

Introduction: In his weekly address to pilgrims at the Vatican this past Wednesday Pope Francis said, ‘All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization’. This was the highlight of a teaching that Christians are not to be passive in their faith relationship with God in Jesus; but, together they are to be active agents to share the LOVE of God to all people IN Jesus. All people need to hear The Joy of The Gospel. *** I believe all Protestant Christians can endorse the Pope’s words and sentiments as the calling God has given to all who are disciples of Jesus – in any denomination of Jesus’ Church on earth. *** I would go a little further to say that any local church that is not actively evangelizing its neighborhood is passively denying Jesus – as much as Peter actively denied Him in today’s Gospel passage. *** In our passage from John’s Gospel we heard how Peter was alone in the courtyard of the high priest. He has seen Jesus led away bound and now He is standing trial. Peter is confused. Soon he will deny knowing Jesus three times. *** Before we criticize Peter, let us remember that Jesus both predicted his denial and prayed for his later restoration (Luke 22:31-34). *** Let us also ask ourselves, ‘What have we been doing as a church, supporting and encouraging each other, to share The Joy of The Gospel with our neighbors?’ Our excerpt from David’s Psalm will help us to do better at sharing The Gospel in the future. *** Let’s now prayerfully dig deeper into our texts, praying God will empower us to evangelize our neighbors concerning all Jesus has done for the deepest needs of all people.

I. As Jesus is taken bound to the high priest, Simon Peter denies being His disciple. (John 18:12-18)

A. Soldiers seize Jesus and take Him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. (Verses 12-14)

1. Then the cohort of Roman soldiers and the captain, and the Temple guards, seized Jesus and bound Him. (Verse 12)

Who: Both Roman soldiers and Temple guards (originally appointed by David – 1 Chronicles 26) were dispatched to Gethsemane (the olive oil press, Mark 14:32-34; Luke 22:39-44).

What: They seized and bound Jesus there.

2. They led Him away to Annas first, for He was father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest that year. (Verse 13)

What: The cohort of soldiers and Temple guards led Jesus away from the olive garden to Jerusalem.

Whom: They first took Him to Annas (humble) father-in-law to Caiaphas (as comely, attractive).

3. Caiaphas was the one having given counsel to the Jews that it is better one man to die for the sake of the people. (Verse 14)

Prophecy: He thought his prophecy would benefit Jews by removing one who might cause Romans to clamp down on Jews because He is a threat to Roman sovereignty. But in the long term, Jesus’ death made it possible for all people on earth of every ethnicity to become the people of God (Revelation 7:9-10).

B. Simon Peter is left alone in the courtyard of the high priest and denies he is a disciple of Jesus. (Verses 15-18)

1. But, was following Jesus, Simon Peter, and another disciple being known to the high priest; and, he went in with Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest. (Verse 15)

Peter and John: The other disciple following with Peter is John. John never identifies himself by name in his Gospel
John’s connection: John was known to the high priest. Some have speculated that his father, Zebedee, had a contract with the Caiaphas to be his supplier of fish.

2. But Peter had stood at the door, outside; then he went out, the other disciple known to the high priest, and spoke to the woman who kept the door, and she brought in Peter. (Verse 16)

Peter initially excluded: Since Peter was not known by anyone in the high priest’s household, he was initially kept outside.

John and young woman: Then John came and spoke to the woman who kept the door, and she let Peter into the courtyard. (A woman gatekeeper would be very rare.)

3. Then she is saying to Peter, the slave-girl doorkeeper, ‘Not also thou of the disciples, thou art being of this man?’; and, he is saying, ‘This not I am being’. (Verse 17)

‘Softball’ question: The slave-girl phrases her question in a way that expects a negative answer. So, there is no threat in the question because she expects Peter to say no.

Peter’s denial: Peter obliges her by giving her that answer she expected. But, this ‘easy’ answer is a denial of Jesus at the very time He is being brought before the high priest to be interrogated.

4. But the servants had stood, and the Temple guards, charcoal fire they had made, because cold it was being and they were warming themselves; but, also it was being Peter with them had stood and warming himself. (Verse 18)

Inertia: The cold spring night was appropriate for how Peter must have felt in his heart and mind.

But due to the inertia of dealing with his denial of Jesus, he needed physical warmth.

II. While Jesus is being questioned with hostility, Simon Peter denies Him twice more; and David prayed that his God would maintain his righteousness. (John 18:19-27; Psalm 17:1-7)

A. Jesus is asked about His disciples and His teaching; and, He replies He has always spoken in the open and they know the answers. (John 18:19-24)

1. Then the high priest asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine; He answered, Jesus, ‘I openly, I have spoken to the world; I always, I taught in the synagogue and the Temple, where always the Jews are coming together, and in secret, I have said nothing’. (Verses 19-20)

Teaching questioned: So the high priest is questioning Jesus’ doctrine, what He taught the people about God and His covenant with Israel through Moses.

Open book: In essence, Jesus says all His teaching has been an ‘open book’ to all people. He taught where Jewish people went to be with God in both worship and instruction, and He has no ‘secrets’.

2. ‘Why Me are thou asking? Thou must ask them which have heard Me; what I have said to them; Behold! They have known what I said, even I’. (Verse 21)

Ask My listeners: Because He has always spoken in the open, and many Jews have heard Him, Jesus asks them to question those who heard Him speak and teach.

