

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 8TH-9TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

## BETRAYAL AND ARREST (JOHN 18:1-12) THROUGH THE VALLEY

After praying His high priestly prayer, Jesus and His disciples cross the Kidron Valley to a garden, in other Gospels called Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36; Luke 22:39; Mark 14:32). The Kidron is a seasonal stream that historically was associated with judgment and death (2 Samuel 15:23; 1 Kings 15:13). It is only in John's account that we get this detail.

### INTENTIONAL SYMBOLISM

By reporting Jesus' crossing of the Kidron, John is drawing our attention to the fact that in the following scenes, Jesus is in complete control of everything that happens.

- Jesus is intentionally obedient to His Father's will. He is not an unfortunate martyr or victim of circumstance. He is a willing sacrifice. (v. 4, 11; 10:17-18; Hebrews 12:2).

### IN CONTROL

Jesus intentionally goes to the one place Judas knows He'll be because He "often met there with his disciples" (v. 2).

- The garden at night also provides the ideal place for a contingent of Roman soldiers and Jewish officials to make an arrest without causing a riot (v. 3).
- In v. 4, Jesus, having orchestrated this whole thing, goes out of the garden to meet Judas and company. This contrasts the false control Judas seems to be practicing in betraying Him and then taking this company of soldiers and officials to Him.
- We often think we are the ones in control when, in reality, Jesus is in control.

### "EGO EIMI"

Jesus invokes the Name of God, "I am he." John notes that Judas and the company "stepped back and fell to the ground" (v. 6). These soldiers and officials were forced to their knees at Jesus' words. "At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow..." (Philippians 2:10).

- One day, all of creation will bow to Jesus, whether or not they were for Him in this life.

### POWER UNDER CONTROL

Jesus uses the Name of God again to identify Himself in v. 8 but with a different outcome of His command of the situation: "let these men go." This guarantees His disciples' safety in everything that transpires next. John also tells us that this fulfills Jesus' prayer (v. 9, 17:12).

- If we belong to Jesus, we are completely in His hands.

### WORLDLY POWER

Despite Jesus' demonstration of control and guarantee of safety, Peter decides to take matters into his own hands and does the only thing he's equipped himself to do in this situation: attack (v. 10). Peter is not the first human to think he knows better than God (Genesis 3).

- Oftentimes, we do not trust that God can deliver what He has promised to us.
- Peter also wasn't the last (Romans 1:28). Humans have been mistrusting God from the Garden until now. We do what is right in our own eyes (Judges 17:6) and don't acknowledge God, sometimes even in service to God.
- Like Peter, we try to take for ourselves what God has already promised. We rely on our methods instead of resting in His promise.

### THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS

In contrast to Peter's foolish attack, Jesus stops him and says, "Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" (v. 11). Jesus is talking about the cup of wrath against sin, which is His to drink. After Peter is stopped, Jesus submits to the company's arrest and is bound (v. 12).

- Jesus and the Father are one (10:30). Their will cannot be usurped.

## TRIALS AND DENIALS (JOHN 18:13-27)

### HIGH PRIESTS?

High priests were appointed for life under Mosaic law. Annas served for 9 years and was deposed by the Romans, who appointed high priests every few years. Five of Annas' sons had held the office before Caiaphas (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews Book xx. 198). Annas held much influence, which would be why Jesus is brought to him first (v. 13) and why Annas is called the high priest in v. 19.

### IRONIC PROPHECY

John reminds us (v.14) of the prophecy that Caiaphas made earlier in John's writing (11:51) in order to bring to our minds the irony behind it. The old and new high priests want to kill Jesus, the true high priest, in order to fulfill prophecy given by God but for all the wrong motives.

- God uses even our wrong motives to bring about His will and purpose.

### A PICTURE OF TRUST AND DENIAL

Peter and "another disciple" (John) follow Jesus as he is brought to Annas. John, knowing the high priest (Annas) and trusting in Jesus' provision of safety, goes into the courtyard with Jesus while Peter hangs outside. John has to go get him, and the girl at the door asks Peter if he is Jesus' disciple like John is. Here Peter slides farther in his distrust of Jesus: "I am not" (v. 17).

- Peter then joins the officials and servants that had arrested Jesus as they stand by a fire warming themselves (v. 18). As he seeks to acquire for himself the safety that Jesus already guaranteed, he finds himself pretending to be one of the bad guys.
- If we do not trust God and His promises, we will find ourselves befriending the world.

### KANGAROO COURT

When Annas questions him (v. 19), notice that Jesus ignores the question about His disciples, protecting them. He tells him that everything He's ever said, in or out of public hearing, was open and the same (v. 20). Proper court procedure would have been to interrogate witnesses instead of the defendant (v. 21).

