

Only By the Power of Christ

"Learning Jesus" (The Gospel of John)

John 13:36-38

July 7, 2019

BIG IDEA

Peter made a bold promise to die for Jesus—but he didn't fulfill it. Why? Because circumstances changed drastically between the time he made it and the time he was to fulfill it. Likewise, if you try to please God on your own, you will be picked apart and destroyed by a culture that is increasingly hostile. We all want to be able to impact the lives of others for the gospel, but please know that you can only do it by the power of Christ.

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Context:

This passage is set at the Passover Meal. Jesus has washed the feet of His disciples, commanded the disciples to love each other, and identified Judas as the betrayer. With Judas out of the picture, the events leading up to the Lord's death would fall quickly into place. But first He needed to help Peter learn a valuable lesson.

John 13:36-38

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "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? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

1. The Power of Christ is Unleashed When Relationship and Obedience Come Together

John 13:36a – *Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?”*

Peter seemed to dismiss the command to “love one another” entirely, and questioned Jesus immediately regarding their relationship. It was: “Lord, where are you going?”
Not: “You bet we’ll love each other!”

In order for the disciples to withstand the onslaught *they* were about to face, and for Christ’s power to be unleashed in *us*, we must pursue a deep relationship with Jesus. That relationship is only secured when we obey Him.

a. Which comes easier for you: obedience, or a desire to be around Christian people and circumstances? If you’re like most people, obedience is hard—yet it is vital to a deep relationship with Christ. Can you think of a time when you obeyed and God really blessed you? How about a time when you disobeyed and you paid the price?

b. Why does Jesus demand obedience from His followers?

c. Are there areas in your life that lack obedience?



2. Now May Not be the Time, But God Has Plans for You

John 13:36b – Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.”

God had great plans for Peter. But it wasn't his time yet. God knows when the time is right to release His power into our lives. That's the idea that Jesus is introducing here. Peter wasn't meant to know the time—he would need to walk by faith.

a. Is there something that you want badly but God doesn't seem to be moving? How does this make you feel? Why do you think God is waiting?

b. Do you believe that God knows what is best? Why or why not?

c. Can you think of something that God delivered to you at just the right time?

3. Good Intentions Without Spiritual Depth Are the Devil's Playground

John 13:37-38 – 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? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

To be fair, three decades later, Peter would lay down his life as a martyr. But here, his own idea of self-worth was about to cost him dearly. As Jesus predicted, he most certainly would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. In his own strength, Peter was weak.



- a. **What would you identify in your life as areas where Satan could attack you? What can you do to fortify yourself?**

- b. **Is it okay to be weak? How do we experience God differently if we stop trying so hard?**

4. The Power of Christ Makes God's Promises a Reality

***Proverbs 3:5-6** – Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

We can experience God's power when we are close to Jesus and depend on Him. As we get closer, the things we want will more closely align with what He wants. His power, then, will be unleashed in our lives.

We can move in this direction by:

- a. **Seeking the heart of God while understanding that our own heart is unable to help us.**

***Jeremiah 17:9** – The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

- b. **Measuring our steps before we make bold promises.**

- c. **Fully embracing our weakness.**

***2 Corinthians 12:9** – But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*



PRAY

Lord, I pray that I would learn to submit myself to your power. Do whatever you want with me. Life is short. I want it to count. Your power is my only hope. Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For further study this week:

- [*My Utmost for His Highest*](#) – a book from Oswald Chambers
- [*Foxe's Book of Martyrs*](#) – a book from John Foxe

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

The Lord's assurance of a future home for believers (John 14:1-4)

