

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 19, John 18:1-19:42, Podcast Audio Overview

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Welcome back, everybody, to another Deep Dive, and today we're looking at, you know, one of the most pivotal moments in history. It's the arrest and the trial and the crucifixion of Jesus. Yeah.

But we're not just going to, like, rehash the story everybody knows, right? Yeah. We're focusing specifically on how it's told in the Gospel of John chapters 18 and 19. That's right.

And we're going to be using a lecture by Dr. David Turner, who is like a leading scholar of John's Gospel, to uncover the unique insights and layers of meaning found only in his account. Yeah. And John's Gospel has this reputation for being a little bit more, I guess you could say, symbolic and theological than the others.

Right. So we're really going to mine for those, like, golden nuggets of insight that John reveals. Yeah, absolutely.

And one of the first things that Dr. Turner points out is the importance of studying each Gospel on its own before you compare them, because, you know, each writer has a distinct perspective and purpose. Okay. So let's dive into John's unique perspective, then.

What's the setting here, and why is it crucial? Well, I mean, the setting is that Jesus has just finished the farewell discourse with his disciples. And this is a moment of intense emotion and weighty teaching. Huge moment.

Yeah. I mean, it's huge. Yeah.

And he moves, you know, from teaching to the events of his passion. And John signals the shift with a simple yet powerful verse. It says, when he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley.

Oh, wow. And it's almost like crossing a threshold into a new reality. Okay, so we're crossing the Kidron Valley, and then, bam, the arrest.

Yes, right. Judas, who has been with Jesus this whole time. Yeah, throughout his ministry.

Leads the authorities to a garden that Jesus frequents. Right. That's crazy when you think about it.

Betrayal from someone who shared meals, conversations, and witnessed miracles alongside Jesus. It's just a chilling reminder that even those closest to truth can choose darkness. Yeah.

Have you ever experienced that kind of, like, deep betrayal from someone you trusted? Well, you know, John doesn't shy away from the raw emotion of the moment. But what's also fascinating is how he introduces this parallel storyline. All right.

Peter's reaction to the arrest. Peter always, the impulsive one, whips out his sword and slices off a servant's ear. Yeah.

I mean, come on. It highlights a stark contrast. Yeah.

Jesus calmly accepts what's coming, while Peter charges into action. Yeah. So, I mean, what does that tell us about how we should respond to challenging situations? Yeah.

I mean, do we react impulsively like Peter, or do we find strength and acceptance even amidst suffering like Jesus? That's a big question. That is a big question. And it's something we'll continue to explore as the story unfolds.

But for now, let's follow Jesus as he's taken from one trial to another. Yeah. First to Annas, then to Caiaphas the high priest, and finally to Pilate the Roman governor.

And you can kind of get all bogged down in the procedural details of these trials. He zooms in on the interactions, the power dynamics, the clashing worldviews. I like that.

Yeah. And woven through these really intense scenes is Peter's story. As Jesus is being questioned, Peter, out of fear, denies knowing him.

Yeah. Not once, not twice, but three times. It's like this gut-wrenching moment of failure, culminating in the rooster crowing, just as Jesus predicted.

Right. So we have these two contrasting responses to Jesus's impending suffering: Judas's calculated betrayal. Right.

Peter's impulsive denial. Yeah. What strikes you about these two failures? I mean, are they completely different, or do they share a common thread? That's a question worth pondering.

But before we delve deeper into that, let's turn our attention to Pilate. Okay. The Roman governor caught in the middle of this explosive situation.

So here's this Roman official in this, like, backwater province, right, trying to navigate this politically charged situation with these demanding Jewish leaders. Right. He's skeptical of their accusations against Jesus, but feels the pressure to appease them.

Oh, yeah. What's going on here? Well, and John brilliantly exposes the irony of the situation. The Jewish leaders are so consumed with ritual purity that they won't even enter Pilate's palace for fear of defilement.

Wow. But they are simultaneously orchestrating Jesus's death. Oh, man.