- When Jesus is slapped for pointing this out (v. 22), He challenges the official (v. 23). This injustice is necessary to bring about the justice Jesus provides on the cross. Even so, Jesus

still holds them accountable.

- Like Jesus, we should be consistent in our words and our character. We will be held accountable for the image of Christ we portray.

### TWO MORE DENIALS

Jesus is then sent to Caiaphas (v. 24). Meanwhile, Peter is asked the same question by those standing around the fire. And he gives the exact same answer: "I am not" (v. 25). Then an eyewitness to Peter's actions in the garden asks him, and he denies Jesus again. "Immediately a rooster crowed" (v. 27), fulfilling Jesus' prediction of Peter's denials (13:38).

- Just like the contrast between Jesus' honesty and the court's hypocrisy, John draws another contrast here: Jesus denied nothing and doesn't back down from his accusers, while Peter denies Jesus. Peter denied his Lord, but grace awaited him on the other side of the cross.
- It is Jesus' faithfulness that redeems us, not our faithfulness. But we must repent.

## KING OF TRUTH (JOHN 18:28-40)

### PURITY?

Since he was the official high priest, Caiaphas was the one that had to present the case against Jesus to Pilate. Entering into the home of a Gentile would make a Jew ceremonially unclean. Since the Passover began that evening, there would not be time to go through the purification process. So they stop in the colonnade and make Pilate come out to them.

- Ironically, the Jews wanted to stay ceremonially pure to eat the Passover while manipulating judicial proceedings to murder the Passover Lamb of God. This is the same hypocritical legalism that Jesus criticized them for previously (7:23-24; Luke 11:42, 46; Matthew 23:28).
- Religious observance of rules does not sanctify us (make us holy); Faith in Jesus does.

### INTRIGUE

Pilate opens official proceedings by asking for charges, but the Jews give a petulant answer (v. 30). This hints at a previous understanding between the Jews and Pilate. Why is he asking? Doesn't he already know? Combined with the detachment of Roman soldiers present at the arrest (v. 12), this is certainly the picture John is painting for us.

- Pilate seems to be manipulating the Sanhedrin into acknowledging his authority. If Jesus is a mere criminal, they can take care of it themselves. But everyone knew what the Sanhedrin wanted: the death of Jesus by crucifixion (v. 31). This fulfilled Jesus' words about the method of His death (v. 32; 12:32-33).
- Jesus is still in control.

### KING OF THE JEWS?

Pilate's question to Jesus in v. 33 is a further indication of a previous conversation between him and the Jews. This is the first time this term "King of the Jews" is brought up. Jesus flushes this out with His counter-question in v. 34.

- We cannot hide our deceptions and sins. God is aware of them and will make them known (Jeremiah 16:17; Matthew 10:26; Hebrews 4:13).

### NOT OF THIS WORLD

Pilate gives up the game with a sarcastic response. It's Jesus' "own nation" and "chief priests" that have landed Him where He is, so what has He done (v. 35)? Jesus responds to Pilate's first question: His Kingdom is "not of this world (v. 36)."

- If we follow Jesus, we are primarily citizens of His heavenly Kingdom.

### THE TRUTH

Pilate rephrases his question: "You are a king then?" Jesus acknowledges His kingship but still insists that it is of a profoundly different nature than what Pilate is thinking. His Kingdom is founded on the truth, which is Jesus' revelation of the Father. It's why He came.

- Those that belong to Him and His Kingdom listen to His voice (v. 37; 10:14-16).

### SON OF GOD OR SON OF THE FATHER?

Pilate ends his interrogation with a curt, "What is truth?" and goes back out to pronounce Jesus' innocence. Instead of releasing Jesus based on His innocence, Pilate asks an antagonizing question of the Sanhedrin: "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" This shows not only his disdain for the Jews but also his disdain for truth and justice.

- The Sanhedrin instead choose Barabbas, a revolutionary (insurrectionist, murderer). Barabbas literally means "son of the father" (bar-Abbas). In another extremely ironic scene, the Jews choose a fake son of the father over the real son of God.
- Again, we often choose worldly means to acquire God's promise (freedom).

### QUESTIONS

- Are we trusting God and resting in His promises, or are we relying on our own abilities (salvation, identity, value, etc.)?
- Are we checking the boxes of religious performance?
- Jesus gave His life willingly to save us from our sin. He is "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). This was the plan all along. Do you belong to Him?

### DO WE LISTEN TO HIS VOICE?

- By reading Scripture.
- By praying.
- By being in community with other Believers.
- We must be disciplined in taking in truth in these ways.