



“Open Church – Open Bible

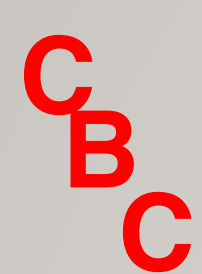
Min. Marossa Davis



Sunday Church School

FEBRUARY 6, 2022

“ Trials and Denials ”
John 18: 15-27



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

John 18: 15-27

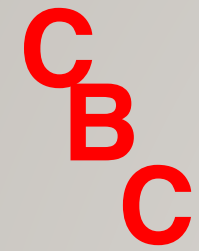
v. 15 “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

v. 16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

v. 17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

v. 18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

“Open Church – Open Bible”



“ Trials and Denials ”

John 18: 15-27

v. 19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

v. 20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

v. 21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

v. 22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

John 18: 15-27

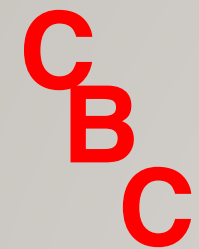
v. 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

v. 24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

v. 25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

v. 26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.”



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

After Jesus was arrested, the activity of the night began as He was put on trial before rulers who were trying to find Him guilty of a crime and execute Him. The whole focus of the religious leaders in Jerusalem was on putting Jesus to death. They were not going to rest until they had masterminded a way to get the Romans to crucify their enemy; these leaders were relentless in their hatred of Jesus.

It was the worst night of Jesus’ life. How did He handle it? What did He do? To whom did He turn? On this night everyone turned their back on Him while His enemies put in motion their plot to kill Him. One of His disciples betrayed Him, and the others abandoned Him in Gethsemane (cf. Mark 14: 50). To make matters worse, one of His closest disciples would deny even knowing Him before the night was over.



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

We too sometimes face rejection from people, both friend and foe alike. When we are rejected by people, we can turn to Christ because He will never reject those who come to Him by faith and love. You can know that He loves you no matter what kinds of situations you may go through or mistakes you have made. He will never leave you, nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5), and He is the friend that sticks closer than a brother (Prov. 18:24).

Between His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and His crucifixion, Christ endured six trials. Unlike under modern American justice, where a case can drag out over several months, or even years, Jesus was tried and convicted within a matter of hours. Not being a Roman citizen meant He had no right of appeal or any legal representation.



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

TODAY’S AIM

FACTS: to examine how Jesus is tried by the high priest while Peter denies knowing Him.

PRINCIPLE: to recognize Christ’s faithfulness in a situation where men were unfaithful.

APPLICATION: to always turn to Christ when others turn away, knowing that He is always faithful.

LESSON OUTLINE

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| I. PETER’S FIRST DENIAL | JOHN 18: 15-18 |
| II. JESUS’ FIRST TRIAL | JOHN 18: 19-24 |
| III. PETER’S FURTHER DENIALS | JOHN 18: 25-27 |



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

I. PETER’S FIRST DENIAL

JOHN 18: 15-16

When Jesus was seized in the garden, the disciples fled into the night. But true to His bold nature, through cautiously, “ Peter followed afar off “ (Luke 22:54)- that is, at a distance- to see what was going to happen. While we cannot be certain, most think that the reference to “ another disciple “was to none other than the author of this Gospel, the apostle John. But some think it was another unnamed disciple. F.F. Bruce suggests it was an unknown Jerusalem disciple who had access to high society (*The Gospel of John*, Eerdsmans).

Whether it was an unnamed disciple or John, he was known to the high priest. We do not know what the connection was, but it did make it possible for Peter to be granted access to the courtyard of his residence. It is likely that the high priest, and possibly other members of his family, resided in or near the temple courts. In the time of Christ, the entire temple complex covered about thirty six acres.



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

It was only after the other disciple spoke to the woman who watched the gate to the courtyard that Peter was able to gain admission to the courtyard. As is still true, access to both people and places is often contingent on whom we know. We even refer to these people as gatekeepers.

