

## **The Glory in the Gloomy Garden**

(John 18:1-11)

(preached 9/1/19; Pine Grove BC Sun AM)

### **Introduction**

Take your Bibles and turn to John 18 please.

We begin a new chapter in John's gospel this morning.

Counting this chapter, there are only 4 chapters left in this account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection through the pen of John.

I am saddened that we are nearing the end of this book, but I am encouraged by what I have learned and how I have grown through this unclosed look at Christ..

We are now just hours away from Jesus' crucifixion.

It is most likely the wee hours of Friday morning in Jerusalem as Jesus walks with his disciples.

So let's read the first 11 verses of John 18 together..

*1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the [a]ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered [b]with His disciples. 2 Now Judas also, who was [c]betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. 3 Judas then, having received the Roman [d]cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, \*came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and \*said to them, "Whom do you seek?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He \*said to them, "I am He." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. 6 So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene." 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way," 9 to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one." 10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. 11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"*

Let us pray.

I am never shocked today at what people do at weddings.

What used to be a pretty predictable ceremony has now become a place for all sorts of activities.

This past week, I ran across a video of a bride and groom climbing in a jeep and riding through mud holes at the reception..

The end result was a gray tuxedo covered in mud, but even worse was a white wedding dress covered in mud.

I was thinking that he was this bride who spent hours getting ready and staying clean and now she and here new husband are covered in mud.

But this is good picture for us as we turn in our Bibles to John 18.

For the past 3 weeks, we have been in Holy of Holies in the gospel of John.

We have been standing beside Jesus as He prays to His Father.

We have listened as the Son of God prays to His Father by the Spirit of God.

We don't get many glimpses inside the Father, Son, and Spirit's relationship, but that is where we have been for the past 3 weeks.

It has been helpful to see what Jesus prayed to His Father.

It has been encouraging to know that Jesus constantly prays for us.

It has been convicting to know that Jesus prays his church to be unified..

But now we leave that glorious scene.

WE leave that scene of John 17 that leaves us encouraged and hopeful and assured, and we return to the filth of the world in John 18.

The purity of that scene and that prayer of Christ are going to become the ugliness and sinfulness and evil of the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus is betrayed by Judas.

But even in the midst of the darkness of evil and sin and betrayal, the light of Christ is still going to be on display.

Even as Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss, the focus is not on the sin of Judas but on the glory of Christ..

But why is that?

In such a gloomy scene, why does John still focus on the glory of Christ?

Shouldn't he write this account of Jesus' arrest with a little sadness?

Shouldn't he make his readers feel the weight of the betrayal and the depravity of man?

Shouldn't we read those 11 verses and weep?

And the answer from John is no.

These 11 verses are not about the triumph of evil.

The purpose of these verses is to illustrate how evil man can be.

The purpose of these verses is to illustrate how glorious Christ is.

Well, first of all, darkness never overcomes light.

Remember, John is concerned with one thing as he writes this book.

He is writing an account of Christ's life with one purpose in mind.

We haven't talked about this verse in a while, but the theme and purpose of John's gospel is given to us in John 20:30-31...

***30 Therefore many other [g]signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is [h]the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.***

In others words, the glory of Christ is still seen in the gloom of the garden because John wants his readers to know that Jesus is the Son of God..

And that truth is very much on display even as Jesus is betrayed and arrested..

Even when the power of evil seems to have the upper hand in the garden, John wants the reader to know that Jesus is still fully in control of what is happening.

And because he is fully in control of even the evil around him, the reader of John's gospel needs to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God..

So, let's look at 4 reasons to believe that Jesus is the Christ in John 18:1-11..

Even when evil men do evil things, they cannot extinguish the light of the truth that Christ is the Son of God.

So let's watch as Judas betrays Jesus, but let us be captivated by the glory of Christ by affirming the reasons we believe in Him..

Reason #1 to believe that Jesus is the Son of God is found in verse 1 of John 18..

## **I. Believe Because Jesus Is Purposeful (1)**

To be clear, there are a lot people who have lived and still live with purpose but this does not make them the Son of God.

What makes Jesus the Son of God is that his purpose was to come and die in the place of all who would believe in Him.

And his purpose in life was to ensure that happened.

Jesus' purpose was to seek and save the lost, and he kept that purpose by arranging for his own death.

As people, we live to preserve our lives.

WE avoid death.

WE stay away from dangerous situations, poor diets, unsafe areas all because we want to live.

However, Jesus came to die and he kept that purpose in mind even on the final night of his life..

Look back at verse 1..



***When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the [a]ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered [b]with His disciples.***

After Jesus' prayed his prayer, John writes that he went forth to a garden..

But not only did he go forth to a garden, he went forth into the garden when he arrived.

We had a dog named Sammy that needed regular grooming, but he hated to have his hair trimmed.

It was no problem to get Sammy into the car..

You call him to the car, and he would go forth to it and jump in because he loved to ride.

But when the pulled up at the groomer, he would recognize it and he would not go forth into the building..

