

<http://youtu.be/VMzKHFnD29E>

How do people see Jesus?

Who do they think he is? What picture do most people have of Jesus today?

A historical figure. A magician. A dead man. A Saviour. A good teacher. A religious figure.

As we move closer to the cross with Jesus, what picture do **we** get? Jesus claims to be God himself. He claims to be the King. He claims to be the Saviour. He claims to have power over sin and death and eternal life.

He says:

I am the Messiah.

I am the bread of life.

I am the good shepherd

I am the way, the truth and the life.

I am the true vine.

But what picture do we have of Jesus as he approaches the cross? What does a King and a Saviour look like? What does God in human form look like?

And I think you'll agree that the picture we get in John 18 is not a very impressive one!

The picture of Jesus is of someone who is:

Betrayed

Rejected

And Weak.

And on top of that, his greatest claim in this whole chapter is that he is obedient.

**III** – What is **your** greatest characteristic? If there was one characteristic you would like people to use to describe your character, what would it be?

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Would it be "betrayed" or "rejected"? Or "weak"? Would it be "obedient"?!

Yet these are what defines Jesus as he moves towards the cross.

### 1. Betrayed

First of all, he is betrayed by Judas. One of his 12 disciples. One of the people who have been closest to him over the past 3 years. And when they come to arrest Jesus, the officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees, along with the soldiers, Judas is there,

leading them to him. It doesn't say much about a leader when he's betrayed by his closest followers does it? And by the leaders of his faith. It's not really the sign of a strong leader to have his church leaders orchestrating his arrest.

And then what happens?

## 2. He is rejected.

Peter, the leader of the disciples, completely denies Jesus. Rejects him. Pretends he doesn't even know him. Only moments ago in the garden, Peter took out his sword to defend Jesus and struck off the ear of the high priest's servant. Peter steps up to defend Jesus even at great risk.

But now, Jesus is under trial, and Peter denies him. 3 times. 3 times he says: I'm not with Jesus. I don't know him.

3 times people recognize Peter and say: "Aren't you with Jesus?" And 3 times Peter says: "No."

Again, that's not a great picture of a leader is it? The leader among his disciples denies even knowing him 3 times.

And where are the rest of the disciples? One disciple went into trial with Jesus, probably John, but where are the others? All gone. He's been betrayed by a disciple, and now denied by another disciple, and deserted by most of the others.

Betrayed. And rejected.

And the final picture we get of Jesus in this chapter is that he is **weak**.

## 3. Weak

Jesus could raise the dead, heal the sick, cast out demons, walk on water, turn water into wine...

Yet what happens to him?

Verse 12 – they bound him up and lead him away.

Verse 19 – they put him on trial.

Verse 22 – they slapped him in the face.

And of course, after this chapter, they beat him and flog him and spit on him...

The picture we get of Jesus is a picture of weakness.

He's betrayed, rejected, denied, treated poorly, arrested, bound, slapped.

In the world's eyes, this is not strength. In the world's eyes, this is a picture of a failure. Not a King.

But in all of this, there is one verse that gives away Jesus' plan. **Verse 11**, just after Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant:

*Jesus commanded Peter: "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"*

The CUP Jesus is referring to is the cup of God's wrath. When you "drink a cup", it's another way of saying that you're taking on that responsibility. Jesus is prepared to take the responsibility and the consequences for our sin and to "drink" God's wrath for the sin of humanity.

Jesus wrestled with the plans of his Father. He was God on earth, but he was also human. He knew God's plans for him to die on the cross for the sins of the world. But it was difficult to face.

Let me read to you Jesus' words from John 12:27-28:

**27** ***"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28*** *Father, glorify your name!"*

Jesus prays for God to be glorified. And that is OUR purpose. To glorify God. To hear his plans for our life and to be obedient. Why? So HE is glorified. Not us.

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We're not in this for our glory. We're not doing what we do as Christians and as a church for OUR glory. We're not here to make a name for ourselves. We're here to make a name for Jesus. To make HIS name great. To see HIM glorified.

Jesus gave up everything to glorify God. And we, as individuals and as a church, are to do the same. To give up our own lives to see God glorified.

And that means sometimes we have to walk a difficult road. We have to make choices between advancing ourselves in this world, or advancing the name of God. Glorifying ourselves, or glorifying God.

Listen to these words from John 17:1-5

**1***After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:*

*"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, **that your Son may glorify you.** 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3 Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

Jesus DOES the work of his Father, commits himself to be obedient God's plans, so God is glorified, and in time, HE will be glorified.

Jesus doesn't call us to do anything more difficult than he's already done. He simply calls on us to glorify God. That is our purpose in life that he keeps reminding us of. He calls on us to be obedient to God. And on the way, if that means we are rejected or betrayed or humiliated, or made weak, then that's simply the cost of doing the Father's will.

Again, in chapter 17, before he's arrested, Jesus prays for himself, for his disciples, and then for us. And he says this in 17:20:

**20** *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.*

Jesus prays for us to be one. That we would be, like him, seeking to glorify God in our lives. That we would be moving forward as one. That we would be following his plans, his will for our lives, not as individuals, but as one body – as his church. That's what we are called to do.

And how do we do that?

Our mission as a church is there on the front page of our newsletter every week. Have a look at it:

*"To be disciples and make disciples."*

And we KNOW this is what God has called us to do.

But we must do this TOGETHER.

If we face rejection and betrayal, if it makes us weak in the eyes of the world, we must remember that it is for the glory of God.

It is not easy. Being a Christian is difficult. Because, to the world, we sometimes look weak, and silly. And we can be rejected. But God calls on us to move together for God's purposes and for his glory.

We are not here to just do what we *feel* like doing as Christians. We're not here to glorify ourselves. We are here to follow this example of Jesus – to put God's plans first.

Life is difficult. And that's why Jesus' prayer for us is that we may be ONE. Because we cannot do this alone.

Jesus gave up his own glory for God's glory. As we step up together for our mission, to be disciples and make disciples, are you prepared to give up your own glory? To be weak? To serve as Jesus served? To be obedient to God?

Who's glory are we working for? God's? Or our own? That's the question to keep asking ourselves. Especially when life is difficult.

We are not in this for ourselves, for our glory. But for the glory for God.

As a Christian, think about those times when it's difficult for you to be obedient to God...

When it's difficult to serve,

When it's difficult to love

When it's difficult to walk away from sin

When it's difficult to be faithful,

When it's difficult to sacrifice,

When it's difficult to persevere,  
Remember, we do all this for God's glory. Not our own.