and the promise of the Holy Spirit (14:15-17). Chapter 15 has the important words about Jesus being the vine and we are the branches, a passage in which the word "abide" shows up 10 times in 6 verses (15:4-9). In Chapter 16, Jesus speaks more about the Holy Spirit, and he warns them of coming pain and mourning which will turn to joy. Then in chapter 17 he closes with a prayer for his disciples.

Then they leave and head to a garden in the Kidron

...and which they were powerless to prevent: for parents whose children are being bullied; children with siblings who are disabled or dying; for victims of torture and war, especially in Ukraine; for those who bear visible scars and many more who carry within them the trauma of living with what they have seen and done. Bring healing and peace, we pray, to this troubled world and to us, who are both creators and victims of its pain.

May we come out of the shadows of our fear to work with you for the coming of your Kingdom, where all are known, and valued and loved. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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Acts of Compassion & Justice:



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valley. A few things to note here:

1. Judas' betrayal of Jesus in John is in the past tense here, which reinforces the idea that the betrayal was in him leaving Jesus, not handing him over (which he does not do in John).
2. Notice there is no agony nor any prayer from Jesus for "this cup to pass". Jesus is ready.
3. The NRSV reads that Jesus "came forward", but the Greek is actually "came out" or "stepped out". In this moment Jesus literally becomes the gate for the sheep that he said he was in chapter 10.
4. Not only does Jesus not pray for "this cup to pass" in John, upon Peter fighting by sword to protect Jesus, Jesus says, "Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" As stated in chapter 10, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is laying down his life for his sheep. No one is taking it from him.

So that's a lot, but it's all very important in following and setting the scene for this week's passage.

Reading the Story:

As you read, note the way in which Jesus' pre-trial is narrated along side Peter's. They are both on trial here.

Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- What images or metaphors popped out at you in this passage? What don't you quite understand?
- Where do you see any glimpses of The Good Shepherd story in this passage, particularly as it pertains to following Jesus and entry/denial of entry to the "sheep pen"?
- What does it mean to "deny" Jesus? What is the difference, if any, between denial and betrayal?
- In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Peter is asked if he *knows* Jesus and answers, "I do not know the man". Here Peter is asked if he is one of Jesus' *disciples*, and he says, "I am not". What is the difference between these two?

