

The Greatness of Our Savior
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John 18:1-11
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Amen. Please turn with me in your Bibles to the 18th chapter of John, John Chapter 18. We are today moving out of the section we've been in for quite some time, especially when you consider the John 13-17, *The Farewell Discourse*, those five chapters, took well over a year. I want to say a year and a half we've been in those chapters, maybe it is longer than that, but I walked right into that one. But today we move into a new section, and the 18th chapter, we move out of *The Farewell Discourse*, which concludes with *The High Priestly Prayer*. We said that *The High Priestly Prayer*, John 17, and the 26 verses there, are the prayer of Jesus prayed at the end of His last hours with the disciples before the events of Calvary begin to happen in rapid succession, the events leading up to the cross. All of these things have happened the night before He is crucified, and His prayer, those 26 verses are called *The High Priestly Prayer* because the high priest would pray, and make a sacrifice for sin in the *Day of Atonement*. And Jesus has prayed, and now He is about to make His sacrifice.

So we come to the 18th chapter, and this morning we're going to look at the first 11 verses which concerns the arrest of Jesus, the arrest of our Savior. I'm going to title the message this morning, it is John 18:1-11, 'The Greatness of Our Savior', because we see, even in this moment of apparent weakness, we have the storm really hitting that we've been anticipating throughout the entire evening before, from the beginning of Jesus' time with His disciples, when He washed their feet, told them He was going to be leaving in Chapter 14. In Chapter 15, He tells them the parable of the vine and the branches, warning them of persecution to come, and that lasts through Chapter 15 and Chapter 16. And then *The High Priestly Prayer*, after all of that.

Now we come to the moment when it really begins to unfold, the battle, the storm has hit, the battle is about to rage. And in this most interesting battle, where Jesus, His glory is seen in this moment of tremendous weakness, and John seems intent on us seeing, as we see these events unfold, he wants to keep before us, we're going to see as we look at these verses and carefully analyze them, he wants to keep before us the greatness, the majesty of the Man of Sorrows. As He is about to be caught up in this whirlwind, don't forget who He is. His death is not some tragedy. On the human level, and from one perspective of course, there has never been a greater tragedy. The fact that God would become man and die, no greater



tragedy. But what I say, don't consider it a tragedy the way the world does. It is not an accidental thing. It is not an unfortunate turn of events, it is something into which our Savior goes knowingly, intentionally, and possessing all authority, all the way throughout.

We're going to see that there is great comfort for us in this because you know we're going to have storms in our lives. Jesus has told us previously, this night He told His disciples, "In the world you will have tribulation, no avoiding it." But what He is saying, "But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." So we are going to have tribulation, and He has told them, "You're going to be hated. If they hated Me, they will hate you, for a servant is not greater than his master." He has told them there will become times of great darkness and delusion so that the people that kill them, remember 10 of the 11, Judas has left, and the 11 He is talking to when He tells them that, 10 of the 11 would die martyrs deaths, "The time will come when they will put you to death and think they are doing service to God." Incredible difficulty awaits you." The disciples knew that and they were being prepared for that, and they were being prepared for that by watching what happens in these first 11 verses of John 18. Because as Jesus goes into the storm, so they will have to go into the storm. Sometimes again and again. And his readers, the readers of John's Gospel, we can't forget them as we try to interpret the Scripture correctly.

Always think about the original audience so that you can understand the authorial intent. What was it that was in the heart of the apostle as he penned these words? To consider those to whom he wrote gives us great insight. We've noted that John wrote his Gospel probably around 85 A.D. It was the last of the four Gospels written. The others were written between the late 40s and probably about 70 A.D., so it's been at least 15 years since Luke finished his. And John is writing to Jewish proselytes, and Jews who he wants to call to faith in Jesus in the Roman world, and for whom if they decide to follow Jesus, there will be great suffering, great difficulty. The call to follow Christ is not a call to ease, it never has been, but especially in that day. We sometimes think it has been, but it really never has been, not truly following Jesus, as Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution in some ways. When you walk with the Lord you are going to be persecuted, even in relative times of peace, for the Gospel. So for his first readers, they knew they were going to encounter difficulty, they were going to walk into storms. If they followed Jesus, they were going to follow Him into being hated by their families, rejected, possibly being persecuted themselves, possibly dying for their faith. The emperor, the Roman emperor Domitian was not favorable to Christianity as well. We noted before in one of the



previous sermons, that historians think that he had some of his family killed because they became Christians. So it was a very perilous thing to follow Christ in the late 1st Century, when these things were written.

