

187. The Gospel of John 18:1-2

Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest-Part 2

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
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In our study in the Gospel of John—we have started looking at Chapter 18.

At this point in John's Gospel, it is just after midnight and Jesus has led His eleven disciples (Judas was gone carrying out his betrayal of Jesus) to the Mount of Olives and in particular to a garden located on that mount called the Garden of Gethsemane.

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!

As I just said, 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 in Jerusalem because they had a rule you couldn't use fertilizer within the walls of the city. 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.

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 that—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.

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:

1. Jesus' **Agony** in the Garden
2. Jesus' **Arrest** in the Garden

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

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."

So, Jesus and His disciples came to the garden—but here we read 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 26:39-41 (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."

"Watch" (stay awake and alert)—"and pray (constantly) 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!

We know **Satan's going to bring temptation** 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 how we're going to handle it.**

As we said last week, **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: What can you do to guard against temptation?

Matthew 26:42 (NKJV)

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

As we said last week, 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 by dying in our place.

This should forever communicate to us how much God hates sin but loves the sinner—

John 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

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

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. ²⁸ Father, 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."

Matthew 26:42-44 (NKJV)

⁴² Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." ⁴³ And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

At this point, Luke's Gospel gives us some more detail into what happened next.

Remember that **Luke was a physician**, and as a physician he focuses more on Jesus' **humanity** than any of the other Gospel writers—especially on the physical suffering Jesus endured in the garden and on the cross.

Luke 22:42-44 (NKJV)

⁴² ..."Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." ⁴³ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Dr. Luke is the only Gospel writer who mentions how that Jesus began to "sweat" and that His sweat was... "like **great drops of blood**" which fell to the ground as He prayed.

➤ **What's going on here?**

Well, there is a rare physical phenomenon known as **hematidrosis**, in which the tiny capillary blood vessels just below the surface of the skin that feed the sweat glands rupture, causing them to exude blood and coupled with the perspiration the person under that kind of duress was producing—caused a mixture of blood and sweat commingled together.

Doctors tell us this phenomenon can occur under conditions of **extreme physical and/or emotional stress**—I believe that is what's in view here.

- We cannot even imagine the *horror* Jesus must have felt that morning as the **absolutely sinless and Holy Son of God** was about to become sin for us!

**Jesus didn't 'turn into sin'—
He became the offering for our sin—
The substitute that died in our place.**

But again, we cannot even imagine the *horror* Jesus must have felt that morning when the collective sins of humanity were about to be laid upon Him as He hung on the cross in just a few hours. **Notice that He was *not* asking to *escape* the Cross—He was praying that the Father's will be done.**

It is impossible for you and me to enter into the full significance of Gethsemane—but I think it was there that He won the victory of Calvary. **The victory came in the *surrendering* of His will to the Father.**

- When we surrender our will to the Father, victory will be ours—but "woe to those who strive with their Maker" (Isaiah 45:9). In fact, the key word that sums up this scene in the Garden of Gethsemane is—**SURRENDER.**

- Jesus surrendered His will to His Father - "Not what I will but your will be done." **This is the essence, the heart and soul of the Christian life—surrendering our will to God.** Look, all Christians want the power of God in their lives—but we need to realize that before Jesus rose in power—He first had to die on Calvary.

Before He died on Calvary, He first had to experience Gethsemane—the surrendering of His will to His Father! **Surrender leads to the death of self** which results in the resurrection power of God being poured out on our lives.

This in a nutshell is the problem with too many Christians today—they want blessings but not sufferings—they reject the cross but still want the crown—they forget that crucifixion Friday proceeds resurrection Sunday!

REFLECTION: What does it mean to “surrender our will” leading to “death of self”?

Hebrews 5 gives us more insight into Jesus’ prayer in the garden that morning—

Hebrews 5:7-9 (NKJV)

⁷ who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, ⁸ though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

“...and was heard because of His godly fear” (verse 7)

The writer of Hebrews states that Jesus’ prayer **“was heard”**— *which implies that it was answered by the Father*. Yet, since He *did* die on the cross, this could not have been what He was praying about—for if the Father *had* answered that prayer—Jesus would *not* have been crucified—if that was really what Jesus was asking His Father—to keep Him from going to the cross.

But as we said earlier, before we think that Jesus was trying to escape the cross let’s not forget what He said in John 12:27-28a—*“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. Father, glorify Your name...”*

The only way for us to interpret Jesus’ prayer in the garden that morning and how His Father did in fact answer it was that **this prayer was not to escape the cross—but a prayer to escape the grave!** In other words, that His Father would not leave His (Jesus’) soul in Hades after He died on the cross—**it was a prayer that the Father would raise Jesus from the dead!**

That was the prayer that the Father answered—that He would not leave Jesus’ soul in Hades but **would raise Him from the dead**—before physical decay began to take effect (which the Jewish people believed started on the fourth day after the body was buried).

