

## **Lent Day 35**

Monday March 26, 2018

### **Reading:** John 18:1-24

<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

<sup>11</sup> Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

### **Reflection**

Jesus, in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), talks about the cost of discipleship. In John's gospel, he has also forewarned his disciples of coming persecution. That's not just for the disciples in Jesus's own day, that's for you and I too. There is a cost to following Jesus. While that involves people, the real cost is in God's will. God has a plan for your life.

That phrase is usually a comfort to us, isn't it? When we hear, "God has a plan for your life," we get excited. Something great must be coming, so I can stick out this crappy time now. However, when we read that verse in context, nothing about that word to Israel is a comfort. Israel had hoped to go home. They hoped their exile would be over — it wasn't. No, the message was to get comfortable because they were staying in exile. You're not going home guys, so build houses, plant gardens, have children there, marry the native residents and give your children in marriage to them. You're staying. These were the plans God had for Israel. Yet, the message was not without hope. Seek the prosperity of the city you are staying in, because if it prospers you prosper; that's the key to the verse and the notion.

God had tied up the fate of his people with the fate of the world. God had a vocation for Israel — to be a light to the nations and no matter how much they just wanted to be blessed and happy, God had a purpose for them. Well, God also has a plan for your life and my life. For our lives. He has tied our lives to the lives of the world. This is true for us because it is true for our Lord, Jesus.

His time had come and he's in the garden but notice how John paints the scene. There is no long prayer in the garden. No stumbling fear. No request for the cup to pass from him. No kiss of betrayal. He steps up to the coming soldiers and ask who they want and then he boldly says, here I am! Jesus knows his fate and the fate of the world are tied together. Because he will die, we will live and he's going to do that with gusto. So, when Peter decides its time to fight, Jesus stops him and corrects him. He knows the cost of obedience and he's more than willing to pay the price. What's true of our Lord is true of us.

There is a cost to discipleship. There is a necessary pain to following God's plan for us and the world. We will suffer (and in some cases die) for the sake of the world. Jesus has called us to put down the sword and take up our cross and follow him.

### **Prayer**

Lord and Saviour, strengthen us to take up our cross and follow you. We have been so trained to carry and use the sword that we need to be retrained to put it down. Give us the courage to love to the end. Amen.