Now for those of us today, what it does is it encourages us, no matter what storms we encounter, that this message is for us, that we need to see what they saw. When we look around us, and we see things becoming more and more hostile to the Gospel, and more and more hostile to true faith, this passage of Scripture will be especially precious and encouraging to us. So before we read that, I want to mention one thing about this, so that as we read, I want you to be looking for something.

The first 11 verses describe the arrest of Jesus, and to see what John was wanting to communicate, it is always so important to observe carefully the words of the text. I want to teach you something about hermeneutics here. Some of this will be a review for many of you, but perhaps it will be helpful. Hermeneutics is a term we use to talk about the science of interpretation. Hermeneutics concerns the methods of properly interpreting the Bible, really properly interpreting any literature is hermeneutics, but when we talk about it, we're talking about, of course, interpreting the Bible. The basic principles of hermeneutics apply across the board, whether you are reading any book. You read the Bible in some ways, I mean, you should read it in similar ways as you read a book. You try to get the intent of the author, you are trying to understand what is really being said. One of the things that is important when you are looking at narrative, and particularly the narrative of the Gospels, is to note what the author selects to say, and what he selects not to say. This can be very instructive, especially when you have parallel accounts like in the Gospels. You have four accounts of the arrest of Jesus—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all describe the arrest of Jesus. They all describe the fact that Judas brought people to arrest Jesus. They all describe the fact that one of Jesus' disciples attacked one of the men in the party, and cut off his ear. All four record that, but there are a number of things that we are going to see that John focuses on that the other Gospel writers don't, and we're also going to see some things that he leaves out that they put in.

Now, an important principle first of all is that when two people tell a story, they always tell it slightly different, if they are not cooperating, and colluding. You know, if you've got some villains who they rob something and, "Our story is this is what we were doing. This is what happened." So they collude and then they have the same story. It is actually one of the things that law enforcement officials look for, lawyers look for, is that there needs to be a straightforward kind of artlessness

about the way people recount details. The truthful witness just tells what he saw. Well but when two people see the same thing, or when four people see the same thing, but then they see different things, they remember different things, they, in recounting it, tell you different things.

A lot of times people, unbelievers who are looking for a way to make, to object to the word of God, will say things like, “The Bible contradicts,” and they’ll say, “One of the apostles says there were two angels at the tomb, and the other one says there was one.” Well when you read it carefully, the other one doesn’t say there is one, the other one says, “The angel said...” He didn’t say, “There is only one angel there. Let’s be clear, only one angel.” No, he said, “The angel said...,” which actually proves even more wonderfully how they’re each telling their own story, and they are complimenting each other perfectly. Because the reality was, there was two angels, but only one talked, and so one guy told you about the angel that talked, and the other was impressed by the fact there was two angels there. So you have the stories, and you put them together.

The same way with the arrest account. When you put them all four together, there is a harmony of the Gospels that many people have undertaken to write. You can look at it, and they will kind of go from, “Here is Matthew, here is Luke, here is Mark, here is John,” and that is helpful. It gives you the fuller picture, but when you step back, really interpreting the Bible, what our goal is is to see what John said, and why he said it, including the fact that we note he may have left things out that other people said. But his account is perfect, it is accurate, and it is inspired by the Lord to give us exactly the picture that we are supposed to see.

It’s one of the things, like when you are teaching through something, or studying through something, it is helpful maybe to go over and look at another account, but you want to come back to, why didn’t my author I’m looking at, he didn’t tell me this event, this story, this part? So I want to know what he said, what does this passage say to us? Does that make sense? Okay, now, having said that, you’re going to note some things, as you’re a thoughtful reader, you will see some things that are there that you haven’t maybe seen other places, and some things that aren’t there that you did see other places. Okay, John 18:1:

John 18:1-11 ~ When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. 2 Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. 3 Judas then, having received the Roman 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’s go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, we ask that You would grant us Your grace. Speak to us now, by Your Spirit. Help us to apply these things to our hearts, to our lives, and let us be changed. All for the glory of our Savior. We pray in His name, Amen.

Okay, what we want to do now, in this narrative, we’ve got two points, and there are going to be some sub-points. The first point is we want to *Observe the Action*. What I want us to do is walk through the narrative observing the action carefully, kind of noting what I was talking about, the things that he includes, and how he tells his account of the arrest. And then secondly, after we *Observe the Action*, the second point is we’ll *Consider the Implications*. Now we are going to *Observe the Action* and there are five sub-points in observing the action, and we’re going to walk through the text. Then what we are going to see when we *Consider the Implications*, our second major point, there are going to be three implications. So a total of eight. Five under *Observe the Action*, and three under *Consider the Implications*.