As the woman let Peter into the courtyard, she asked him if he too was not one of Jesus’ disciples. Exactly why she suspected this about Peter is unclear. Perhaps she thought she recognized him from a previous encounter, or she may have detected his Galilean accent. A.T. Robertson notes “ She made it easy for Peter to say no” (Word Pictures in the New Testament, Broadman), in that “ her question to Peter is cast in the form expecting the answer ‘No’” (Bruce). Worth noting too is the fact that her question is formulated to cast disparagement upon Jesus. “ You’re not one of *this* man’s disciples, are you ?” (Robertson).

“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

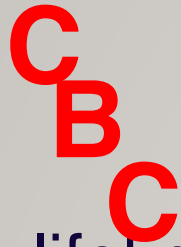
At this point, Peter swiftly denies that he was one of Jesus’s disciples. He would eventually deny the Lord three times, as foretold by Jesus in all four Gospels (Matt. 26:33-34); Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34; John13:38).

The night was cool, so those gathered had built a fire to keep warm. Being ‘ a fire of coals’ (John 18:18), it was not a blazing fire that people could be easily warmed by at a distance. Such a fire would require those present to gather closely together at its edges to keep themselves warm. Peter was likely trying to blend in with those present, and he therefore stood close to them. This decision would eventually set him up to again be challenged about knowing Jesus, leading to his further denials of Him.

II. JESUS’ FIRST TRIAL

JOHN 18: 19-24

Jesus’ first hearing was before Annas, the former high priest and father in law to Caiaphas, the current high priest. The office of high priest was a



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

lifetime position, and the Jews still considered it so despite the fact that it's terms was now set by the Roman authorities. Annas was still considered by many Jews as the lawful high priest, so that is undoubtedly why Jesus was brought before him first. Before things could move ahead, Annas would have to give his stamp of approval on the proceedings.

Annas questioned Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Since all rabbis had disciples, the high priest likely wanted to know where Jesus' followers were from and possibly why they had decided to follow Him. He may also have wanted to know how many disciples Jesus had and what revolutionary threat, if any , they might pose.

Since the high priest had connections with the Roman authorities, it is likely that he wanted to ascertain whether Jesus and His disciples were a political threat to the Jewish religious hierarchy and their always tense relationship with Rome. “ This was Annas making a preliminary examination of Jesus probably to

“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

see on what terms Jesus made disciples- whether as a mere **rabbi** or as **Messiah**” (Robertson).

The high priest also questioned Jesus about His teachings. Since Christ already had numerous confrontations with various religious leaders, especially the Pharisees, Annas was probably trying to decide whether His teachings were any threat to the Sadducees, the party to which he and many other priest belonged. It seems clear, however, that the religious leaders, whatever party they were associated with, were bent on ridding themselves of Jesus. While the Pharisees and Sadducees could agree on little else, they did agree that Jesus should be done away with.

In response to the high priest inquiry about His teachings, Jesus boldly referred him to what He had taught openly in the synagogues as well

C
B
C

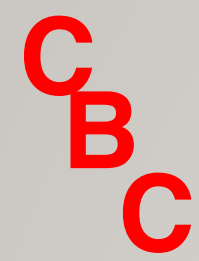
“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

as in the Jerusalem temple. It was not as though Jesus had been running a covert operation. All He had taught and done had been in open, public forums.

Earlier in His ministry, Christ had said “ if I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true” (5:31). By this He meant that by an Old Testament legal standpoint, a person’s testimony about himself does not verify any fact as true. Some objective, corroborating testimony is required to establish a fact as true. For example, if one person accuses another of a crime, but the accused person denies the charge, it is merely one person’s word against another ; nothing has been legally proved. Additional corroborating testimony must be presented to establish that the accused is in fact guilty of that crime.

The above being true, it was not irregular that Jesus would answer the high priest by referring him to those who had actually heard Him teach. A considerable amount of disinformation about Jesus and His teachings was circulating in Jerusalem at this time (cf. 7:12, 20, 40-43). He, therefore, told the high priest that he should consult with those who actually heard Him



“Open Church – Open Bible”

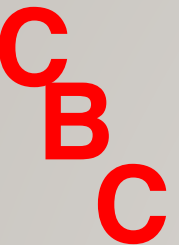
“ Trials and Denials ”

on various occasions.

