**JOHN 18:1-27**

**PAIRS AND SPARES CLASS**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, WAYCROSS**

**APRIL 30, 2023**

**INTRODUCTION**

In the presence and hearing of His disciples, Jesus had just offered His profound prayer to God in which He prayed that in all that was about to happen to Him He would glorify God. But He also had prayed for His disciples, that God would protect them. And He had prayed for you and me, that those who would believe in Jesus as a result of the witness of His disciples would be united with one another through our faith in Christ to share the message of Jesus with the world.

The teaching phase of Jesus’s ministry on earth was coming to an end. His mission to reveal God to the world was entering its final stage. God was about to display His unimaginable love and grace to humanity in a way that only God could have conceived, a solution that after 2,000 years is still incomprehensible to those of us who have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior.

*God’s solution for our sin is the most unselfish and most exorbitant act ever conceived or carried out.*

**BETRAYED** (John 18:1-3)

Jesus led His disciples from the Upper Room, down the eastern slope of Jerusalem into the Kidron Valley, across the Kidron Brook, and up onto the Mount of Olives where there was an olive grove and an olive press known as Gethsemane.

When they arrived in the garden, Jesus instructed His disciples to “‘Sit here while I go over there to pray’“ (Matthew 26:36b). Then He took Peter, James, and John with Him a little farther, telling them,
“ ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me’ “ (Matthew 26:37b).

While praying in the garden, Jesus asked God to remove the “cup” that God had given Him. But He also prayed that no matter what, God’s will would be done, that God would be glorified.

In John 18:4, we will see that Jesus knew every single detail of all that He was about to experience. He knew God’s desire and plan for Him, and He was committed to carrying it out to the glory of God.

?So why do you think Jesus was so sorrowful, so bothered? Knowing that He would

1. Endure torture?
2. Experience hate-filled treatment at the hands of Jewish religious leaders?
3. Be treated unfairly?
4. Be beaten nearly to death?
5. Be led through the streets of Jerusalem, stripped naked at Golgotha, nailed to a cross?
6. Physically die?
7. Take on the sins of every human being that had ever lived or would ever live?

Each of these concerns would be normal for any human being. But perhaps the cause of His sorrow and burden was that for the first time in eternity He would be separated from His Righteous Father because of His willingly assuming responsibility for my sin and your sin if we were to be forgiven and made righteous before God.

Jesus had brought His disciples to this place many times during His ministry to teach them, to pray, to rest. All of them knew about this place, including Judas. So Judas, the disciple who chose to betray Jesus, led “a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees” (v. 3b) to Jesus.

We don’t know how large the detachment was, but we know they brought torches, lanterns, and weapons with them to confront an unarmed Jesus and His disciples. They were unaware that *Jesus is always more than able to keep safe those who are His, no matter what* *mankind or Satan might bring against us.*

**UNRESTRAINED** **IDENTIFICATION** (John 18:4-9)

Knowing everything that was about to happen to Him, Jesus accepted and embraced it all to glorify God and offer sinful man—you and me—the only solution possible for us to be restored to God.

?When Jesus saw the approaching detachment, what did He do? (He walked boldly to them and asked with authority, “Who is it you want?” (18:4b). Who are you looking for?)

?And what was their answer? (“Jesus of Nazareth” (18:5a).)

?And how did Jesus respond? (“I am he” (18:5b).)

?And how did the men in the detachment react to Jesus’s response? (“…they drew back and fell to the ground” (18:6b). In the Greek, they dropped from one level to another.)

?Why do you think these men stepped back and fell to the ground?

1. They were caught off guard: they probably expected Jesus to deny who He was or attempt to flee, certainly not boldly and fearlessly approach them in confidence and authority.
2. His use of the “I am” might have reminded the Jews in the detachment that this is how God introduced Himself to Moses and that Jesus had used this term to identify Himself with God.
3. Any Gentiles in the detachment, even hardened Roman soldiers, might have been surprised by Jesus’s unarmed lack of fear and His command of the situation.

Jesus then asked the men again for whom they were looking, and they answered, “Jesus of Nazareth” (18:7b), followed by Jesus again confirming that “I am he” (18:8).

When the detachment confirmed they were looking only for Jesus, He ordered the detachment to “ ‘…let these men go’ “ (18:8b). And the detachment would obey the instructions of Jesus, the prisoner.

**LIVES** **IMPERILED** (John 18:10-11)

?At this pivotal moment, what happened? (Peter took a sword that he had brought from the Upper Room and struck Malchus, a servant of the High Priest, cutting off his ear. But Jesus told Peter to put the sword away, that what was occurring was part of God’s plan. He then healed the ear of Malchus and diffused the violent and possibly deadly situation. By stepping in, Jesus probably saved the life of Peter and possibly the lives of all the disciples. *Jesus, the prisoner, was in complete charge.*)

**ARRESTED**, **BOUND**, **INTERROGATED** (John 18:12-14, 19-24)**\***

Jesus was arrested, bound, and taken to Annas who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the current High Priest. Annas had been the High Priest until the Romans replaced him with Caiaphas. Apparently the Jews continued to recognize Annas as the one who held the real authority of High Priest.

John 11:49-50 had pointed out that it was Caiaphas who told the Sanhedrin Jesus needed to be killed in order to save Jerusalem and Judah from being destroyed by the Romans, to keep the status quo.