1) Observe the Action:

A) Jesus Hurries to the Battle:

The first thing we note, and I want to go ahead and give you the title of each point. The first sub-point, *Observe the Action*, in Verses 1-3, what we’re going to see is that *Jesus Hurries to the Battle*. Now let’s look at this together.

John 18:1 ~ When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples...

The first thing to note is that the verb, the way that John tells this is he says, “Jesus went forth, Jesus went out.” He doesn’t say, “He and the disciples went out.” He says, “Jesus went forth with His disciples.” Remember in Greek, like many languages, the verb changes a lot based on the number, singular or plural. In English, a lot of our verbs don’t change. I mean, some of them do, but most of them don’t. ‘I hit’, ‘We hit’, same verb form, different number of the subject, right? But in Greek, there is always the specificity of number, and so the verb here is a singular verb. It literally says, “He went forth with His disciples.” It doesn’t say, “They went forth...” And I think it is instructive because he is going to use that same form in Verse 4 when he says:

John 18:4 ~ So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth...

Same verb, same emphasis. “He went forth.” “He went forth.” John is cluing us in here that he wants us to see the action that Jesus is taking. Now ‘went forth’, ‘went out’, recalls for us the fact that they were in the upper room, remember? When Jesus washed the disciples’ feet? He talked for a while in the upper room at the end of Chapter 14. He says, “The ruler of this world is coming, let us leave this place. Let us go out,” and so they apparently then leave the upper room and begin the approximately one mile journey from the upper room to Gethsemane, and along the way apparently, He continues teaching.

So Chapters 15 and 16, I believe, He was teaching along the way. Some people think that in Chapter 14, and it is negotiable, He said, “Let’s go out,” and then they started to go out, and then they stopped. Kind of like the way southerners leave. “We gotta leave now,” “Oh, don’t leave now,” and you kind of hang around and talk for another 30 minutes, right? Sometimes that is the way it is after church, isn’t it? The man is in the car, the wife is still talking, or vice-versa. Sometimes the woman is in the car, and the man is still talking, right? Anyway so, “We’re leaving now,” doesn’t necessarily mean we’re leaving now. Some people say that is what happened. I don’t really think it is that way myself, but it certainly doesn’t affect things ultimately. The point is, He was leaving the upper room, heading to the garden, and when He did so, He was on a mission. He said, “The ruler of this world is coming, let us go out from here,” Chapter 14:30-31.

And then He has been teaching, and He apparently stopped to pray at some point. He has prayed and now, John 18:1, ... ***When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth...***, He went out again. So here it either meant He went out of the upper room, or He, what I think here, is He went out of the city. They are now going out of the city. They left the upper room in John 14:31, now they've been walking along. Now they are going out of the city, and to go out of the gate, the first thing they would do is cross this ravine. Now this wasn't just like a little culvert, this was a 200-foot descent down to the bottom of the ravine, and then 200 feet plus back up because the other side is the Mount of Olives. So they had to go down 200 feet and then up probably 300 plus. So this is the walk now that they are making, but John doesn't tell us any more about what happens as they are doing this. He says:

John 18:1 ~ He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden,...

So He hurries to the battle. Why did I choose that term? Because I think the emphasis is on the rapidity of the action. For instance, why does John not tell us that it is Gethsemane? All the other apostles tell us that the garden was Gethsemane. Clearly it was, John knows it. I think he didn't tell us because he is not going to tell us about Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. The other apostles have already done that. His purpose is to step back in kind of a bigger way. You know, sometimes you do a slow motion instant replay, and you get a closer look, and sometimes you get a panoramic view, and you step back. And John gives us the panorama view and says, "Listen, the point is, Jesus left the city on a mission to get to the garden." And what was the mission? He doesn't stop and tell us about the prayer. The mission was to meet the enemy. *The mission was to meet the enemy.* That is what he focuses on. He says, "He entered there with His disciples..." and he doesn't talk about praying.

John 18:2 ~ Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

The sense is, He went to the appointed place. We don't have Him telling Judas, "I'll meet you in Gethsemane," but it is basically that effect. When He left the upper room to go to the garden, He was going to meet the ruler of this world. That is what He said, John 14:30, and Judas knows, when he is telling the Pharisees, "I know where you can get Him away from the crowds. I know where He goes at night, to be alone with His disciples. So John's emphasis is, the battle lines have been drawn, and Jesus is, in a sense, rushing on ahead courageously into the battle.

