

Series: John

Title: A Comforting Contrast

Text: Jn 18: 12-27

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John 18: 12: Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, 13: And led him away to Annas first;...15: And Simon Peter followed Jesus,...

In this passage, the Spirit of God moved John to go back and forth between the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostle Peter showing us a comforting contrast. We behold Christ holy and faithful under immense pressure before the high priest and the supreme court, the Sanhedrim. We also see Peter, a believer, who unfaithfully denies Christ before a small number of people.

Proposition: This is a contrast instructive for every sinner and one that will greatly comfort God's saints. We need Christ to be our Righteousness because we are sinners.

THE LAMB

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God. He is the High Priest called of God.

First, we see Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God.

John 18: 12: Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, 13: And led him away to Annas first

In the old testament shadow, the type, the lamb had to be a free will offering. Christ Jesus is the free will offering. He willingly, voluntarily gave himself to suffer the cross in place of his people—*"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* (v11)

In the old testament shadow and type the lamb was bound. We see it here—*"Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him."* This is who Isaac typified when Abraham bound his only Son Isaac, to slay him on the altar. Christ Jesus is God providing himself a Lamb (Gen 22: 8). He is the Lamb not only for Abraham and Isaac but for all his people. Christ was typified each time they would bind the sacrifice to the altar.

Psalm 118: 27: God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

Christ Jesus was willingly bound with the sin and curse his people deserved that his people might be loosed from the curse and condemnation of God's holy law. He was bound that his people might be loosed from our sin. He was bound that his people might be loosed from the devil, from death, and at last from this world.

In the old testament type, the lamb was led to the priest—*"And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year."* Of our Lord Jesus Acts 8: 32 says, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter."

Sinners can only come to holy God through the blood of Christ Jesus the Lamb. He laid down his life as the Substitute of his people and put away all the sins of his people by his precious blood.

Heb 9: 22: And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Cain was rejected because he came to God without blood. Abel was received only through the blood of the lamb. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Only through faith in the Lamb shall sinners be accepted of God.

THE HIGH PRIEST

We also need a High Priest to represent us to God. We behold our Lord Jesus the Great High Priest.

John 18: 13: And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

The law which God gave concerning the priest (which Christ himself gave) said there was to be one high priest who remained until death. But by now the priesthood was very corrupt. They had more than one high priest and changed sometimes yearly. Annas had been high priest. He was still considered so by most, that is why they come to him first. But also his son-in-law, Caiaphas, filled the office. Originally the high priest was called of God. But Annas put Caiaphas in that office, probably for money or other political reasons. By God's law, it was Aaron and his sons, not Aaron and his sons-in-law.

But standing there is the very one the office of High Priest was given to typify. God our Father made Christ our High Priest and made him our eternal High Priest.

Hebrews 5: 4: And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron. 5: So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6: As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec...16: Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17: For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec...23: And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24: But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25: Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

As the Lamb he laid down his life for his people. As High Priest he entered into the holiest of holies by his own blood to represent us to God our Father.

Hebrews 9: 11: But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

THE SUBSTITUTE

Then to remind us Christ is the Substitute of his people, the Spirit of God moved John to include this detail again.

John 18: 14: Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

John 11: 51: And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52: And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53: Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

Caiaphas meant this for evil but God meant it for good. this was God's eternal purpose. it was, indeed, expedient that Christ Jesus the GodMan should die for all God's elect people. It was expedient for Christ to die that he might fulfill the law and the prophets, declare God just and Justifier of his people and save his people from our sins.

THE CONTRAST

Next, we see the contrast between Christ and his people.

First, we see the apostle Peter's denial begin. Peter represents God's believing people.

John 18: 15: And Simon Peter followed Jesus [afar off], and so *did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16: But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17: Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. 18: And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

Everyone there that night was a guilty sinner, except the Lord Jesus Christ. Every child of Adam—every man—is a guilty sinner. The elect of God who Christ came to save are all guilty sinners. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3: 23).

But in Peter's fall, we see that it is not only for the sins of his people *before* we are converted but also for our sins *after* we are converted. Having had a new man created in us, we now see that there is no good thing in our sin-nature. As a converted, aged believer the apostle Paul,

1 Timothy 1:15: This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Brethren, as a believer, have you ever been where Peter was that night? He was a regenerated, sanctified believer. He walked with Christ and was taught of him for three and a half years. Peter was faithful. He loved the Lord Jesus. Like each of us here born again of God, Peter was determined to serve Christ faithfully, determined to never sin. But the Lord Jesus told Peter plainly that he would deny the Lord Jesus three times before the cock crowed. But while things were good, Peter did not think he would.

