

186. The Gospel of John 18:1-2

Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest-Part 1

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This morning in our study in the Gospel of John—we are going to enter into Chapter 18.

First of all, let me stop and say again, that as we look at the four Gospels—we can see that three of them (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are *similar*. Because of that, they are known as the **synoptic Gospels** (from a Greek word meaning “to see together” or “to share a common point of view”).

The synoptic Gospels focus primarily on Jesus' *Galilean* ministry and *public* teachings. Whereas **John's Gospel is unique in that it focuses mainly on Jesus' Judean ministry and His private teachings to His disciples.**

Almost one-half of John's entire Gospel deals with the last week of Jesus' life before His crucifixion—and half of that focuses on the last twelve hours of His life before the cross.

This gives us a detailed look into the **final hours of Jesus' life** in a way we just don't see in the synoptic Gospels—including and especially the time He spent with His closest men in the final hours before He went to the cross and the **critical teaching**, He gave them (Chapters 13-16).

At this point in John's Gospel, it probably just after **midnight**.

The evening began in Chapter 13 in an **upper room somewhere in Jerusalem** where Jesus and the twelve apostles/disciples observed the **Passover** together. During the meal **Judas Iscariot left to carry out his betrayal** of Christ. After Judas left the room **Jesus instituted communion** and then began to give His disciples **one final teaching before His crucifixion** to comfort and prepare them for what was coming the next day.

At the end of the 14th Chapter Jesus said to the eleven remaining disciples—“**Arise, let us go from here**” (verse 31).

At that point, Jesus and the disciples left the upper room and began making their way through the streets of Jerusalem toward the **Eastern Gate**. The Eastern Gate (**also known as the 'Golden Gate'**) was the gate thru which they needed to exit the city to make their way to the **Mount of Olives**—and ultimately to the **Garden of Gethsemane** which was located on that mount.

Jesus would often retreat to this garden after a long day of ministry in Jerusalem to spend time with His Father in prayer—sometimes praying all night!

This night would once again find Him spending time in prayer in that very garden—the only difference being that—**this would be the last night He would be spending time in that garden praying.**

John 18:1–2 (NKJV)

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ²

And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples...

Now at this point I need to stop and say that here in these opening verses of Chapter 18, John doesn't give us a more complete look at the events that transpired that morning (it now being after midnight)—but in fact skips over a very important piece of the narrative that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane *before* Jesus' betrayal and arrest.

I'm going to divide the first 12 verses of John 18 into 2 main parts—Jesus' Agony in the Garden and Jesus' Arrest in the Garden.

1. Jesus' Agony in the Garden

For this first main point I'll have you turn to Matthew 26—

Matthew 26:36 (NKJV)

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

The Garden of Gethsemane is located on the Mount of Olives just across the Kidron Valley—a little more than half a mile from the city of Jerusalem. The wealthy people of Jerusalem had gardens on the Mount of Olives—primarily because they couldn't have gardens within Jerusalem because they had a rule you couldn't use fertilizer within the walls of the city.

As I said, there was one particular garden there that Jesus liked to go to—either alone to spend some time with His Father in prayer—or simply to spend some quality time with His disciples after a long day of ministry in Jerusalem.

It is called the "**Garden of Gethsemane**"—which immediately causes us to picture something along the lines of an *'English garden'* loaded with all kinds of beautiful flowers. But it really wasn't a garden like we think of one with all kinds of flowers—**the Garden of Gethsemane was an olive orchard.**

In fact, **'Gethsemane' means "oil press"**—because it was the place where olives were crushed and pressed to release their oil.

This was a fitting place for Jesus to spend His final hours before being arrested because—**He would endure a crushing of sorts that morning. The crushing, the pressing, and the subsequent agony that Jesus endured in Gethsemane as He was about to feel the weight of humanity's sins laid upon Him on the cross**—so far exceeds anything we can even begin to imagine that it is rendered incomprehensible to our human minds.

But once again, the Garden of Gethsemane contained private, gated (and locked) gardens owned by well to do citizens of Jerusalem—*so how did Jesus and His disciples get in?* Jesus obviously knew the owner (probably one of Jesus' disciples) who had given Him the key so that He and His disciples could come and go as they pleased. >>> So, Jesus and His disciples came to the garden—but the Gospels record that He left eight of the disciples near the entrance and only took Peter, James, and John into the garden to keep Him company while He prayed—

Matthew 26:36-38 (NKJV)

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

Jesus knew full well what was coming—the events of the next few hours wouldn't take Him by surprise.

In His humanity His soul longed for some encouragement and companionship from His closest disciples—but that wasn't to be as Peter, James and John fell asleep on Him (verse 40)!

Matthew 26:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

The cup that Jesus mentions here was **"the cup of suffering and death"**—a cup that He had mentioned earlier in Matthew 20:22—

Matthew 20:22 (NKJV)

²² ... "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able."

A "cup" is often used in Scripture to denote an instrument of God's wrath and judgment:

- In Psalm 75:8 we read: *"For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, And the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain and drink down."*
- In Isaiah 51:22 God describes the cup as the *"The cup of trembling, the...cup of My fury"*.
- In Jeremiah 25:15 He calls it *"the cup of the wine of my wrath"*, and
- Ezekiel 23:33 the Lord refers to it as *"The cup of horror and desolation."*
- Let's not forget Revelation 14—

Revelation 14:9–11 (NKJV)

⁹ Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the **cup of His indignation**. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

All of these describe God's judgment being poured out on the wicked if they don't repent or refuse to repent.

