

TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

John 18: 1-11: The Arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

"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. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," 9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

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

Background Notes

"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"(v1). What words had Jesus spoken? Well, specifically the words of the Lord's high priestly prayer (ch17), and the upper room discourses (ch13-16) may also be included in this statement. Here in verse 1 we read that Jesus and His disciples went out -- they went out of the upper room and over the Brook Kidron, which is east of Jerusalem. Then they entered a garden -- the Garden of Gethsemane, on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Verse 2 tells us that Jesus often met there with His disciples. The Lord and His disciples would often spend a whole night camping out in the area of the Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives. In fact, we read in Luke 21:37 *"And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet."* During this last week of our Lord's ministry His days were spent in the Temple area and His nights were spent camping out on the Mount of Olives. So Judas knew that the Lord would be in Mt of Olives area that night, and he led a group of Roman soldiers and temple police out of the city to find Jesus. We know from the accounts in the other Gospels that it was here that Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss.

The word that is used in verse 3 for "detachment of troops" refers to a Roman cohort, which could be anywhere from 300 to 600 men strong. This unit was probably dispatched from the Antonia Fortress, the Roman garrison adjacent to the Temple area. It may not have been the complete unit of that many men, but Matthew's account does say that it was a great multitude with swords and clubs, probably including the officers from the chief

priests, the Pharisees are the Jewish temple police who had failed to arrest Jesus back in chapter 7. Maybe this previous failure is why the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing body, persuaded the Roman authorities to get involved. They probably said that Jesus and His band were plotting an insurrection against Rome.

The Roman soldiers probably expected some kind of guerrilla attack out there in the Kidron Valley. They were most likely thinking that this Jesus of Nazareth had a lot more than eleven followers hiding out there, armed and ready to fight. So when Jesus said to them, "*I am He*," and "*they drew back and fell to the ground*"(v6), this was their startled reaction to the Lord's voluntary surrender! They expected a fight; they were ready to put down a rebellion. On the other hand, it may have been a supernatural effect that came upon them when the Lord said, "I am He."

Look at verses 5&6 in your Bible. Notice that the word "He" is in italics. The italics mean that the word "He" has been added by the translators for better meaning. Thus the Lord's actual statement was "I am." The "I am" statement here is the same claim to deity that was used by the Lord Jesus so often in the gospel of John. It is the name of God -- I AM" -- as revealed to Moses at the burning bush.

Doctrinal/Teaching Points

1. The Lord Jesus voluntarily gave up His life for sinners.

"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "*Whom are you seeking?*"(v4). The Lord was not taken by surprise -- He **voluntarily** surrendered Himself. The Lord knew exactly what was going to take place -- His betrayal, His arrest, His death by crucifixion. "*Jesus therefore, **knowing all things** that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "*Whom are you seeking?*"(emphasis added). The Lord could easily have escaped by not going to the Mount of Olives or the Garden of Gethsemane that night -- but He didn't.*

Furthermore, we read in Matthew 26:53, that after Peter cut off the ear of the high priest servant, the Lord said, "*Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?*" But the Lord didn't pray for angels, and the Lord didn't escape this arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. He voluntarily stepped forward and said, "*Whom are you seeking?*" And they said, "*Jesus of Nazareth.*" 8 Jesus answered, "*I have told you that I am He.*" He surrendered voluntarily!

Notice, by the way, that the Lord was not recognized by a white robe or a halo! White robes and halos are all extra-biblical material (sources other than biblical) that are used in medieval paintings or movies or TV dramas. The Lord had to be identified by the kiss of Judas, and by His own testimony that He was indeed Jesus of Nazareth. The Lord was **not captured**, and the Lord was **not forced** to stand trial, and was **not forced** to go to the cross. No! He went **voluntarily**! The Lord Jesus said in John 10:17-18 "*Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*"

Why did the Lord voluntarily surrender and give up His life? It was for us! He gave His life for sinners. Mark 10:45 says, "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" He died in our place for our sins. He died as our substitute. The Lord Jesus voluntarily gave up His life for sinners.

2. The Lord Jesus resolutely "took up the cup" for sinners.

In verse 11, after Peter had cut off the ear of the high priest servant, the Lord said to Peter, *"Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"* The Lord was determined and purposeful and resolved to take up the cup that the Father had given Him.

What was that "cup"? It included His coming suffering and death, but that was not all it entailed. In Matthew 20:22-23, we read that the Lord Jesus asked James and John, *"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."* 23 So He said to them, *"You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."* Now James and John did suffer for the sake of Christ, but the cup that the Lord was referring to here, the cup that the Father had given Him, was more than just a cup of suffering and death -- it was the cup of **judgment!** It was the cup of God's wrath against sin.

That's the cup that the Lord prayed about in the Garden of Gethsemane. *"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."* The Lord didn't fear death, even death by crucifixion, but taking up and drinking the cup of God's wrath against sin was an awful and agonizing time to look forward to, saying in essence, "Father, if there is any other way for the sin question to be settled, let this cup pass from me!" But there was no other way! So the Lord continued, *"nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done."*

The Lord drank the cup of God's wrath against sin, our sin. The Lord Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath against sin so that we would not have to drink that cup. He didn't turn away from that cup, but drank it completely. The Lord Jesus resolutely took up the cup for sinners.

Practical Applications

1. Let's think of others during times of personal crisis.

In verse 8 the Lord said to the soldiers and the guards, *"I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way..."* What a picture of the coming substitutionary work of Christ on the cross for us! The Lord was about to be crucified, having been betrayed by one of His own disciples, but He was thinking about the safety of others. How different from us! During times of personal crisis, we usually think of "number one" -- **my** problems, **my** needs. If we think of others at all, often it is to blame them, or to demand something from them.

Did you ever look around to help someone else while you are going through a time of personal crisis? I was encouraged this past week by a Christian man who is facing a personal crisis right now. He's out of work and has a family support and care for. Furthermore, he has been suffering from a painful sinus condition -- it's not easy to deal with sinus infection. But in spite of his personal problems, this man sacrificially and willingly came to the rescue of a ministry project that was facing a deadline. He didn't think only of his own problems and needs, even though he is going through a personal crisis at the present time. Let's think of others during times of personal crisis!

2. Let's not cut off ears that need to hear.

The other Gospels tell us that when the soldiers arrived, the disciples were sleeping. When Peter woke up he rushed into the situation, and with gutsy religious zeal, he whipped out his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. He probably was aiming for the whole head, but missed. Peter meant well -- but he was wrong! We

know from Luke's Gospel that the Lord healed this man's ear. What a testimony to the grace of our Lord!

I wonder how many ears the Lord has had to heal because we have "cut them off." How often in our religious zeal, we act too quickly – people get hurt, the very people that need to hear the gospel. I remember the first Sunday school class I ever taught -- it was a group of lively fifth grade boys. One Sunday I lost my patience and temper with one kid who would not sit still or be quiet. I kicked him out of class -- and he never came back. Let's not cut off ears that need to hear.