At this, one of the officers of the high priest slapped Jesus across the face with the palm of his hand. The Lord’s indirect answer to the high priest was seen as insubordination and disrespect. This was just the beginning of the abuse Jesus would endure at the hands of both the Jewish and the Roman authorities throughout His trial and crucifixion.

In response to this abuse, Jesus challenged His attacker to give a valid reason for the attack. Since Jesus had said nothing evil and had meant no disrespect to the office of the high priest, why had the officer struck him? In a prior confrontation with the Pharisees, Jesus had challenged them by saying, “ Which of you [accuses] me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (John 8: 46).

Christ was innocent of all wrongdoing, and the officer’s reaction was unwarranted. This was just one of many violations of the law that occurred during the trials of Jesus. According to Attorney Earle Wingo, there were fifteen



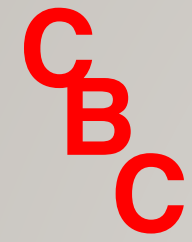
“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

obvious violations of Jewish and Roman law in the proceedings against Jesus (The Illegal Trial of Jesus, Charter).

At this point, Annas had apparently heard enough. He sent Jesus to the current high priest, his son in law Caiaphas. As a final note concerning the term “ high priest,” , “ it is used not only of the presiding high priest but of others who were leaders in the Jewish religious hierarchy. Hence when it is used of one person, it is rendered “ high priest” (John 18: 10:13,15,16), but when more than one priest is indicated , it is translated “chief priest ” (7:32; 11:47; 18:35; 19:6). This is true in all four Gospels.

Concerning Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas, the other Gospels give considerable detail (Matt. 26:57-68; Mark 14: 53-65; Luke 22: 54-71). These other accounts also include the fact that the Jewish Supreme Court, the Sanhedrin , condemned Jesus. Since not all the members of the Sanhedrin had to be present in order to conduct business, it may have been a handpicked



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

group that would simply rubber stamp the wishes of Annas and Caiaphas. There were, however, a few dissenters to their actions (cf. Luke 23: 50-53; John 19: 38-42).

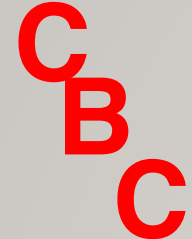
III. PETER’S FURTHER DENIALS

JOHN 18: 25-27

Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still warming himself at the fire along with servants and soldiers. Someone asked him, “ Art thou also one of his disciples?” As he had done previously, Peter denied Jesus by asserting , “ I am not.”

This was the second time since Jesus’ arrest that Peter had denied Him publicly. Peter had pledged his loyalty to Jesus even if it meant his own death. But when he was actually faced with owning his loyalty to Christ before those who could have him arrested and punished along with his Master, his courage failed. When push came to shove, he lied to save his own skin.

This is a humbling experience for anyone who relies on his own



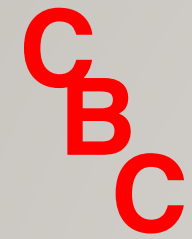
“Open Church – Open Bible”

“Trials and Denials”

self - confidence in the Christian life. In I Corinthians 10:12, Paul warns us, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he falls.” It is only through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit that we can persevere in our faithfulness to Christ.

Resisting such temptation is not easy. But the Peter we see here is a stark contrast to the Peter we see in Acts 2: 14-40! After the Holy Spirit had come to dwell in the church and in the hearts of every believer, Peter was emboldened to stand up and intrepidly proclaim the Gospel in the very heart of Jerusalem. His preaching pierced the hearts of his listeners, compelling them to beg him to tell what they needed to do to be saved. Even after the most dismal failure, there is yet hope of great victory if we endure in faith and reliance on God’s grace.

One of the servants standing near the fire with Peter just happened to be related to Malchus, who had his ear cut off by Peter. The servant had also been present in the garden when Jesus was arrested. But since it had



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

been dark and there had been a large number of people there, he was apparently not completely certain that Peter was actually the one who had attacked Malchus. He nevertheless was suspicious. So he asked pointedly, “ Did not I see thee in the garden with [Jesus] ?”

Upon this third denial, the rooster immediately crowed. Comparing the four accounts of Peter’s denial of Christ provides additional details concerning this episode. They are all similar but different enough to conclude that there was no collaboration between the four Evangelists.