The contrast. It's the stark contrast between their meticulousness about ritual and their disregard for justice. And what's even more fascinating is Pilate's reaction.

He keeps asking, "Are you sure? Right. As he offers to release Jesus, it's almost like he's giving the crowd this chance to reconsider, to choose compassion over condemnation. Yeah.

But the crowd, spurred on by the religious leaders, shouts for Barabbas, a known insurrectionist, to be released instead. Yeah. I mean, this choice speaks volumes about their distorted priorities and the dangerous power of mob mentality.

Oh, it's a chilling reminder of how easily fear and prejudice can cloud our judgment, even leading us to choose violence over justice. Absolutely. And then we have that famous ambiguous exchange between Pilate and Jesus.

Yeah. My kingdom is not of this world. What do you think Jesus meant by that? Well, it's a statement open to interpretation.

Right. I mean, is Jesus denying any earthly kingship? Or is he pointing to a different kind of kingdom, a spiritual one that transcends the political, you know? And Pilate's cynical record-what is truth, really reveals his utter lack of understanding. Yeah, he's so focused on worldly power and pragmatism that he's blind to the deeper spiritual realities that Jesus embodies.

It raises a crucial question for all of us, then, right? What truths do we prioritize? Yeah. I mean, are we like Pilate, fixated on the tangible and the temporal? Or do we seek a deeper understanding of truth that goes beyond the surface? I mean, that's something to think about. It is.

You know, it's interesting how John handles the crucifixion itself. He doesn't dwell on the graphic details like some of the other gospel writers do. Yeah, he doesn't.

Instead, he focuses on these specific moments that reveal a deeper theological meaning. Yes. He's inviting us to look beyond the physical suffering and to see the spiritual significance of what's happening.

Like, for example, he highlights several instances where Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled. Like the soldiers dividing Jesus's garments and casting lots for his robe. It seems like such a small detail.

But John connects it back to Psalm 22, showing how Jesus's suffering was foretold centuries earlier. That's right. That's wild.

It is. And then there's that, like, really poignant moment where Jesus entrusts his mother to the beloved disciple's care. Yeah.

Even in his final moments, he's thinking of others and demonstrating this, like, radical compassion and love. It's a beautiful testament to his unwavering love, even amidst, you know, excruciating pain. And then we have those powerful declarations from the cross.

Yes. I thirst, and it is finished. And Dr. Turner points out that these aren't cries of defeat, but declarations of triumph.

Really? Yeah. It is finished signifies the completion of Jesus's mission, the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. Wow.

And there's another detail that only John includes that really struck me. The piercing of Jesus's side and the flow of blood and water. It foreshadows the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.

Yeah. Essential elements of the Christian faith. It's like John is saying that even in death, life flows from Jesus, a life that continues to nourish and sustain his followers.

Right. Okay. So then we come to the burial, a scene that beautifully ties back to earlier moments in the gospel.

That's right. Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus, steps forward and requests his body. Wow.

And he's joined by Nicodemus who, if you remember, first came to Jesus at night seeking answers in secret. Yeah. I remember that.

Yeah. That's amazing to see how Nicodemus, who was initially hesitant to publicly acknowledge Jesus, now boldly participates in his burial. It's a testament to the transformative power of faith.

Yeah. And the fact that Jesus is laid in a new tomb in a garden. Yeah.

Well, that sets the stage for the resurrection narrative that's to come. It does. Speaking of the garden, it's easy to get lost in all the theological details and forget that these events took place in real locations.

Yeah. You're right. John grounds the story in the Geography of Jerusalem.

Mentioning places like the Kidron Valley, the Garden of Gethsemane, and Golgotha. I know some people might find the geographical details a bit dry. Yeah.

But I think they're fascinating. I mean, they help us connect with the story on this visceral level. Imagine yourself standing in the Garden of Gethsemane surrounded by these ancient olive trees.

Wow. Can you feel the weight of history? The anticipation of what's about to unfold? It's a powerful way to engage with the narrative. Yeah.