In Psalm 16, Jesus is speaking thru David, and He tells us that in some way the Father reassured the Son He would never leave His soul in Sheol/Hades—

Psalm 16:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. ¹⁰ For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

We read in Hebrews 5 that Jesus’ prayer was heard because of His **“godly fear”**. (verse 7)

The Greek word carries with it the idea of being **“devoutly submissive”**.

Hebrews 5:8 (NKJV)

⁸ though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Be careful that you don't interpret this to mean that Jesus learned to stop *disobeying* His Father and learned obedience—**this speaks of Him growing into greater obedience** than He ever knew before the Garden of Gethsemane and the Cross.

- Jesus learned obedience the same way we do—through the experiences of life.

One author—

"We must remember that our Lord, in His earthly walk, lived by faith in the Father's will. As God, He needed to learn nothing. But as the Son of God come in human flesh, He had to experience that which His people would experience, so that He might be able to minister as their High Priest. He did not need to learn how to obey because it would be impossible for God to be disobedient. Rather, as the God-Man in human flesh, He had to learn what was involved in obedience. In this way, He identified with us."

The thing we need to understand is that, even as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had to learn obedience through the things He suffered—so must we.

Obedience is the only way God can really lead us, bless us—and use us.

There is only one thing that stands in the way of a fully surrendered, obedient life—and that is SELF! The only command that God gives with regard to *self* (the flesh) is "*crucify it!*"

When we talk about '*crucifying our flesh*'—we wrongly think of '*suicide*.'—i.e., that we are being commanded by God to kill ourselves (not literally but figuratively—'dying to self'). **Yet suicide by crucifixion is impossible!**

- We *can't* crucify ourselves—someone else has to crucify us.

This folks, is where faith comes in - **as Christians we are '*in Christ*' and as such His death is our death and His resurrection is our resurrection, and His victory is our victory because we are in Him—a truth we accept and walk in by faith!**

REFLECTION: What does it mean to you to be "Devoutly Submissive"?

Romans 6:6 (NKJV)

⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- Let me say once again, it is impossible for you and me to enter into the full significance of all that happened in Gethsemane—**but I think it was there that Jesus won the victory of Calvary**. Not purchased our salvation—for that He would have to die on the Cross. But here in the Garden of Gethsemane **the devil unleashed the full force of hell against Jesus**—causing Him to sweat blood!
- If Satan could get Him to think one thought contrary to His Father—Jesus’ mission would have been blown and we would be forever lost.
- It was in Gethsemane that the battle reached its climax and it was here in Gethsemane where the battle was won—the cross was in some ways ‘anticlimactic’.
- The victory came in the **surrendering** of His will to the Father.

C.S. Lewis in his book, *‘The Great Divorce’*, pointed out how that Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane prayed, *“Father not My will but Thy will be done.”*

He said if a person refuses to turn their will over to God now and pray as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (the place of crushing and surrender), *“Not my will but Thy will be done”*—if they instead say to God, *“Not Thy will but My will be done.”*

Lewis said then someday when they stand before God, He will be forced to say to them, *“Not My will but thy will be done.”*

Matthew 26:44–46 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples and said to them, *“Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”*

Jesus returns a third time from prayer and finds them sleeping once more and says to them, **“Get up, My betrayer is coming.”** Those words were spoken by Jesus to His disciples at one of the most critical times in human history—Jesus’ crucifixion. **Yet, I believe He is saying similar words to His Church today!**

- This has to be one of the most critical times in our nation’s history, both politically and spiritually—and yet far too many Christians are sleeping instead of praying.

Paul the apostle admonished the Thessalonian Christians along these lines when he said—

1 Thessalonians 5:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober...

The implication is that just because we are believers in Jesus Christ and have come out of darkness in His marvelous light—doesn’t mean that we can’t fall asleep in the light! In fact, he goes on to tell us in Romans 13 that **many have in fact gone to sleep in their relationship with God and are no longer being vigilant in looking for Jesus’ return.** Paul tries to wake them up by saying—

Romans 13:11-12 (NKJV)

¹¹ And *do this*, knowing the time, that now *it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Paul said, *“It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.”*

- If Paul could say those words two-thousand years ago—how much closer is our ‘salvation’ today—speaking of the Rapture of the Church?!

Matthew 26:44–46 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then He came to His disciples and said to them, *“Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.* ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

REFLECTION: How can Christ followers stay alert and remain vigilant for Christ’s return?

This then leads us back to John 18—

John 18:1–3 (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. ³ Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons...

Starting next time, we will look at the second main point of John 18:1-12— **Jesus’ Arrest in the Garden.**

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

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