3. But these (words) of Him having spoken, one which stood by of the Temple guards gave an open-handed slap to Jesus, having said, 'In this way, thou are answering the high priest?!' (*Verse 21*)
Offended 'third level' guard: With Roman soldiers standing by, a mere Temple guard (considered by Rome to be beneath the Roman soldiers and their captain) has taken offense at the way Jesus answered the high priest and asks an incredulous question of Jesus.
 4. Answered to him Jesus, 'If evil I have spoken, thou must bear witness concerning the evil; but, if well (I have spoken), why Me are thou striking?' (*Verse 21*)
Jesus answers with question: Jesus frequently answered questions with pointed questions. This is an example: All Jesus spoke was well and correct. He is putting the guard on the defensive so he realizes the goodness of Jesus' teaching, especially in contrast to the proud and worldly high priest.
 5. Now Annas sent Him who had been bound to Caiaphas the high priest. (*Verse 21*)
'Kicked upstairs': Annas was removed as high priest about 15 AD, but was given the honorary title of high priest. This is why John previously called him high priest. But now Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas who was the official high priest.
- B. Simon Peter denies Jesus twice; to those standing around a fire to get warm, and to a relative of the man whose ear was cut off by Peter. (*John 18:25-27*)
1. But it was being Simon Peter had stood and is warming himself; therefore they said to him, 'Not also thou, of his disciples, thou are being?'; He denied this one, and he said, 'Not I am being'. (*Verse 25*)
Group 'softball' question: These people together question if Peter is Jesus' disciple. They too phrase their question in such a way that they expect Peter to say he is not. There is no pressure on Peter to tell the truth about his relationship to Jesus.
Denial: Now Jesus is on trial before the former and current high priest. Peter has had time to reflect, but he is doubling down on his denial of Jesus. Peter does not have the strength in himself to acknowledge in public his relationship to Jesus.

While Jesus is on trial, His disciple denies Him

2. He is saying, one of the servants of the high priest, being kinsman of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, 'Didn't I thee I saw in the garden with him?'; then again he denied, Peter; and, immediately the rooster called out. (*Verses 26-27*)
Kin: Peter is directly confronted by a man kin to the man whose ear he severed with a sword in the garden of Gethsemane!
'Hardball' question: And this one questions Peter with a phrasing that demands a yes answer, because he is sure he saw Peter with Jesus and defending Jesus. Even in the face of this, Peter still denies Jesus in His moment of trial. It was what Jesus had prophesied, and it has now happened.

While Jesus is on trial, His disciple denies Him

Rooster and conviction: When the rooster crowed, Peter fully realized what he did (Luke 22:60-62).

Application: May this dangerous truth be impressed upon us: Whenever we lose our sense of Jesus as our ALL-powerful Savior, we are in danger of denying Jesus – especially if we are alone and not supported by other believers.

- C. King David prays to his God, as The Savior of all taking refuge in Him, to maintain his righteousness. (*Psalms 17:1-7*)
 1. Thou must hear, Yahweh, righteousness, Thou must give attention: my cry /
 Thou must 'give ear' my prayer in not lips of deceit. (*Verse 1*)
Petition: This is a petition for The Covenant God to listen to David in his righteousness and no deceit.
 2. From Thee my justice will come forth / Thy eyes will see uprightness. (*Verse 2*)
Faith: David has faith, based on his relationship with God, that justice will come to him in the uprightness of God that will be given to him as a gift of grace.
 3. Thou have tried my heart / Thou have visited by night / Thou have tested me and will not find wickedness /
 it will not transgress (go over), my mouth. (*Verse 3*)
Past: Because his God has continually examined David in the past and found him without fault, David has confidence in God he will not sin greatly in the future.
 4. To the works of adam, in The Word of Thy lips / I have avoided the ways of the violent // To uphold my steps in Thy paths /
 They have not slipped, my feet. (*Verses 4-5*)
Your Word: God's Word has sustained David so that he has not fallen away from God.
 Peter had forgotten Jesus' Word to him because he was overconfident in himself.

While Jesus is on trial, His disciple denies Him

5. I, I will call on Thee because Thou will answer me God / Thou must stretch out Thy ear to me, Thou must hear my speech //
 Thou must wonderfully cause Thy strong LOVE / Those who seek refuge from those who rise up,
 (trusting) at Thy right hand. (*Verses 6-7*)
Confidence: First, David expresses great confidence for a positive answer to his request of God.
Refuge: Then he strongly petitions God to act wonderfully in his behalf, as king, for all seeking refuge in God and His Word because of God's strong LOVE for people, now manifested in Christ Jesus.

God saves those taking refuge in Him by His Word

Conclusion: A detachment of Roman soldiers and Jewish Temple guards seized Jesus, bound Him and took Him to the high priest to be interrogated. John and Peter followed and were allowed into the courtyard of the high priests because of John's relationships. When John went in, Peter was alone in the courtyard with many people and denied Jesus three times. One thousand years earlier, David prayed for God to justify his righteousness along with all people taking refuge in Him as their Savior.

While Jesus is on trial, His disciple denies Him ... and we do not want to deny Him.