It was a pull and struggle and put on a muzzle for the rest of the time there.

Look, no one dragged Jesus to the cross..

He went forth in his life preaching and teaching.

ADN now that it is time to go forth to the cross, he goes willing..

He finished the prayer for Himself and these 11 disciples and for his coming church, and he went forth to the Garden of Gethsemane and then went forth into it.

Now, the names of these places should be familiar to us.

John doesn't tell us but the other gospel writers call this garden the garden of Gethsemane..

And we also notice that he crossed over a ravine here that is called Kidron..

Now here is modern day picture of Israel for the air.

In the center of the picture is the hill known as the temple mount.

No Jewish temple sits here today.

That golden domes structure is a Muslim mosque..

But if you look below that mosque, you will see an old wall there..

It was constructed by Herod the great around the time of Christ.

It was simply a retaining wall for the Temple complex.

Here is a better picture of it..

And as Jesus leaves the city on this night, he would walk down this steep bank with his disciples..

The Garden of Gethsemane was on the next hill called the Mount of Olives...

The next picture kinda gives you a side view of this walk the Jesus was taking..

Now, the lowest point on the walk would require them to cross the ravine of the Kidron.

Here is modern picture of the ravine.

But this isn't a ravine.

It isn't really a valley.

Both of those words make us think big..

A number of translations call it the brook Kidron, and that it the way to view this point on the journey.

The Greek word literally means winter stream.

In other words, there is only water in this brook when it is the rainy season..

But on this night, there was something flowing through it but it wasn't water, it was the blood of the sacrifices going on at the temple for Passover..

Remember it is Friday night, and there has been 1000s of lambs sacrificed at the temple..

We have historical records that date almost back to this Passover that note over 250,000 lambs were killed at the temple Passover week.

So as Jesus crosses over this brook, it is filled with blood that has been flowing out of the temple all week..

There was probably a makeshift bride of some sort, but you have to imagine the thoughts of Jesus as he crosses over that valley of blood.

No more lambs would have to be slaughtered.

He was going to be the Ultimate Passover Lamb later that day.

All the centuries of sacrifices were coming to an end.

He was the true spotless lamb sent to die for the sins of His people.

The whole Jewish system was able to crumble.

The veil in the temple was about to be ripped.

The priesthood was about to be abolished.

And the need for sacrifices was about to be erased.

As Christ stepped over a valley of blood, the shedding of his blood was imminent but this is what He was sent to do.

He marched over that valley because it was the way to his betrayal, arrest, trial, and ultimate crucifixion.

Jesus is going forth to die, and this is proof that He is the Son sent to take away the sins of His people..

Now, here is also a modern day picture of the garden of Gethsemane.

If you ever visit Jerusalem, you can visit this place..

But remember that it is night when Jesus and the disciples arrive..

So it is dark in this garden but not as dark as what is coming at Jesus in verse 2..

So let's leave the purpose of Jesus and look at his power..

A second reason to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God is simply his unrivaled power..

## **II. Believe Because Jesus Is Powerful (2-6)**

Back to verse 2..

***2 Now Judas also, who was [c]betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.***

***3 Judas then, having received the Roman [d]cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, \*came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.***

We don't have time to explore all the details of these verses but long story short, Judas arrives with a small army to arrest Jesus..

A Roman cohort normally consisted of 600 soldiers..

It could have been a smaller detachment but even then, it would have been at least 200 soldiers..

Now this is really interesting..

On one hand, Judas has immense respect for Jesus.

If you think you are going to need 600 men to arrest someone, you must think that he is pretty powerful..

But as much as this shows Judas' respect of Jesus, it also shows his unbelief.

If Judas thought that Jesus was truly the Son of God, he would know that no amount of soldiers would be enough..

But Judas does not believe Jesus' claims that He is God, so he gathers an army to arrest him..

And they come with lanterns and torches and weapons in case Jesus resists or runs from them..

But that won't happen.

Jesus has purposed his whole life for this moment..

In fact, Jesus knows exactly who is coming to arrest him.

Look at verse 4..

***4 So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and \*said to them, "Whom do you seek?"***

He wanted them to admit that they sought him and him alone.

He wanted to also make it clear that He was Jesus..

And then we get this awesome display of his power in verses 5 and 6..



***5 They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He \*said to them, “I am He.” And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. 6 So when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.***

The personal name of God is Yahweh.

God reveled that name to Moses in the burning bush in the book of Exodus..

Jesus referred to Himself numerous times as the I AM.

I am the bread of life.

I am the light of the world.

I ma the door of the sheep.

Here, Jesus simply says, I am.

The “he” is just put there for understanding. In the Greek Jesus simply uttered 2 words, “I AM” and the entire group of soldiers fell to the ground..

I can’t imagine how they explained that.

They come to arrest Jesus and he simply identifies Himself and they all fall to the ground..

I often wonder if any of these soldiers make it to see Jesus on the cross..

Maybe it was this moment that some in the cohort began to be convinced that Jesus was no ordinary man..

Either way, what a display of power in the midst of such evil.

