

Shall I Not Drink the Cup?

John 18:1-27

August 16th, 2026

1. Plot: _____ in the garden (18:1-11)

Subplot: Peter tries to _____. (18:10-11)

2. Plot: On _____ before the High Priest (18:12-27)

Subplot: Peter _____ being a disciple of Jesus. (18:15-18, 25-27)

3. Applying the Word

We _____ but Jesus did not.

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on John 18:1-27

1. Why do you think the soldiers fall to the ground at Jesus' words? (v. 6) What are the possible natural and supernatural explanations? How is it similar and different than other passages where people fall to the ground in response to God? (Ezekiel 1:28, Acts 9:4, and Revelation 1:17)
2. Read the account of Jesus' prayer in the garden in Matthew 26:36-46. This scene likely takes places between the end of John 17 and the events of John 18. How does it describe Jesus' willingness to "drink the cup" that the Father has for Him?
3. What is the cup the Father has given Jesus? Consider Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, and Jeremiah 25:15-17.
4. Place yourself in Peter's position. What do you think motivated his response in v. 10? What was he missing?
5. Contrast John 13:37 with 18:15-18. What caused Peter to change his stance? What motivations do you think were ruling his heart?
6. Why does Jesus respond by pointing to previous teaching in v. 20 after being questioned?

Shall I Not Drink the Cup?

John 18:1-27

August 16th, 2026

Big idea: Judas' betrayal, the soldiers arrest, Peter's denial, and the high priests' unjust trial all served to bring Jesus to the cross.

Intro

What had to happen for you to be sitting here today?

Some things inside your control – maybe you set an alarm, ate breakfast, put on the clothes you picked out the night before, and drove here.

Maybe some things outside your control – someone else set an alarm, made you eat breakfast, and brought you here.

Other things are far outside your control – you were born in a particular time and place, you were either from the area or were in a position to move here; you were healthy enough to come, it's likely you were born in a family of Christians who shared the gospel with you or someone else later shared the gospel with you.

Some things you chose to do. Some things happened to you.

After a long pause in the storyline of John's gospel in which Jesus taught and prayed for 5 chapters, the action picks up quickly in chapter 18. It's a current of activity that leads to Jesus on the cross. Some things He chooses to do – going to a particular garden where He often visits. Others are done to Him – arrested, placed on trial. But John doesn't paint Jesus as a victim of circumstances. He's marching to the cross with intentionality and purpose.

Matt Carter puts it this way, "Jesus is innocent, but he's not a victim: a victim has no control over his circumstances."

That truth is reflected in the words of Jesus after Peter attempts to "save" Jesus with a sword.

v. 11 – Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

Plot – what is Jesus doing?

Subplot – what is Peter doing?

1. Plot: **Arrested** in the garden (18:1-11)

- a. Jesus finished speaking – teaching and prayer in ch 13-17 – and he left with His remaining disciples.
 - i. He traveled over the ravine of the Kidron and to a garden.
 - ii. Putting the gospel accounts together, we can understand the timeline of events.
 - iii. Jesus celebrated the Passover meal/Last Supper (Matt. 26:20-25, Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-30)
 - iv. Upper room discourse (John 13:1-17:26)
 - v. Jesus prays in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:47-53)
 - vi. Betrayal and arrest (Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12)
 - vii. Trial before Annas (John 18:13-24)
- b. The garden was probably an olive grove on the Mount of Olives outside Jerusalem.
 - i. It was likely a walled garden that they "entered"

- ii. See map
 - iii. Judas knew the place because Jesus often met there with His disciples.
 - 1. It isn't a place to hide but a place to be found (Carter, adapted)
- c. Judas shows up with a cohort of Roman soldiers and Jewish officers. (vv. 3-4)
 - i. A cohort was normally 600 troops, but it can refer to a smaller group, which was likely the case here. Unlikely that 600 troops came with Judas into the walled garden, but it is likely that it was a sizable group of soldiers who were armed with torches and weapons.
 - ii. Jesus didn't run. He knew all things that were coming upon Him (v. 4) and went to them, asking whom they seek to draw attention to himself and away from his disciples.
- d. When Jesus identified Himself, they fell back (vv. 5-7)
 - i. What explains this response?
 - ii. When they say who they are looking for, Jesus identifies Himself as the one – "I am He"
 - 1. Could just be the natural, grammatical way to identify Himself.
 - 2. Could also be an "I AM" statement that identifies Himself as God by using the divine name.
 - a. Since Exodus 3 God has identified Himself as "I AM" and Jesus has echoed that in John, especially 8:58 when He says, "Before Abraham was born, I am."
 - iii. The soldiers' response at Jesus' words is a response to Him in some way.
 - 1. Fear and awe from His courage – but that doesn't seem to fully explain it.
 - 2. Some sense of His true identity, and yet they still proceed with the arrest. It's like they don't quite know what to do with Him.
 - iv. Once again He presses them for an answer – whom do you seek?
 - 1. Since they are seeking Him, He protects His disciples by telling them to let them go, and they do.
 - 2. Concern for His disciples even when arrested and knows what is coming.
 - 3. That present concern for their physical safety and protection of them illustrates His greater power to keep them and lose none of them.
- e. Subplot: Peter tries to **intervene**. (18:10-11)
 - i. While the greater plot of Jesus' arrest unfolds, a subplot unfolds with Peter.
 - ii. Every one of the four gospels describes this event. Only John names Peter.
 - iii. Peter sees this as something to be prevented by any means so he takes matters into his own hands. He thinks Jesus needs protection. Someone needs to stop this!
 - iv. Notice the historical details –
 - 1. the man was a slave
 - 2. he was a slave of the high priest
 - 3. it was his right ear
 - 4. the ear was cut off, not merely damaged

