

The Christ Who Was Betrayed
John 18.1—11

Pastoral Prayer

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Introduction

Please turn in your Bibles to John 18 (p. 729). You probably know the story we are about to read: the betrayal of J by Judas. Reasons: (a) we rehearse the story every Holy Week, (b) it's recorded by every gospel writer, (c) it is the fulfillment of OT prophecy and sets off the events climaxing in Christ's crucifixion. Look for John's emphasis. Read text.

Followers of J talk about the will of God many different ways: "I hope to get this job if it is God's will," "I just want to know what God's will is in this situation," "I just want to be faithful to obey the will of God." Scriptural senses: moral will (what God wants us to do), sovereign will (what God decrees to happen). This befuddles us. **FCF.** We don't understand how these two operate—how things outside God's moral will can be within God's sovereign will—and we often don't know how to respond. But this was never a problem for X. **Theme.** X submitted to the will of God, and nowhere is this more clear than when he was betrayed.

1. Resigned, but Active (1—9)

1.1 The hour had come

- Earlier statements: 7.30 – *they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come*; 8.20 – *these words he spoke in the treasury, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.*

- Fulfillment: 12.23 – *Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified"; 12.27 – "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.*
- Not a literal sixty minutes, but saying that his time had come, i.e., of his betrayal, arrest, and execution.
- **App (d).** God rules over every event in life. Nothing happens in your life that has not ultimately come from the hand of your Heavenly Father.
- **App (p).** At one level, X's suffering is intended to be a pattern for us (cf. Heb 12.3 – *consider him who endured from sinners such hostility toward himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted*). Our response to trials: fearfulness, anxiety, self-absorption. Our prayer: get me out of this. X's response: resignation; not fighting, but yielded.

1.2 Jesus moved with intention: not passive, but active

- Indications of intentionality
 - He went where Judas could find him (1—2) instead of running to hide.
 - He knew what would happen (4a): not ignorant but fully aware of what awaited him.
 - He approached them (4b): not *que sera, sera*.
 - "Jesus offers up his life in obedience to his Father, not as a pathetic martyr buffeted by the ill winds of a cruel fate" (Carson).
- **App (d).** Belief in God's sovereignty is never an excuse for passivity, but a reason to move forward.
- **App (p).** You have every reason to get out of bed in the morning, for the Heavenly Father will order every event of your day for your joy and his glory.

- Indications of deity
 - He questioned them (4c): clearly Jesus is in control of this whole situation.
 - He revealed who he really was (5—7). The culmination of Jesus’ “I am” statements in John (6.20 – “*it is I, be not afraid*”; 8.24 – “*unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins*”; 8.28 – “*when you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am*”; 8.58 – “*before Abraham was, I am*”).
 - He protected his own (8—9): in fulfillment of his own prayer (cp. 17.12)
- Certainly drew a response before (cp. 8.58 – *so they picked up stones to throw at him, but J hid himself and went out of the temple*), but never like this. Morris: “it is possible that those in front recoiled from Jesus’ unexpected advance, so that they bumped those behind them, causing them to stumble and fall.” NET note: “Perhaps this is what in fact happened on the scene; but the theological significance given to this event by the author implies that more is involved. . . . Jesus has applied to himself the divine Name of Exod 3:14, ‘I AM.’ Therefore this amounts to something of a theophany which causes even his enemies to recoil and prostrate themselves, so that Jesus has to ask a second time, ‘Who are you looking for?’ This is a vivid reminder to the reader of the Gospel that even in this dark hour, Jesus holds ultimate power over his enemies and the powers of darkness, because he is the one who bears the divine Name.”
- **App (p)**. The only right response to Jesus is to bow before him and worship him as Lord.

2. Obedient, but Cursed (10—11)

2.1 Misguided (10—11a)

- Setup: Peter sees that the arrest long-averted is about to happen. Things are starting to fall into place: Judas as the betrayer, his own promise to lay down his life for Jesus (cp. 13.37); Jesus’ encouragement to buy swords (cp. Lk 22.35—38). Was now the time to use it, to defend Jesus?
- μάχαιραν. Likely a dagger, used for stabbing not slicing. A death blow aimed at this servant’s head, who avoided the attack and suffered a lesser injury.
- Certainly an act of bravery on Peter’s part. But deeply misguided. “Peter’s bravery is not only useless, it is a denial of the work to which Jesus has just consecrated himself” (Carson).
- Peter assumed that **he knew what the right outcome was**, i.e., rescuing Jesus from this cohort of soldiers; that **he knew the right way to secure that outcome**, i.e., using his sword to fight back; and (most significantly) that **God lacked the power to do these things himself**.
- **App (p)**. How often does this describe us! We know what is best, the best way to achieve what we’ve determined is best, and that unless we act, God’s hands are tied. What arrogance on every level exists in our hearts!
- **App (p)**. Peter acted out of what he believed to be a right application of Jesus’ words, but he was wrong about both the outcome and the means to the end. We would do well to assume that, more often than not, we are wrong—even when we think we are prompted by the Scriptures. This is why God gives us brothers/sisters and elders (cp. Heb 3.12—13).

2.2 The cup (11b)

- ποτήριον. A frequent image for God’s wrath (cf. Ps 75.8; Is 51.17 – *the cup of his wrath*; Jer 25.15 – *this cup of the wine of wrath*; Rev 15.10 – *he will drink the wine of God’s wrath*). Jesus uses the same image in his prayer in the Garden (Mt 26.39 – *Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will*; Mt 26.42 – *My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done*).
- Further reflections
 - The Father gave Jesus the cup (11b). Not a transaction between Jesus and the devil.
 - Jesus gladly and willingly took the cup (cp. Heb 12.1—3 – *J, the founder and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Not “divine child abuse.”*)
 - **App (d)**. But why did the Father give and the Son accept this cup of divine wrath? If J were perfectly obedient (and he was), why was he punished as if disobedient? Scripture’s answer: propitiation (cp. Rom 3.25—26). In order for J to accomplish his mission of clearing sin from the world, he had to take the sin of the world upon himself (cp. 1.29).
 - **App (p)**. Your sin is not just unfortunate, but condemnable. Worse yet, even your righteous deeds are like filthy rags (cp. Is 64.6). But the gospel says that J took the condemnation earned by sinners like you and me. And if you would repent and believe, God would no longer be angry with you. Stop trying to appease God. It’ll take a lot more than that to satisfy his anger. Thankfully what it took has already been accomplished.

Conclusion

Hope-giving words! Because Jesus willingly drank the cup that the Father gave him, God is no longer angry with you!

From whence this fear and unbelief?
 Hath not the Father put to grief
 His spotless Son for me?
 And will the righteous Judge of men
 Condemn me for that debt of sin
 Which, Lord, was charged on thee?

Complete atonement thou hast made,
 And to the utmost farthing paid
 Whate’er thy people owed;
 How then can wrath on me take place
 If sheltered in thy righteousness,
 And sprinkled with thy blood?

If thou hast my discharge procured,
 And freely in my room endured
 The whole of wrath divine,
 Payment God cannot twice demand—
 First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,
 And then again at mine.

Turn then, my soul, unto thy rest!
 The merits of thy great High Priest
 Have bought thy liberty;
 Trust in his efficacious blood,
 Nor fear thy banishment from God,
 Since Jesus died for thee.

--Augustus Toplady

Benediction

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. —Jude 24—25