That is the force. Judas, who was betraying Him, interesting, he repeats that twice in this passage, Verse 2 and Verse 5.

John 18:5 ~ They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He *said to them, “I am He.” And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them.

Why the repetition of that? In fact, why does he even mention it at all that he was betraying him? I mean, we’ve been following along, as we read along, he has been talking about this over, and over, and over again, the fact that Judas would betray Him. It is first mentioned in Chapter 6, Jesus says, John tells us there that Jesus knew from the beginning who was betraying Him. I think it is Verse 64. Then if you turn back over to Chapter 13, and Verse 2, this is right before, this is the beginning of the night before He is crucified, His time with the disciples in the upper room. He says in Verse 1, this is John 13:1.

John 13:1-3 ~ Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. 2 During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands,...

So it is already clear, John has reminded us, “Hey, remember I told you Judas is going to betray Him,” and he told us that in Chapter 12 also. I forgot to tell you that. Remember when Mary gives Jesus the offering of perfume, pours the perfume on Jesus? It tells us in Chapter 12:4:

John 12:4 ~ But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, *said,...

So he tells us in Chapter 6, he tells us in Chapter 12, he tells us in Chapter 13, Verse 2, and then tells us again in Chapter 13, Verse 11, after He is washing the disciples’ feet, when Peter objects, remember? He says, “You can’t wash my feet.” Jesus says in Verse 10.

John 13:10-11 ~ “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.” 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him;

Getting the message, Judas is betraying Him. Follow on down to Verse 18, well in Verse 17:

John 13:17 ~ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

He is talking to the 12 now, and He says, Verse 18:

John 13:18 ~ I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.'

He's talking about Judas. Verse 21:

John 13:21 ~ When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me."

Now here, from Verse 21-27, they are trying to figure out who it is that is betraying Him. There is a lot of emphasis on this betrayal is what I'm trying to get across. Verse 27, after the morsel, Jesus gives the morsel to Judas. He says, "I'm going to dip the bread and give it to the one who is betraying Me." And then amazingly, when He dips the bread and He gives it to Him, the other disciples are clueless, and don't even know what He has done. But Judas knows, and it says in Verse 27:

John 13:27 ~ After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus *said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

Satan takes full possession of Judas at that moment. Now, come back to Chapter 18, we know that Judas is the one betraying Him. If you'd been reading thoughtfully at all, it has been repeated, and repeated, and repeated. Why does he remind us here? I think he wants us to be very clear on who it is Jesus is meeting. He is meeting the one who has yielded himself completely to Satan. He is meeting, in the person of Judas, the ruler of this world, so that the battle has begun to transpire. The fact that the battle lines are there, and Satan himself is there, ready to attack the Son of God.

In fact, the emphasis that John is making this sense of battle, Jesus hurries into the battle, this is still our first sub-point, *Observe the Action, Jesus Hurries into Battle*, Verses 1-3. It is made even more clear that it is a battle that John wants us to sense,

and to feel the sense of this battle happening by the way he describes those who came to arrest Jesus. Here is where he alone tells us, of all the Gospel-writers, that a Roman cohort attended, came along with the temple authorities. The other Gospels don't mention that. And so apparently what had happened was the chief priest had met with Judas, they determined they are going to arrest Jesus, they send probably dozens of their temple security guys. These were armed officials whose responsibility was to guard the security of the temple. So they are armed men, and he tells us, look what he says in Verse 3:

John 13:3 ~ Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, *came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

You see the emphasis? So what has happened is the officers from the chief priests, they've sent them, "Go arrest Jesus." But they know that this could be a dicey thing, so they've apparently gone to the Roman authorities and said, "Look, it is Passover, we need to arrest a troublemaker," and the Romans have said, "You're going to take a cohort of troops along with you," because Passover, and the other holy holidays were very potentially disruptive times in the life of Israel. In fact, it was the practice of the Romans to send extra soldiers down from Caesarea to Jerusalem every holiday because when they would come together for Passover, or Pentecost, the Day of Atonement, the nationalistic fervor of the people would be at a pitch. And so the Romans knew it's better to have a strong military presence there to keep order. So what they do then is they send a cohort.