However here in Matthew Chapter 26 Jesus uses it to speak of the cup of God's judgment that was about to be poured out upon Himself in just a few hours—

Matthew 26:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me..."

REFLECTION: What was the agony Jesus was going through mean to you?

Once again, this *cup* is **the cup of God's wrath** which was poured out full strength on Jesus when He hung on the cross and paid for our sins, dying in our place.

Because *Jesus* drank the cup of God's wrath—it allowed Him to offer to *us* the **'cup of communion'** (Luke 22:20) which speaks of forgiveness and fellowship!

Matthew 26:39-41 (NKJV)

³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." ⁴⁰ Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

Here Jesus tells us that **believers in Him have two natures** that struggle with one another for dominance and control of our lives—the flesh and the spirit.

- The "**flesh**" is a reference to our **fallen nature** which we were born with, which we inherited from our father Adam—our fallen nature is that part of us that wants to live in rebellion against God.
- The "**spirit**" refers to our new nature—the "**divine nature**" as Peter called it—the nature of God which was born in us when we gave our lives to Jesus and were born of the Spirit. So again, this '*spirit*' is God's divine nature in us—the part of us that desires to live in obedience to God now that we are saved.

These two natures are at constant war with each other for control of our lives—

Galatians 5:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish...[see our study in Galatians 5]

Jesus commanded Peter and all His disciples to—"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation..." (verse 41)—in other words, **"Watch out for and constantly pray against temptation."**

We know Satan's going to bring it our way at some point in our day (probably at many points throughout our day). So, we need to—expect it—be on guard against it—and purpose in our hearts (before it comes) how we're going to handle it (like Joseph did with Potiphar's wife).

- **Don't make yourself an easy target** for the devil by going to places where temptation can easily overcome you. (That's why I don't go to all you can eat buffets!)

- So, the time to be on guard against temptation is **before** it comes—if you wait until it comes knocking and then try to resist it—you’re probably going to fall to it!

REFLECTION: In your own words define the two natures of believers:

And remember to **feed on the Word of God daily** which will strengthen you against sin—

Psalm 119:11 (NKJV)

¹¹Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!

- The Word of God in other places commands us to be watching and praying

Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...

1 Peter 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷But the end of all things is at hand; therefore, be serious and watchful in your prayers.

“Watch” (stay awake and alert)—“and pray lest you enter into temptation”.

- This admonition by the Lord Jesus is no less relevant and vital today as it was when He first gave it to His disciples in that garden two-thousand years ago!

It’s interesting, the first two people that gave in to temptation (Adam and Eve) also found themselves in a garden—but they didn’t watch and pray and so the devil was able to tempt them, and they fell. Jesus possibly had them in mind when He admonished His disciples in *that* garden to watch and pray lest the devil cause them through temptation to fall.

The words of Paul are especially relevant here—

Ephesians 5:15-18 (NLT)

¹⁵So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. ¹⁷Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

- In other words, the best defense is a good strong offense—

1 Peter 5:8-9a (NLT)

⁸Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith...

One more thing about temptation before we move on—

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)

¹³No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

Matthew 26:42 (NKJV)

⁴²Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

- The first time He prayed to His Father in verse 39 He said, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me..."
- The second time He partitions the Father He said, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

REFLECTION: What does the statement "watch and pray lest you enter into temptation" mean to you"

Now before we think that Jesus was trying to escape the Cross let's not forget the words He spoke in John 12:27-28—

John 12:27-28 (NKJV)

²⁷"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify Your name."...

Jesus wasn't trying to get out of His mission to bring salvation to the people of this world—in His humanity I believe He was speaking rhetorically not literally here. He knew there was no other way for people to be saved then by Him going to the cross.

He said in John 14, earlier in the evening while still in the upper room with His disciples—"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life—no one comes to the Father except through Me."

William MacDonald—

“The prayer was rhetorical, that is, it was not intended to elicit an answer but to teach us a lesson. Jesus was saying in effect, “My Father, if there is any other way by which ungodly sinners can be saved than by My going to the cross, reveal that way now! But in all of this, I want it known that I desire nothing contrary to Your will.”

What was the answer? There was none; the heavens were silent. By this eloquent silence we know that there was no other way for God to justify guilty sinners than for Christ, the sinless Savior, to die as our Substitute.”

- If there was any other way for a person to be saved other than by Jesus going to the cross—then as Paul said in Galatians 2:21 *“Christ died in vain!”* The context of Paul’s statement was directed at those who believed that they had to keep the Law of God (think ‘10 Commandments’) *plus* believe in Jesus to be saved and go to heaven.
- Paul responds by saying unequivocally that if people can be saved by religious practices (going to church, helping out at the homeless shelter, lighting candles, praying the rosary, keeping commandments, sacraments, holy days—and by simply trying really hard to be nice and good people)—then Jesus’ death on Calvary’s Cross would have been unnecessary—needless—in vain!

Folks, the main lesson we need to take from Jesus’ prayer to His Father in the garden that morning was that— if there was any other way for people to be saved and go to heaven then by Jesus dying on the Cross—it would mean that the Father ignored the prayer of His Son in that garden and let Him die for nothing!

That is not only incomprehensible—it is blasphemous!

- Any so-called faith system that teaches that we can earn our salvation in any way, shape, or form—is **blatantly and blasphemously teaching** that what Jesus did on the cross in dying for our sins was unnecessary or at very least insufficient in purchasing our salvation.

Galatians 2:21 (NKJV)

²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain...

Galatians 3:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? ² This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—³ Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

REFLECTION: Jesus’ prayer to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane is important – why?

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