5. his name was Malchus – perhaps identified because he was known by the audience, became a Christian, or simply is an identifiable witness (“ask Malchus about this, he’ll tell you”)
6. He was a relative of another slave that Peter talked to in v. 26
- v. Luke tells us that Jesus heals the ear (Luke 22:51)
- vi. What I think is most significant though is Jesus’ words to Peter.
 1. “The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”
 2. **Matthew 26:39** And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."
 3. He asked the Father to take away the cup of suffering if possible.
 - a. Not a question of whether He would do the Father’s will, but whether there was any other way.
 4. D.A. Carson – The cup refers not only to suffering and death but, as often in the OT, also to God’s wrath
 - a. **Psalm 11:6** Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.
 - b. His death wasn’t merely a display of God’s love (although it was that) and it wasn’t merely an example of self-sacrifice we should follow (although it was that). It was substitutionary (in our place) and vicarious (for our benefit).
 5. “Peter, I’m not running from this. I came for this. These men and their unjust actions are the means toward the end for which I came.”
2. Plot: On **trial** before the High Priest (18:12-27)
 - a. So they arrested Him and bound Him – it was not necessary. He went with them willingly. (v. 12)
 - b. Jesus undergoes a series of “trials” over the next few hours.
 - i. Jewish trials
 1. Before Annas (John 18:13-24)
 2. Before Caiaphas and part of the Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:57-75; Mk. 14:53-72; Lk. 22:54-65)
 3. Before the full Sanhedrin (Matt. 27:1-2; Mk. 15:1; Lk. 22:66-71)
 - ii. Roman trials
 1. Before Pilate (Matt. 27:2-14; Mk. 15:2-5; Lk. 23:1-5)
 2. Before Herod (Luke 23:6-12)
 3. Before Pilate (Matt. 27:15-26; Mk. 15:6-15; Lk. 23:13-25; John 18:28-19:16)
 - c. They took Him to Annas, described as the father-in-law of Caiaphas (v. 13)
 - i. Annas had been high priest from AD 6-15 when he was removed and replaced by Caiaphas, who served until AD 36.
 - ii. The high priest was appointed by the Romans, much to the unhappiness of the Jewish people. “Fired” high priests still often retained significant informal influence. According to OT law they were supposed to be a lifetime office.
 - d. Return to Simon Peter in a moment

- e. If this is considered a “formal trial,” it was illegal in many ways.
 - i. It was at night
 - ii. It was the result of a bribe
 - iii. He was asked to incriminate himself, rather than the questions being directed to the witnesses
- f. Jesus’ defense was to speak to the openness of his message – ask those who heard.
 - i. How shocking that one of the officers struck Jesus.
 - ii. How would you respond?
 - 1. He is innocent.
 - 2. He is far above them.
 - 3. He may be tired – it’s night. He has been teaching his disciples and praying in agony.
 - 4. What he is about to do, he is doing for sinners, and yet sinners strike him.
 - iii. John Henderson from the Biblical Counseling Conference in Bozeman had a great message called *Humility, Charity, and the Art of Being Hard to Offend*. Much of the message looked at the example of Jesus, examples like this passage.
 - 1. He responds with solid, clear logic not rage, even though he would have every reason from our perspective to rage.
 - 2. “If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?”
 - iv. Annas had no response to that but to send him along to the next “trial.”
- g. Subplot: Peter denies being a disciple of Jesus. (18:15-18, 25-27)
 - i. Peter’s denial is predicted (John 13:38) and happens (John 18:15ff).
 - ii. Peter is brought in by another disciple who had a connection to the high priest.
 - 1. Speculation that could be John, but we don’t know that.
 - iii. Denial 1- before a slave girl who kept the door and asks if he is one of Jesus’ disciples.
 - 1. The wording expects a “No” answer, like a hint of a sneer not an open question.
 - 2. Moody - The presumption behind the question is that to be one of Jesus’ disciples is faintly ridiculous, disreputable, and something that any respectable person would wish to distance themselves from. But rather than challenging the presumption, Peter gives in to the temptation: “I am not” (John **18:17**).
 - 3. Was he afraid he would get in trouble also?
 - a. Probably, but not for very good reason.
 - b. He and the others were with Jesus when he was arrested and they all could have been arrested then. Additionally, he cut off the ear of one of the servants of the high priest but he wasn’t arrested for that. The hostility was directed against Jesus.

