20261018 Too Broken to Be Used? – Ps Bijoy

John 18:12-27, John 21

Introduction

Turn with me to John chapter 18. Perhaps no trial in all of history has been more closely examined than that of a Galilean carpenter some 2,000 years ago. There were no charges brought against Him and no basis for His arrest, yet He was led away to a series of six trials, three Jewish and three Roman, and then executed in barbaric fashion.

Notice how John portrays Jesus in the garden. He is in total control, He is sorrowful about what He is going to endure, but He is not evasive. He is deliberate and determined to fulfil His destiny. And what is that destiny? Paul tells us it is a trustworthy statement, "worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Now put yourself in the garden. The soldiers arrive with torches and lanterns, led by Judas, a man who days earlier pretended to be a close companion. Jesus asks, "Whom do you seek?" They answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." He says, "I am," and the Bible does not say they felt a strange breeze or sensed His authority. It says they fell on their backs. Battle-hardened warriors were reduced to stumbling by a single word from His mouth. Then Peter swings a sword and cuts off the ear of a man named Malchus, and Jesus touches the man and heals him. The last miracle Jesus performs before He is slaughtered is for a man who is trying to arrest Him.

How could anyone be so dense? They fell back at His voice, they watched Him restore an ear, and the talk of the town was that He had raised a man from the dead. The answer is that they were blinded by sin. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." And the moment people see that glory, they recognize who they really are, sinners in need of a Savior.

That brings us to Peter. Look at verses 18 and 25. Both begin with the word "now," and the NIV says "meanwhile." John wants you to see two things happening at the exact same time in the exact same place. Jesus is standing strong in the face of trial. Meanwhile, His most loyal and outspoken disciple is folding like a chair. And here is what should stop us. Jesus is about to die for sin, but not just sin in general. He is going to die for the sin His leading disciple is committing at that very moment.

How Peter Fell

Remember what Peter had said just hours earlier. Jesus told him, “Before this night is over, you will deny me three times before the rooster crows.” And Peter answered with passion, “If I have to die with you, I will not deny you.” He meant every word.

When Jesus was arrested, the other gospels tell us all the disciples fled. But Peter made his way back, following at a distance with another disciple, I believe John himself, who never refers to himself by name. John was known to the high priest, so he got them both into the courtyard. Peter stood at the door outside until John spoke to the doorkeeper and brought him in.

Then comes verse 17. The slave girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” And he said, “I am not.” Isn’t it interesting who it was? Not a Roman centurion. Not a Pharisee or a scribe. A slave girl. Temptation and denial usually start small. Peter was not ready, it took him by surprise, and he denied his Lord.

And after he denied Him, he tried to blend in. Verse 18 says it was cold, and the slaves and officers had made a charcoal fire. Take note of that charcoal fire, because we are going to come back to it. Peter stood with them, warming his hands. He loved Jesus, but he was too cowardly to say that he knew Him. And remember, this was not happening a mile down the street. Jesus was being examined in that very courtyard, in full view of Peter. When Jesus was struck across the face, Peter saw it. While his Master was being beaten, Peter was warming his hands by the fire.

In verse 25 he is asked again, and again he says, “I am not.” Then one of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, says, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” Matthew tells us Peter answered with cursing and swearing. The force of it was, “I do not know the man. I swear on my father’s grave. I am not his follower. I could not care less about him.” The man who promised to die with Jesus now insisted he had never met Him.

And immediately a rooster crowed. Turn with me to Luke 22:61. “The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, ‘Before a rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.”

Why Peter Fell

If Peter fell, any of us can fall. So why did he fall? I wrote down four reasons.

First, he was overly confident in himself. He had said, “I will never deny you.” Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Sometimes we look at people who commit a big sin and ask, “What were they thinking?” Paul says, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

The seeds of the most depraved sins are in all of our hearts. You are not that awesome, and neither am I. We are sinners.

Second, he tried to operate in his own strength. Just hours earlier Jesus had told them, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Apart from me you can do nothing.” And that word nothing means exactly that. Not something. Nothing.

Third, he failed to pray. Jesus had told them, “Be watchful and pray, lest you fall into temptation.” He even asked them, “Could you not pray for one hour?” A prayerless person is a powerless person in the face of temptation. A courageous spine to live for God depends on bruised knees, asking God for strength.

Fourth, he got comfortable. He was at home with them, warming himself by their fire. Nobody plans to fall in the middle of the storm. Sometimes we fall because we sat down somewhere we never should have been and started to feel at ease.

What Jesus Did for Peter

So what does Jesus do for a man like this? First, He looks at him. Luke says the Lord turned and looked at Peter. I want you to be careful here. Do not read that look through your sinful perspective. The look you would give someone who failed you is not the look Jesus gave. This was not a manipulative glance. I believe it was the kindest look Peter had ever seen. It was a look of love. It was a look of mercy.

Second, He dies for him. The justice due for those denials was going to be carried by Jesus within a matter of hours. Jesus did not die for Peter because Peter was awesome. We say that Jesus died for sinners, and that is a great truth. But somewhere along the way, I think we start to believe Jesus died for the all-stars, the ones who never fail and never stumble, the good guys He can use. Peter had this profound lapse, and he spent the rest of his life saying, “Jesus died for people like me.”

As an American Baptist preacher says, “I have always felt bad for Peter that the lowest moment of his life was recorded in all four gospels and translated into almost every known language in history. I used to think, man, it stinks to be Pete. But the more I think about it, the more I see an amazing, immeasurable gift. For the rest of his life, Peter was freed from the temptation to pretend to be anything other than a sinner who needs the mercy of God.” When people know you at your worst, you are allowed to be exactly what Scripture says you are, a sinner in need of grace. You do not have to pretend to have your act together.

How Jesus Restored Peter

Now turn to John 21. I told you that the charcoal fire in chapter 18 is the first time John mentions one. It is not the last. This is after the resurrection, and here is where Peter is. He knows Jesus has forgiven him. But

he tells the other disciples, “I am going fishing.” What does he mean? He believes he is forgiven, but he thinks he is no good to Jesus anymore. The Lord has ten other men He can use. I will go back to my boats.

And Jesus is on the shore, and He calls Peter back to land. When Peter arrives, he sees something familiar. Verse 9 says, “When they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid out, with fish placed on it, and bread.” The same kind of fire where he had denied his Lord is now the place where Jesus serves him breakfast.

Then in verse 15, “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’” Jesus asks the question three times, once for each denial. And each time He says, “Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep.”

Here is what I want you to know. God uses people powerfully who have been deeply impressed with their own sense of weakness and inadequacy. Is there someone listening to my voice right now who believes God has forgiven them, but thinks He would never want to use their life? That is not the God of the Bible. He says, “Peter, do you love me? Get in the game. Feed my sheep.”

Conclusion

Throughout this passage, we kept seeing Annas and Caiaphas going back and forth, and it makes us ask, who is the real high priest here? The answer is clear. It is Jesus. But unlike the priests in the Old Testament, who offered a sacrifice, our High Priest, the true go between for God and man, came to be the sacrifice. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And this is not just a theory or a story. It is a reality.

If you are listening this morning and you know you are a sinner, and that is all any of us are, and you need a Savior, the Scripture is clear. If you come to Jesus in faith, believing who He is and what He has done, that He died for your sin and rose from the grave, He will change your life. And He will use your life, for His glory and His purposes.