

## John 18.1-12 – “Seeking Love’s Consequences” – Fourth Sunday in Lent

### *What’s the meaning of this Scripture?*

Each of the four Gospel authors has a particular slant on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Read John 18.1-12 alongside one of the other Gospels’ account of Jesus’ arrest (Matthew 26.36-56, Mark 13.32-50, or Luke 22.39-53). What differences do you notice? How would you summarize the main point of John’s account of Jesus’ arrest in one or two sentences, as compared with the Gospel arrest story that you read?

### *Jesus and God’s Name*

When Jesus surrenders to the soldiers, they say they are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, he replies, “I am [he]” [Greek: *ego* (I) *eimi* (am)], and they all fall to the ground. To understand their strange response to Jesus, read John 8.48-59 (esp. v.58) and Exodus 3.1-15. What do you make of this name of God: I AM [WHO I AM] (Ex. 3.14)?

### *Putting yourself in the story*

John’s Gospel often attempts to describe the inner thoughts and feelings of people in the story. But the story of Jesus’ arrest is full of surprising detail that goes unexplained.

A) Put yourself in the soldiers’ heads as they fell down. What were they thinking? How could they have this reaction and still turn around and arrest Jesus – and, later, crucify him?

B) Similarly: what was going through Peter’s mind when he strikes Malchus, the high priest’s slave? Keep in mind the disciples were outnumbered by at least twenty to one. Roman soldiers weren’t known for their TLC of rebellious peasants – why do you think Peter makes it out alive?

C) What if we hold up the soldiers’ and/or Peter’s behaviour as a mirror to ourselves. Do we ever look like these characters – that is, perhaps: recognizing God in one moment, but shaking it off? Or charging in to follow God where we haven’t been called to do so?

### *Jesus refuses to avoid, escape, or resist*

The sermon proposed that John shows Jesus actively seeking out the cross as the consequence of his love for his own, and the arrest shows how he: 1) *seeks* betrayal, instead of *avoiding* it; 2) *hands himself over* instead of *escaping*; and 3) *rebukes violence* instead of *resisting*.

A) Is this summary persuasive to you? Why/why not? What would you change/add/delete?

B) What are the implications of this for your own life? Where are you avoiding, escaping, or resisting the consequences of love? Alternately: where have you *not* avoided, escaped, etc.?