

Today's scripture is like modern movie story-telling in which two scenes unfold simultaneously in different spots: the interrogation of Jesus and that of Peter. This passages, near the beginning of the trial of Jesus, hints at the great violence to come. It also wrestles with the relationships between the Rabbi Teacher and the student-disciple. Asking the question to John – and us – how are you with Jesus? It insists upon the relational and life link between teacher and disciple, identity and discipleship, life and death; and so confronts us with questions of our own faith, agency, and identity.

We aren't familiar with the scriptures in the same way as the early followers of Jesus. We speak different native languages. So we easily miss the relational connections between the way in which John dramatically recreates this story and the other gospel portions which it points & builds.

Verse 14 :: this citation of the words of Caiaphas points back to John 11: 49-53 establishing a textual relationship.

⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed." ⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God. ⁵³ So from that day on they planned to put him to death.

Courtyard :: the Greek word used here (αὐλήν pronounced [aulēn]) is also used for the sheep flock in John 10:1. **gate/door** :the Greek word used here (θύρας pronounced [thyras]) is also used for the door of the sheep pen in John 10:1. These are the only times that this vocabulary is shared in the gospel of John in which the Good Shepherd teaching of John 10 alone appears. It's worth comparing the two passages. What connection do you see?

¹ "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the **sheepfold** by the **gate** but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the **gate** for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the **gate**. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. *The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me..." John 10:1-14

SCRIPTURES FOR SUNDAY 3.4.2018

John 18:12-27
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹² So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³ First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the **courtyard** of the high priest, ¹⁶ but Peter was standing outside at the **gate**. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸ Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple,

I am not :: We see 2 of the 3 denials of Jesus by Peter in the passage. John tells this differently than the other gospels. John alone tells of the interrogation of Jesus stands against the religious and political elites in which he responds “I am” simultaneously with that of Peter who stands among the slaves and servants saying “I am not.”

Verse 20 :: the answer of Jesus points back to an early comment by John in his telling of how popular Jesus was in John 25-26: “²⁵ Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? ²⁶ And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah?”

I have said nothing in secret :: this verse is an exact citation of Isaiah 45:19 which concludes God’s self-disclosing proclamation of identity.

<<¹⁸ For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it (he established it;
he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!):
I am the Lord, and there is no other.

¹⁹ *I did not speak in secret*, in a land of darkness;>>

Again Peter denied it :: This points back to the prophetic word of Jesus about Peter’s denial in the darkness to come. Notice the relationship between the saying “I will lay down my life...” with the same saying in John 13:36-39

“³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.

It also points ahead to the triple reaffirmation of Peter’s call by Jesus in John 21, which seems to redeem this trip denial.

<<¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “**Feed my lambs.**” ¹⁶ A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “**Tend my sheep.**” ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “**Feed my sheep.**” ¹⁸ Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” ¹⁹ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “**Follow me.**”>>

where all the Jews come together. *I have said nothing in secret.* ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.” ²² When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” ²³ Jesus answered, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶ One of the slaves 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?” ²⁷ *Again Peter denied it*, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

- What shimmers for you in this story?
- With whom do you identify in the story? Peter? The other disciple? Someone watching in the courtyard? Or maybe one of the elite trying to protect what is? Why?
- How does Jesus’ response to interrogation differ than that of Peter? Why did John alone choose to put them side by side in his telling of the story?
- How does your relationship with Jesus shape your identity?
- Just before his arrest Jesus teaches that “²⁴unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.” John 12:23-26 How does that connect with his passage just a few chapters later?; how does it connect with your life and faith journey?