Now, what's a cohort? Normally this was a detachment of 600 soldiers. It's probable most theologians believe it could also be used to speak of a subset of that 600 soldiers. In fact, the commanding officer that's mentioned in Verse 12 when it says ***...the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews...*** the word for *commander* literally in the Greek means a ruler of 1,000 so that originally the Roman cohort was supposed to be 1,000 soldiers. It was 240 cavalry and 760 foot soldiers. Over time, I guess, like a lot of things, they kind of shrunk the number down a little bit to 600 foot soldiers, and then a smaller number of cavalry than 240. But the cohort was still named a cohort, and the leader was still called the ruler of 1,000, but most scholars think that what was probably sent was the normal detachment from a cohort of 600 soldiers was 200, so that 200 Roman soldiers with their weapons, along with dozens of temple police with their weapons, converge on the garden of Gethsemane with lamps, and torches, and their swords.

John tells us about the cohort because he wants us to see the picture of what has happened. The Jews and the Gentiles are gathered together in battle array against God's anointed. The world has come together against the Messiah. Do you see that? The Jews and the Gentiles. He mentions this detail that the others don't, because his focus at this point is to emphasize the sense that the whole world is against God's Son, and he's picturing Jesus as the great captain of our salvation, the great divine warrior who is entering into the conflict.

So Satan himself is there, the god of this age. Remember how we mentioned in John this idea of light and dark, and this idea of the world, the word *world*, *cosmos*, is used 78 times in the book of John. It was used 15 times just in the high priestly prayer. "Lord, I'm leaving them in the world." The word *cosmos* means *to arrange*. The etymology early use of the word was to arrange soldiers in battle. It has a military overtone in itself. John sees the world as against Christ, and so the picture he's presenting is Jesus hurrying into the battle. That's the first point, Verses 1 to 3, in observing the action. Jesus hurries to the battle.

Now, what's the second thing that we observe as we observe the action in the verses? Look at Verse 4. Jesus then initiates the action.

B) Jesus Initiates the Action:

John makes this clear where the other apostles don't as well. He picks up on this detail under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to show us something about our Savior. Who is it that begins the talking? Look at Verse 4.

John 18:4 ~ So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and *said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

Again, there's that *went forth* again. You see, He's the one that moves. Here they are coming up the hill toward the Mount of Olives, toward Gethsemane, and Jesus goes out to meet them, and He asks them the questions. He says, "Whom do you seek?" The question is repeated twice, because He has to ask them again after they sort of get dazed, in a moment. He says it in Verse 4: "***Whom do you seek?***" and then in Verse 7:

John 18:7 ~ Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?"

He didn't wait on them to come get Him. He went out to meet them and He asked them. He took the fight to them. That's the force and the feel that I think John is trying to get us to see in this. Jesus initiates the action. We don't have a God who sits silently by. He's always at work. Remember He said that in John 5? Remember when He healed the man that had been lame for all those years, and they got upset because He healed on the Sabbath? And He basically healed on the Sabbath so that they would know that He had authority to heal on the Sabbath, and what He says to them is, I'm paraphrasing, but they're basically upset because He healed a man on the Sabbath, and it's against the law to do anything on the Sabbath, which was ridiculous anyway, because anybody could help somebody on the Sabbath. But they were confused, and He says, "My Father is working and I also am working." What He says is, "Listen, the Father works on the Sabbath, and I work on the Sabbath, because the only person that works on the Sabbath is God." And here He's doing the same thing. Listen, He takes the initiative. God is always working. Even when we can't see it, God is on the move, and that's what we see here. Jesus initiates the action. That's what we see in Verse 4.

Now, we'll look at the next point in the action. We're observing the action. We saw Jesus hurries to the battle, Verses 1 to 3. Jesus initiates the action in Verse 4. And now this next point is Verses 5 to 8.

C) Jesus Displays His Great Power and Then Surrenders:

Look at Verse 5. He had said, "Whom do you seek?"

John 18:5 ~ They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He *said to them, "I am He."

You have italicized *He* in the New American Standard, probably in your translation as well. It should be italicized because it's supplied. It's not literally what He said. It's trying to help us to take this expression and make it fit into our vernacular. He said, "I am He," but He didn't really say, "I am He," literally. He said, "I am." He said, "Ego eimi," which we know as we've read through the Gospel of John is a key phrase that John has picked up on again, and again, and again, Jesus' designation of Himself as the *I Am*. The "I Am" sayings of Jesus, remember "I Am" with a predicate we talked about, where seven different times He uses that "I Am" with a predicate. "I am the bread of life. I am the Light of the world. I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the true vine." And then aside from that, a number of times He uses the "I Am" without a predicate, like He does here.

