

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK TWENTY-EIGHT: JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

READING

31 As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. 32 And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once. 33 Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. 34 So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” 36 Simon Peter asked, “Lord, where are you going?” And Jesus replied, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow me later.” 37 “But why can’t I come now, Lord?” he asked. “I’m ready to die for you.” 38 Jesus answered, “Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me. John 13 (NLT)

TEACHING

In this passage of Scripture, we learn three remarkable things about Jesus. The first thing we learn is that Jesus understood the timing of God’s plan of redemption and he knew what it would cost him. In the gospel of John, anytime Jesus talked about “the time” for “his glory” – he was talking about the cross. Jesus wasn’t an unwilling victim in this plan, he was willing to lay his life down so that we could receive real life.

The second thing we learn in this passage is Jesus also knew his followers would be instrumental in the plan against him. Peter was one of Jesus’ three closest followers and friends. But Jesus knew Peter would deny him (*parents, you may need to explain the word “deny”*) in just a matter of hours. What’s amazing is that Jesus was still loving toward Peter (who would deny him), Judas (who would betray him), and all the other disciples (most would abandon him) – even to the point of washing their feet just moments earlier!

Lastly, we learn Jesus knew why he must go to the cross. He gave his followers a command to love each other and provided them with an example of loving each other. But he knew that they didn’t just need new commands. They needed new hearts. We can’t obey God’s commands unless he gives us new hearts, new desires. When we believe in Jesus’ work on the cross, our hearts become right before God. And when we “see” Jesus’ work on the cross, our hearts are melted and moved to love and serve God and others.

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RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- Have you ever predicted something correctly? What was it?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- Jesus knew one of his friends would deny him. Who was it?
- In this story, Jesus gave his disciples a command. What was it?

CHILDREN:

- What command did Jesus give his disciples?
- What did Jesus predict about Peter?
- Why did Jesus go to the cross?

TEENAGERS:

- Jesus loved and served his disciples even knowing they would hurt him. What does that teach you about his nature?
- Why do we need new hearts and not just new commands?

ADULTS:

- Jesus loved and served his disciples even knowing they would hurt him. Who is God asking you to love and serve despite what they've done?
- "We can't obey God's commands unless he gives us new hearts, new desires." How does that truth inform how you disciple and pray for your children?

PRAYER

God, thank you that Jesus was willing to lay his life down for me. He wasn't trapped or tricked into doing it – he knew the plan and he honored and glorified you by obediently going to the cross. Help me to believe that what Jesus did with his life, death and resurrection is everything I need. Help me to trust in his work and treasure him above all other things. Holy Spirit, help me to see – to experience – the goodness of Jesus. Help me to love and serve others regardless of how they treat me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

It's worth nothing that Jesus said that our love for each other would prove to the world that we are his followers. It's easy to think that our moral standards, political convictions or religious preferences are the key identifying marks. But the real evidence is our love for each other, even if we don't share all of the same standards, convictions or preferences.