To imagine yourself walking in Jesus's footsteps. It really is. Yeah.

And it's not just about places. It's about people too. Yeah.

Right. We often think of biblical figures as like characters in a story, but they were real people who lived and breathed. Yeah.

Like, take Pontius Pilate, for example. Okay. We tend to think of him as a purely biblical figure, but there's actual historical evidence that he existed.

That's right. In 1961, archaeologists discovered the Pilate stone in Caesarea Maritima. This inscription confirms Pilate's governorship of Judea, providing this tangible link between the biblical narrative and historical reality.

That's amazing to think that we have a physical artifact that connects us to the person who condemned Jesus to death. I know, right? Mm-hmm. Speaking of tangible details, John describes Jesus being laid in a new tomb, likely referring to a rolling-stone tomb, which was a common type of burial chamber in first-century Israel.

You can still find examples of those tombs in Israel today, offering a glimpse into the burial customs of Jesus's time. It's fascinating to think about how these details help us visualize the scene. Yeah.

The heavy stone rolled in front of the tomb, sealing it shut. Right. Such a powerful image of the finality of death, seemingly having the last word.

But of course, we know that's not the end of the story. Right. And this brings us to one of the most thought-provoking aspects of John's passion narrative: the seeming paradox of Jesus's actions.

Yeah. On the one hand, he appears passive, allowing himself to be arrested, tried, and condemned. But on the other hand, he's actively embracing his fate, fulfilling scripture, and caring for those around him.

Yeah. So how do we reconcile those two seemingly opposite realities? That's a tough one. It is.

So, Dr. Turner suggests that Jesus's submission is actually a powerful act of obedience and love. Right. And it challenges our conventional understanding of power and sacrifice.

So true, we often equate power with dominance and control, but Jesus shows us a different kind of power. Right. A power rooted in love, sacrifice, and obedience to God's will.

It makes you wonder: how does this challenge our own understanding of power? It's a question worth pondering, especially as we consider the characters of Judas and Peter, both of whom fail Jesus in different ways. Right. But whose stories offer contrasting lessons about betrayal, denial, and ultimately redemption?

OK, so Judas, despite having witnessed Jesus's ministry firsthand, chooses betrayal. Right. And Dr. Turner suggests that maybe he became disillusioned when Jesus didn't fit his preconceived notions of a messiah who would overthrow Roman rule.

Yeah. That raises a chilling question. Can proximity to truth without genuine transformation lead to a greater rejection of it? Oh, that's a thought-provoking idea.

And then we have Peter, who, despite his initial boasts of loyalty, denies Jesus three times when faced with fear and pressure. Yeah. But unlike Judas, Peter's story doesn't end in despair.

Right. He repents.

And he's ultimately restored to fellowship and given a crucial role in the early church. That's encouraging. Yeah.

It's a hopeful reminder that our failures don't define us. Yeah. God's grace is bigger than our mistakes.

Right. And even our most profound failings can become opportunities for growth and transformation. It begs the question: how can we, like Peter, learn to move forward from our failures and embrace the redemptive power of grace? It's a journey we all face at some point.

And then there's Pilate, a character who seems to embody the dangers of compromising one's morals for personal gain. Right. Pilate is such a complex character.

He is. He's clearly conflicted and torn between his desire to do what's right and his fear of the consequences. He keeps asking Jesus what is truth, but it's almost like he's not really seeking an answer.

Right. And Dr. Turner suggests that Pilate represents those who prioritize worldly power and security above truth and justice. Yeah.

He's so focused on maintaining his position and avoiding conflict that he misses the opportunity to stand up for what he knows is right. The sobering thought, isn't it? It is. We all face those moments where we have to choose between what's easy and what's right.

And sometimes, like Pilate, we might be tempted to compromise our values for the sake of comfort or security. Yeah. And that's a temptation we must constantly be aware of because when we choose comfort over conviction, we risk losing sight of what truly matters.

Okay. So as we wrap up this section of our deep dive, I'm struck by how much more there is to uncover beneath the surface of this familiar story. You're right.