In John 6:20, when He was walking on the water and they were all nervous, He said, "Do not be afraid. I am." In John 8:58, when the Jews were saying to Him, talking about Abraham, and He said, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day and was glad," and they said, "You're not yet fifty years old. How did Abraham know about You?" And Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am," and they picked up stones to stone Him, because they knew He was claiming to be God. And here, they say, "We're looking for Jesus the Nazarene," and He said, "I am." And look what happened in Verse 6:

John 18:6 ~ So when He said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground.

Now, remember it's a Roman cohort of probably 200 soldiers and dozens of soldiers from the temple, so maybe 300 armed men. They've come out to take the Messiah. He simply says, "I am," and they step back and fall down on their faces. This is a sense of theophany. There's a glimpse of glory that shines out when He says, "I am," and they are overwhelmed by it. The force of it hits them, drives them back, and they fall down. His deity is on display, and yet amazingly, He then asks them. You can see them. They draw back, fall to the ground, and we can imagine that they're getting themselves up figuring out, "What happened?"

John 18:7 ~ 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,"

He basically surrenders to them after He displays His glory. After He displays His absolute sovereign power, He then goes like a Lamb. The Lamb is not merely a lamb. The Lamb is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. So we see that. Jesus displays His great power and then surrenders. The fourth thing as we observe the action, the last part of Verse 8 and Verse 9 is that in the middle of the conflict, Jesus looks after His own.

D) Jesus Looks After His Own:

John 18:8 ~ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

He's concerned about the eleven. That's the heart of the Shepherd. Here He is going into battle directly with the god of this age, the ruler of this world. The Gentiles and the Jews have gathered together. They're thronging together against

Him, against God and His anointed, just like Psalm 2 had basically prophesied from the beginning of the Psalter. The nations are raging. The peoples are in an uproar against the Lord and against His anointed. Here's a moment of decisive conflict, and at that moment, Jesus says, "You don't need to take these guys. Let them alone." And there's a sense in which that request, there is no disobeying that request, because they're talking to the Lord of glory. But He cared for them, and John adds then, that this was:

John 18:9 ~ to fulfill the word which He spoke,...

His own word is fulfilled, which He spoke in John 17:12 when He was praying, remember?

John 17:12 ~ While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

John says, "This is what He was saying when He said that. This is fulfilled." He went out and did exactly what He said. He kept on guarding His sheep. That's the fourth thing in the action unfolding. Observe the action. He hurries to the battle. He initiates the action. He displays His great power, and then surrenders, but He protects His own. And fifthly, in Verses 10 and 11, He overcomes the attack of His friend.

E) He Overcomes the Attack of His Friend:

John 18:10 ~ 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.

Now here again, why Simon Peter's name? All three other Gospels do not mention Peter's name. I don't know if Matthew, Mark, and Luke were thinking, "Hey, Peter's had enough of a bad time already. We don't need to mention this." John was one of Peter's closest friends, and John says, "Yeah, you need to know who it was. It was Peter. Peter's the one. You've seen in those other three Gospels they talk about how one of the disciples cut off his ear. It was Peter." There's so much resonance here. Remember Peter is the one who said, "I will die for You," in chapter 13, and Jesus said, "You'll die for Me? I tell you, you'll deny Me three times." And here Peter is attempting to do what he thinks is best, and what he thinks is best is wrong. He's basically doing exactly what—remember when Peter

had one of his other great moments, when Jesus said, “Who do men say that I am?” Remember that? And Peter was the one who finally stood up and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus said, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.” And then later right after that, it says Jesus was telling them how He must be crucified at the hands of the chief priests and rulers, and then to be resurrected. And Peter came and took Him aside. Peter said, “Jesus, come here. I need to talk to You for a second. This whole thing that You’re talking about, about the cross, that’s never going to happen to You.” The audacity of Peter, and Jesus didn’t just say, Peter, you’re wrong.” He said, “Get thee behind Me, Satan.” After He had said, “What you’ve said is from God,” He now says to the same man, “Get thee behind Me, Satan, because Satan is the one that gave you that thought, and Satan is using you to get at Me, and to try to distract Me from My mission, which is the cross.” And what is Peter doing here? Look at Jesus’ response:

John 18:11 ~ So Jesus said to Peter, “Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”

“You’re completely misunderstanding My mission, and you are standing in the way. Put the sword away.” How could he do that after Jesus had knocked them down with His glory? It’s like everybody was just so frazzled and dazed by it. They weren’t thinking straight. Peter thinks he’s going to help now. I don’t think He needs your help, Peter. He doesn’t need our help. So that’s the *Observe the Action*. He hurries into the battle. He initiates the action. He displays His great power, and then surrenders, all while protecting His own, and then even overcoming the attack of His friend. Now let’s consider the implications.