- iv. This story is not flattering to Peter, and yet the Bible records it. Peter isn't advancing his own power in the early church. He isn't setting himself up as an infallible leader. He records what really happened.
 - 1.
 - 2. Like if you are asked, "You don't believe that narrow minded stuff, do you?"
 - v. Denial 2 – Warming himself around the charcoal fire during the cold, dark night.
 - 1. "they said to him" – a small group around the fire
 - 2. "I am not"
 - vi. Denial 3 – one of the slaves, a relative of the one whose ear Peter cut off
 - 1. Although the ear had been healed, Peter may have been fearful
 - 2. He denied it again
 - vii. And the rooster crowed.
 - 1. Luke adds that Jesus turned and looked at Peter (Luke 22:61)
 - 2. Matthew adds that he went out and wept bitterly (Mt. 26:75)
3. Applying the Word
- a. We **fail** but Jesus did not.
 - i. On one level – we see ourselves in the disciples and Peter.
 - 1. Sometimes self-confident in a naïve way
 - 2. Sometimes physically and emotionally weary and although the spirit is willing the flesh is weak.
 - 3. Sometimes caving to the fear of people or fear of consequences and so we keep quiet or pretend to hold a different opinion than we do.
 - 4. We're convicted and resolve to do better – to be less naïve, more aware of our ability to be tempted or fall, less captive to the fear of man.
 - 5. That's appropriate because the things written in scripture are written for our example, both positive and negative, to learn from, as 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 tell us.
 - ii. But more significantly – much more significantly – we learn that Jesus was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, for us, in our place, because there was no other way to save us.
 - 1. The gospel is NOT do more, try harder, be better.
 - iii. The gospel is, Jesus has done this for you in your place. He drank your cup of suffering and wrath. Believe it. Receive His forgiveness.

SHALL I NOT DRINK THE CUP?

John 18:1-27

1. Plot: Arrested in the garden (18:1-11)

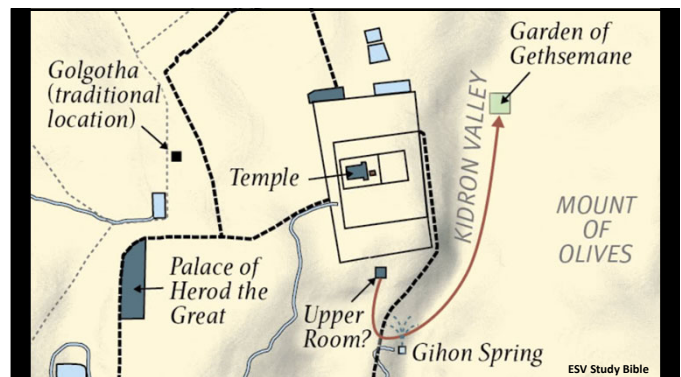
Passover meal (Matt. 26:20-25, Mark 14:17-26; Luke 22:14-30)

Upper room discourse (John 13:1-17:26)

Praying in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:47-53)

Betrayal and arrest (Matt. 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:2-12)

Trial before Annas (John 18:13-24)



Subplot: Peter tries to *intervene*. (18:10-11)

Matthew 26:39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let **this cup** pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

Psalms 11:6 Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of **their cup**.

2. Plot: On *trial* before the High Priest (18:12-27)

Jewish trials

Annas (John 18:13-24)

Caiaphas and part of the
Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:57-75)

The full Sanhedrin (Matt. 27:1-2)

Roman trials

Pilate (Matt. 27:2-14)

Herod (Luke 23:6-12)

Pilate (Matt. 27:15-26; Jn. 18:28-
19:16)

Subplot: Peter *denies* being
a disciple of Jesus. (18:15-18,
25-27)

3. Applying the Word

We *fail* but Jesus did not.