Of note is the fact that Peter actually backed up his denials with cursing and swearing (cf. Matt. 26:73; Mark 14:70; Luke 22:59). Luke also mentions that Jesus looked upon Peter at this very moment (cf. 22:61), probably as He was being moved from the residence of Annas to that of Caiaphas. Upon remembering what Christ said, “ Peter went out, and wept bitterly “ (v. 62).

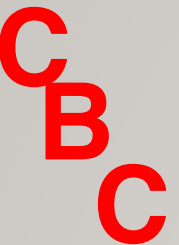
Most Christians can remember times when they have in some

“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

manner denied knowing Jesus. The world is hostile to the claims of Christ and likewise hostile to those who follow Him. This hostility is often expressed by contempt for those who publicly dare to express allegiance to Christ. It can be observed at times when a Christian sports figure gives praise and thanks to Jesus Christ for his or her success. The interviewer seldom acknowledges what has just been said, urgently endeavoring to change the subject. Talking about Jesus invariably makes worldly people uncomfortable. Sometimes it makes them upset or even angry and belligerent.

We must therefore be ever vigilant concerning temptations to deny Christ that are continually before us in the world (cf. I Cor. 10:12-13). Concerning Satan’s tricks, Paul declares, “ We are not ignorant of his devices (II Corinthians 2:11). But bold reliance on the Holy Spirit who dwells in us will give us courage to represent Christ as faithful ambassadors. As John wrote to the readers of his first epistle, “ ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world “ (4:4)



“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials ”

In conclusion, as we can see, Jesus’ enemies used deceit and manipulation in order to execute their wicked plan to destroy Jesus. No one that night wanted to admit to knowing Jesus, including one of His closest friends - a man He had called on to pray with Him right before He was arrested. Where do you stand? Are you trying to blend in, or do you stand out?

We usually place enormous blame on Peter for denying Jesus three times. But think of the many ways we have also denied our Lord at times: by being silent when we should speak, by not exercising our spiritual gifts for the building up of the Church, by being stingy when we could give, by forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, by complaining instead of thanking God for His blessings, by gossiping - and the list could go on and on.

Peter’s life teaches us that no matter how strong we think we are, no one is strong enough to live for Christ in their own strength. Remember Jesus admonishes us in John 15:5, “ For without me ye can do nothing” Let us always ask God for the strength and boldness to not deny Him.

“Open Church – Open Bible”

Practical Points

1. The Lord can use earthly connections to place us where He wants us (John 18: 15-16).
2. A focus on our own comfort can keep us from testifying to others about our relationship with Jesus (vs. 17-18).
3. Integrity means doing and saying the right thing at all times (vs. 19-21).
4. Truthfulness is the best policy, but it is not always appreciated (v.22).
5. People who are out to destroy God’s work will persist in their opposition (vs. 23-24).
6. Denying Jesus is another way of betraying Him (vs. 25-27).

The logo consists of three red, bold, sans-serif letters: 'C', 'B', and 'C', stacked vertically and slightly offset to the right.

“Open Church – Open Bible”

“ Trials and Denials” Questions For Reflection

1. There were eleven disciples, not including Judas Iscariot. Why, perhaps, did only two of them follow Jesus to the palace (John 18:15)?
2. Why, do you think, did Peter deny Jesus (vs. 17, 25) ?
3. Peter denied Jesus three times (v. 27). List ways in which people deny Jesus today.

“Open Church – Open Bible”

Communication Information

Thank you for sharing today at the “Open Church-Open Bible Ministry at the Christ Baptist Church.

If this lesson has been a blessing to you, and you desire to support Christ Baptist , please go to <http://www.cbcburlingtonnj.org/>, click on the **GIVE** tab at the top of the page and follow the prompts

Or Send Your Donations by Mail to
Christ Baptist Church, PO Box 10, Burlington NJ 08016

A copy of this lesson can be obtained by going to the CBC Website at <http://www.cbcburlingtonnj.org/>, Click the ON-LINE Sunday School tab
A copy of the Weekly Lesson PDF will be available for downloading