2) Consider the Implications:

Why does John tell us this? What does he want us to see? I think first of all he wants us to clearly see the sovereignty of our Savior, the absolute and complete sovereignty of our Savior. Look what he does in this passage. In Verse 4, he shows us the omniscience of Jesus. ...***Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him,***... Do you see that in Verse 4? He knew everything. He was omniscient. And then when He says, “I am,” and they fall down, you see the omnipotence of Jesus. He has all power. He possesses all knowledge. He has all power. The “I am” saying is a direct claim to deity. John is reminding us here as Jesus goes humbly and meekly to begin to walk the way of the cross, he says, “Don’t forget who He is, the sovereignty of the Savior.” He’s telling us what Jesus

had actually told us really clearly earlier in His teaching ministry in John 10:18. Actually, He starts off in Verse 11 with one of the “I am” sayings.

John 10:11 ~ “I am (Ego eimi) the good shepherd;

What does the good shepherd do?

John 10:11 ~ ...the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

That is, the good shepherd places His life for the sheep. He sets it down. Verse 18:

John 10:18 ~ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.

That’s what we’re seeing in John 18. He lays it down. Nobody takes it from Him. Nobody takes anything from the Son of God. He is the one who when the strongman had all of his goods in order—that’s a picture of Satan that He used—Jesus said, “One greater than the strongman has come, and He’s going to plunder his house. I’m going to bind the strongman, and I’m going to plunder his house.” And that is the reality of who the Savior is at every moment. As a baby in the manger, He was the one who possessed all sovereignty. As He hangs on the cross, He still is upholding all things by the word of His power, and we need to know that. We need to know that no matter what circumstance we find ourselves in, that the one who said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you,” has you and your life in the palm of His hand. No one can snatch you out, and nothing can come in except He allows it. I love that picture. He used that later in John 10. He said, “I have them in My hand, and no one can take them out of My hand. The Father has them in His hand, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand.” So the picture is you are held like that if you belong to Jesus Christ. You’re held like that. Nothing can take you out. And if you’re held in His hand, nothing can come in that He doesn’t want to come in, so that whatever happens truly is according to His sovereign will, and His sovereign purpose, and for His glory, and for your good. That’s the sovereignty of the Savior.

We’re considering the implications. We looked at the sovereignty of the Savior. The second thing is the love of the Savior. This puts on display the love of the Savior. The fact that He’s laying down His life is highlighting His great love, and the wonder of His love is multi-directional, but it’s basically two directions. His love of the Father is being highlighted, and His love of His own, His sheep, us, is being manifested in this act as He lays down His life. When He said in Verse 11:

John 18:11 ~ “Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”

“I’m doing what the Father’s called Me to do, Peter. Get out of the way. I love the Father, and I’m going to obey the Father.” Turn back over to John 14:31. I’ve mentioned this passage, John 14:30, this is where He says:

John 14:30 ~ I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me; 31 but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me. Get up, let us go from here.

Do you see that? “Get up, let us go from here. We’re going to the garden. We’re going to meet the ruler of this world. Why? Because I want everyone to know that I love the Father, and I do exactly what the Father has commanded me to do.” So when He’s going into the battle and He’s yielding Himself to the cross, He’s expressing His great love for His Father, how much He loves the Father, and at the same time, He’s also expressing His great love for us. He’s showing that He loves His own, just like He said in John 10. “The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” In Verse 14 He says again:

John 10:14 ~ I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

My knowledge of the sheep is the same as My knowledge of the Father. I know the Father. I love the Father. The Father knows Me and loves me. I know My sheep and they know Me, and I’ve called them into a relationship with Me that is just like the relationship I have with the Father, and I love them.” His love is so great. This is why He’s laying down His life for us. This is why John says in 1 John 3:16—actually those are great verses to remember. Most everybody knows John 3:16, or we should, right?

John 3:16 ~ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Good thing I didn’t mess that up after I said that, wasn’t it? But 1 John 3:16...

1 John 3:16 ~ This is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down His life for us.

Do you see that? The Father's love is on display in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave His Son." That's the Father's love. In 1 John 3:16, how do you know the love of God? "This is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down His life." So that's what's on display here in John 18. He's saying, "I want you to look at the Lord Jesus' love." It wasn't taken from Him. He laid down His life freely. So understand that the one who has all sovereignty has proved His love.