John's gospel invites us to look beyond the events themselves and grapple with the deeper questions that they raise about faith, betrayal, failure, and redemption. It's a reminder that the story of Jesus's passion isn't just an ancient narrative. It's a story that continues to speak to our lives today.

Absolutely. And as we move into the final part of our discussion, we'll continue to explore the implications of this story for our own lives and our understanding of what it means to be followers of Jesus in a world that often seems to operate according to very different values. It's like we've been talking about Judas and Peter and Pilate.

It's easy to get caught up in their failings, but we can't forget that in the middle of all this, Jesus is incredibly aware of what's happening to him. Right. He's not just a passive victim.

Yeah. That's one of the things that makes John's account so powerful. He emphasizes Jesus's agency throughout his passion.

Yeah. He's actively fulfilling God's plan, even in the face of immense suffering. Like he's almost orchestrating his own arrest and trial.

Right. Remember when Peter tries to defend him with a sword? Jesus tells him to put it away. Yeah.

He knows what's coming, and he's choosing to embrace it. He even says, do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than 12 legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way? Powerful words. So powerful.

He's not just passively accepting his fate. He's actively choosing it as part of this like larger divine plan. It really challenges our typical understanding of power, doesn't it? Absolutely.

We tend to think of power as dominance and control, but Jesus shows us a different kind of power. Yeah. A power that's rooted in love, sacrifice, and obedience to God's will.

It makes you think about how we use our own power. Are we seeking to control others or are we using our influence to serve and uplift? Right. Are we building our own little kingdoms, or are we working to advance God's kingdom of love and justice? Those are questions we all need to grapple with.

Yeah. And I think Pilate's character offers a stark warning about what happens when we choose worldly power over truth and integrity. He's such a tragic figure.

Yeah. He has the authority to release Jesus, but he just lacks the moral courage to do what's right. He chooses political expediency over justice, comfort over conviction.

And John highlights this by contrasting Pilate with Jesus. Jesus, even though he's facing death, speaks with authority and clarity. Pilate, on the other hand, seems lost and uncertain.

Totally. His famous question, "What is truth," reveals this profound sense of cynicism and disillusionment. It makes you wonder: what truths are we willing to sacrifice for the sake of our own comfort or security? Right.

Are we willing to stand up for what we believe in, even when it's difficult? Yeah. Or are we, like Pilate, going to wash our hands and just let injustice prevail? It's a challenging question and one that John's gospel forces us to confront. Yeah.

And as we reflect on the contrasting stories of Judas and Peter, I think we see two very different responses to failure. We do. Judas, consumed by guilt and despair, takes his own life.

Right. It's a tragic end. And it raises this question: can we allow our failures to define us, or is there another way? And Peter's story offers a glimmer of hope.

Yeah. Yes, he denies Jesus, but he doesn't give up. He repents, he seeks forgiveness, and he's ultimately restored to fellowship.

It's a reminder that God's grace is bigger than our mistakes. It is. And that even our most profound failures can become opportunities for growth and transformation.

Right. It makes me think about the times I've messed up, the times I've fallen short. How can I, like Peter, learn to embrace forgiveness and allow God's grace to heal and restore me? It's a lifelong journey, and one that John's gospel invites us to embark on.

As we wrap up this deep dive into John's account of the Passion, I hope you're left with this sense of both awe and challenge. I hope so, too. Awe at the depth of Jesus' love and sacrifice, and a challenge to live out his teachings in a world that often values very different things.

John's gospel isn't just a story to be read; it's an invitation to be lived. I love that. Yeah, an invitation to embrace the truth, to wield our power for good, and to allow God's grace to transform us from the inside out.

It's a call to move beyond passive observation and step into active participation. To allow the story of Jesus' Passion to shape our understanding of what it means to be his followers in a world that so desperately needs to encounter his love and grace. Thanks for joining us on this journey.

Yeah, this has been great. May the insights we've uncovered together continue to resonate with you as you seek to follow Jesus in your own unique way.