Judas leads them to Jesus, and Jesus levels them like dominoes with his voice.

But the glory of Christ in the gloomy garden is going to be revealed further..

Jesus is purposeful.

Jesus is powerful.

But Jesus is also protective of his people..

Look at verses 7-9..

### **III. Believe Because Jesus Is Protective (7-9)**

***7 Therefore He again asked them, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus the Nazarene.” 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,” 9 to fulfill the word which He spoke, “Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.”***

In the last chapter, Jesus prayed this for the disciples..

John 17:11

***11 I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name,***

Then he prayed this in John 17:15..

***15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them [d]from [e]the evil one***

And now Jesus moves from prayer to action.

Jesus is protecting these men from the mob that seeks to arrest him.

I am sure that they are filled with all sorts of emotions at this moment.

There is no doubt that they would be raging against Judas for his betrayal.

There is no doubt that they would be saddened by Jesus' arrest..

But I think it is also clear that they would be fearful.

600 soldiers looking for Jesus and you arrive walking right beside Him?

It doesn't look good for them either, so Jesus offers divine protection and love.

If they want Him, then just take Him.

So he offers protection for his people.

No one does this.

Most people look to shift the blame to others.

Jesus shoulders all the blame for his people..

But there is one final display of Jesus' glory here..

We will call this..

#### **IV. Believe Because Jesus Is Propitiatory (10-11)**

We don't use the word propitiation but we should.

A propitiation is act that pleases or satisfies.

We use the word appease or appeasement, which simply means to please someone according to their demands..

I appease the county government by paying my property taxes.

I appease my wife by taking out the trash, but only when it is still daytime..

Christ appeased God by taking on his wrath toward guilt sinners..

Look at verses 10-11..

***10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus. 11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"***

As they attempt to arrest Jesus, Peter attempts to help him escape.

But he is not too good a swordsman and chops off the ear instead of the head of a slave named Malchus.

Jesus reprimands Peter for his action.

Peter has no idea what he is doing.

Not only is he trying to take the life of someone else, he is also trying to prevent his own salvation.

Christ has to go to the cross.

There is no other way for sins to be given.

If Peter had been successful in his revolt and Jesus escaped, the cross would have never become a reality and sins would remain unforgiven.

The passion of Peter was admirable but the plan of Peter was short sighted.

Jesus had to go to the cross because he had to drink the wrath of God intended for all those who would believe in Him.

It was Christ's cup to drink and his alone.

And if he had drunk in God's wrath, that wrath would fall on Peter and every guilty sinner in history..

Believe in Christ because he is the propitiation for sin.

His death satisfied God's wrath toward all who would believe in Him.

There is no other sacrifice for sin.

You must believe in Christ and Christ alone.

Jesus has drunk the cup of the Father's wrath, so if you want to avoid wrath for your sin, must you find shelter in Christ.

## **Conclusion**

John was inspired to write this passage in John 18 so that you would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing you would have eternal life in Jesus name.

The only question is do you believe that?

Do you believe that Christ is the Son of God and have you put your trust in Him alone?

Like many in the world today, Judas knew who Jesus was.

Like many in the world today, Judas liked to hang around Jesus.

Like many in the world today, Judas had some Christian friends.

Like many in the world today, Judas knew where to find Jesus.

Sadly, like many in the world today, Judas never believed that Jesus was God.

I warn you like I have warned you many times before.



It is possible to be near Christ but not having saving faith in Christ.

Like so many, Judas kissed Jesus.

But it wasn't an act of affection, it was an act of betrayal.

How sad and tragic to know the truth but die without believing it.

This morning, avoid the unbelief of Judas and put your trust in Christ.

He headed purposefully to cross for guilty sinners.

He displayed his power to convince unbelieving sinners.

He protects repentant sinners.

And he died as a substitute for those sinners who trust in Him.

What else must he do to prove who He is to you?

Let us pray.

This morning is a special time in the life of the church as believers remember the death of Christ on our behalf.

Just a few hours before Jesus' arrest, he transformed the Passover supper in what we call the Lord's Supper.

And we take part in this supper every so often here at Pine Grove.

Today is one of those days.

As reminder, we do not take this event lightly in the life of the church.

The Lord's Table is not open to everyone.

For any unbeliever, you are not to take part in the Lord's Table.

To do so would be a violation of God's word and would invite God's judgment into your life.

For any Christian who is living in sin.

This is not the Christian who sins because we all sin.

This is for the Christian who refuses to repent of known sin.

If that is you, you are not take part in the Lord's Table.

It would also invite unpleasant consequences into your life as well.

This Supper is for the believer who is demonstrating a pattern of obedience to the Lord.

If you are not a member of this church, you can take part in this Supper here, providing that you are living in patterns of obedience as well.

I also advise parents to help their children think through whether they should take part in this supper as well.

With that said, I want to remind the church that this is a glorious reminder of our Savior's propitiation for our sin.

It is also a great opportunity to proclaim Christ's name until He returns..

I am going to pray for us, and our deacons will head down and begin to serve the church.

Let us pray.