We watched the movie *The Hiding Place* last night, our family. It's the story of Corrie ten Boom who was along with her father, and sister, and brother, their family was arrested by the Nazis in Holland during the German occupation of Holland in 1944. They were arrested because they had hidden Jews and helped Jews to escape from the concentration camps. They were arrested after they were discovered to be doing that, and were put in the concentration camps themselves. Corrie's dad, and sister, and brother all died. Two of them died there, and her brother actually died a few months after the war was over, from diseases he got in the concentration camp. So she lost her whole family. She was there, and there in the misery of the concentration camps with the brutality, the horrible wickedness of Nazism, the ugly underbelly of evil and the wickedness, and the depths that man can descend to on display, they were living in the mire of that on a daily basis. And she and her sister had been helped by God to smuggle in a New Testament, and they would read the Scriptures, and pray together. One of the things she talked about early on in the story is her sister was helping Corrie, because Corrie was struggling a little more with being grateful and trusting God, and her sister said, "The Lord's sovereign. He's in control. Thank Him for this. Thank Him for everything." Corrie says one day, "I'm not going to thank Him for the lice," and then shortly after that, one of the ladies happens to say, "One of the reasons the soldiers don't come in here is because they're scared of the lice. They won't come past the front door." Her sister looks at her and says, "Thank Him for that too, the lice," because they had privacy in their barracks. They would read the Scriptures and pray. Most of the people there were Jewish, so they weren't interested in the Gospel initially, but there were unbelievers there who were asking the question, "How can a good God allow this?" Corrie said, "I don't know exactly why God is allowing this, but I do know this, that God became a man and gave Himself on the cross for our sins." What she's saying is that when you put whatever's happening in your life in context of the cross, it changes everything. This world is such a mess, but God came to deliver us from that. That's the love of the Savior.

Thirdly, the last implication is the victory of the Savior. There's the authority of the Savior, the love of the Savior, and the victory of the Savior. Jesus is going to win. He has demonstrated that He has all power, but the way that He achieves His victory is by apparently losing. He surrendered. The victory, the power, the triumph, happens in the moment of weakness. And what this tells us is that this is the way of God in a fallen world, that victory comes through apparent defeat, many, many, many, many times, that when you are brought down to the lowest, that is the opportunity for you to see the glory of God.

We read from Colossians 2 earlier, the imagery there, remember? It says He makes a public spectacle of the principalities and powers, the demonic kingdom of darkness that had authored things like the Holocaust. Jesus made a public spectacle of them. He triumphed over them. He was victorious over them. How? In the weakness of the cross, as He hung there and died, He defeated Satan. And it has been God's way throughout history to, in moments of weakness, show forth His glory, and apparent defeat to show forth His power.

So there may be times in our lives, and that's what happened with Corrie ten Boom, because she was completely controlled by her captors, and yet she wasn't. In the midst of the darkness, the light of the Gospel of the glory of God shone out. One of the beautiful scenes at the end is when she's brought out of the concentration camp through a clerical error. They dismissed her. They released her. She thinks she's going to the gas chamber when they call her name, because that's what normally happens when you're called out is you're going to the gas chamber, but she didn't go to the gas chamber. She's praying to God for dying grace, and it turns out she's released. But one of the ladies that had been listening to her preach the Gospel and talk about Jesus, said to her as she's walking out, "I want Him. I want Him. The One that you know and love, I want Him." How many people were touched by her testimony? Her sister had said this to her. Her sister died. Her sister said, "We must go everywhere and tell people this message," and Corrie went all over the world to over 60 countries telling about the wonder of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. She forgave her captors. She loved and prayed for them, and she witnessed. She said this. This is what her sister said. "We must tell everyone that no matter how deep the pit in which you find yourself, Jesus is deeper still." That is the reality of such a great Savior, such a glorious Savior who has experienced everything that we will ever experience. And when she was in those moments, she had an opportunity to see Him and to experience what Paul says, the fellowship of His sufferings.



May God help us to bear up under whatever comes our way, for the rest of our lives, trusting that our Savior will be with us in His sovereignty, His love, and His wondrous way of victory.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer...

Father, we thank You for the glory of what You've done for us in Jesus Christ. We marvel that You would love us and give Your Son, and Lord Jesus, we marvel that You would love us and lay down Your life. We pray that so great a love would constrain us and compel us, that we would no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. For those that need to repent and believe and be saved, Lord, bring them to Your family today. For those that belong to You, may we be more completely Yours. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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