Matthew 26: 35: Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

When the soldiers came in the garden, Peter probably thought that was the test. He pulled a fisherman's knife and cut the officer's ear off. Peter made a terrible error in judgment. Still, that was a courageous thing to do. There were hundreds of officers there that night. They were well outnumbered. Peter was indeed ready to die with Christ.

But now, he stands with only as many people as could stand around a fire. There is not nearly the pressure as when the officers stood before him in the garden. Yet, when the damsel asks, "*Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.*"

Then, immediately, the Spirit of God takes us back to the Faithful One, to Christ before Caiaphas. Annas had sent the Lord to Caiaphas. We see this down in verse 24.

John 18: 24: Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest...19: The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

Matthew says the scribes and elders were assembled, the Sanhedrim. Peter was standing around a fire with a few men casually talking. Our Lord is before a host of powerful men. This was a far more intense setting than Peter by the fire. Yet, our sinless Lord Jesus is ever faithful.

John 18: 20: Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. 21: Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22: And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23: Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

While Peter was outside denying knowing the Lord, Christ remains faithful to Peter and to all his disciples. He says nothing to implicate his disciples. The Faithful One ignores that part of the question. He speaks only of his doctrine.

We see the sinless, perfect faithfulness of the Holy and Faithful One. Caiaphas was a sinful high priest questioning the true, holy High Priest. The Sanhedrim were all guilty sinners with hearts to crucify Christ the only Holy One among them. This sinful officer strikes the first blow and rebukes the very living God who holds his and every man's life in his hand. Yet, the Lord Jesus never sinned—he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, faithful to God and to his people. This is the only perfectly Holy Man who could say of every word he spoke, "*If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?*"

Again, the Spirit of God takes us back to behold the very opposite in Peter.

John 18: 25: And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples? He denied *it*, and said, I am not. 26: One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? 27: Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Brethren, do we see our need? Do we see why the Lamb of God had to lay down his life for his people? We see why we must have our High Priest represent us to the Father in the holiest of holies. Christ came to save a multitude of elect sinners born dead in sins. But in Peter we behold why it was a must that Christ put away ALL the sins of his people—past, present and

future—before and after conversion. Peter represents regenerated believers. Mark says of the apostles, “they ALL forsook him, and fled” (Mk 14: 50). Now, here Peter denies the Lord three times.

JC Ryle wrote, "We should mark...the amazing degree of weakness that may be found in a real Christian. We see this exemplified in a most striking manner, in the conduct of the Apostle Peter. We see that famous disciple forsaking his Master, and acting like a coward—running away when he ought to have stood by His side—ashamed to own Him when he ought to have confessed Him— and finally denying three times that He knew Him. And this takes place immediately after receiving the Lord's' Supper—after hearing the most touching address and prayer that mortal ear ever heard, after the plainest possible warnings—under the pressure of no very serious temptation. "*Lord,*" we may well say, "*what is man that You are mindful of him?*"

We see in Peter the danger of pride and self-confidence in a sanctified child of God. Peter was too confident in himself and his ability to resist sin.

Charles Hodge wrote, "There are, in general, few stronger indications of ignorance of the power and evil of sin, than the confident assertion of our ability to resist and subdue it."

1 Corinthians 10:12: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

But we also see amazing grace! As far as sin and guilt, there was no difference between Judas and Peter, nor between Judas and me and you. Think about that!

The difference is God's grace in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He perfected us in his Righteousness from a perfectly holy nature. The Lamb of God put away all the sin of his people past, present and future.

1 John 2: 1: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*

Again, JC Ryle wrote, “Let us have “the comfortable reflection that we have a merciful and pitiful High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and will not break the bruised reed. Peter no doubt fell shamefully, and only rose again after heartfelt repentance and bitter tears. But he did rise again. He was not left to reap the consequence of his sin, and cast off for evermore. The same pitying hand that saved him from drowning, when his faith failed him on the waters, was once more stretched out to raise him when he fell in the High Priest's hall. Can we doubt that he rose a wiser and better man? If Peter's fall has made Christians see more clearly *their own great weakness and Christ's great compassion*, then Peter's fall has not been recorded in vain.”

Peter's sin was his own. But God was in sovereign control overruling all to teach Peter so that Peter could teach us. Here is what the Lord taught Peter and how Peter strengthens us.

1 Peter 5: 5:...Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 8: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9:

Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10: But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*. 11: To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Amen!