In 11:51-52, John had interjected a comment that put things into perspective: not only would Jesus “die for the Jewish nation…but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.” What Jesus would do was far more important than simply keeping the status quo; Jesus would die, not just for the Jews but for all who would place their faith in God through Christ: Jews and Gentiles, you and me, all those whose hearts yearned to know God.

?In John 18:19, what did Annas question Jesus about? (His disciples and His teachings). ?Why?

?How did Jesus respond? (That He had “always” taught openly, never in secret, in the synagogues and the Temple courtyards where the Jews gathered. Jesus’s message was never intended to be political or subversive. He told Annas and the gathered Jews that there were plenty of people who had heard Him and could confirm the truth of what He had just told Annas).

At that point, one of the officials in the group of interrogators “struck” the bound Jesus “in the face” with what some might call a sucker punch (18:22). Jesus calmly addressed the official, asking him what He had done wrong and why the man had struck Him. *In the midst of His interrogation, Jesus displayed His authority and remained in command of the entire situation.*

**BETRAYED AGAIN** (John 18:15-18, 25-27)**\***

Simultaneously with the interrogation of Jesus in Annas’s courtyard, another scene was unfolding.

As He always did, Jesus had done His best to prepare His disciples for what was about to happen.

In Matthew 26:41 He had told His disciples, “ ‘Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak.’ “ *Without the power of the Holy Spirit*, *Believers are not capable of being victorious in the spiritual battles that Satan hurls at us.*

In Mark 14: 27b-28, Jesus quoted Zechariah 13:7 to warn them. “ ‘I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered” then adding, “But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.’ “

**\*\***In Luke 22:31-33, Jesus had told all the disciples, but especially Peter, “ ‘Simon,…Satan has asked to sift you [plural] as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith will not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.’ “**\*\***

Peter had responded, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death’ “ (Luke 22:33b).

Jesus had secured Peter’s freedom from the detachment, but Simon Peter and “another disciple” had chosen to follow Jesus to Annas’s house. Because this other disciple was known to Annas, he was admitted through the gate. But Peter was unknown to the gatekeeper, so the other disciple vouched for Peter, enabling Peter to enter.

We don’t know for certain who this disciple was. Possibly John, but John identified him simply as “another disciple,” not “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

As Peter entered the courtyard, the servant girl at the gate asked Peter, “You are not one of his disciples, are you?”, worded in such a way as to expect a negative answer. And Peter answered, “I am not” (18:17).

The night was cold, so Peter joined a group of people warming themselves by a fire. Someone there asked him, “You are not one of his disciples, are you?”, again expecting a negative answer. So Peter responded, “I am not” (18:25).

But then a man who had been at Gethsemane with the detachment, a relative of Malchus, called Peter’s hand, accusing him: “Didn’t I see you with him in the olive grove?” (18:26).

?And how did Peter reply? (According to John, Peter again denied being a disciple of Jesus. According to Matthew 26:74 and Mark 14:71, Peter did not simply deny his relationship with Jesus, he called down curses on himself and swore to them that he didn’t even know Jesus).

Jesus had warned Peter what to expect. Peter chose to disregard the warning, place himself in danger, and rely on his own strength. Luke 22:61 tells us that at the very moment Peter denied Jesus, a rooster crowed, just as Jesus had told Peter it would, and Jesus “turned and looked straight at Peter.”

Peter immediately understood that Jesus knew he had denied and totally failed His Lord and Savior, the One he loved with all his heart and soul. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all confirm that Peter left the gated courtyard, broke down, and wept bitterly. None of us can fully grasp Peter’s bottomless hopelessness and despair at that moment—or perhaps we can.

And Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas.

**CONCLUSION**

John 18 is filled with life lessons for us. A few that stand out to me are:

1. God’s solution for our sin stands out in all of eternity and in all of creation as the most unselfish and most exorbitant act ever conceived or carried out.
2. Throughout everything Jesus experienced from His arrest through His crucifixion and beyond, Jesus remained in absolute control of everything He experienced.
3. Without the power of prayer and the presence of the Holy Spirit—before, during, and after the challenges and opportunities we face—Believers are not capable of being victorious in the spiritual battles that Satan hurls at us.
4. No matter what we Believers face, Jesus has the authority and power to intercede for us and enable us to be victorious over whatever Satan or man might bring against us.
5. Satan wants to destroy Believers; Satan must ask permission to test Believers; Believers are safe-kept by the sovereignty, power, and love of Jesus; Jesus can use the evil intents of Satan to strengthen our faith and enhance our relationship with Jesus.
6. Believers are held firmly in the hands of Jesus. There is nothing—nothing--we can experience that Jesus doesn’t know about or have absolute authority and control over.

**\*\*LUKE 22:31-32**

“’Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you [plural] as wheat. But ***I*** have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.’’

Sift: To separate

To remove lumps or particles

To examine thoroughly in order to isolate that which is most important or most useful

To find out what is in you, what you are made of

Satan had asked God to allow him to test the disciples and especially Simon to separate them from Jesus.

But Jesus had interceded on their behalf and asked God to strengthen their faith in Jesus.

1. Satan has no authority or power other than that which God allows him to have.
2. Even more importantly, Satan has no authority or power over Believers—you and me—other than that which God allows him to have.
3. When Satan attacks us, God is not only aware of it, He has allowed it for God’s purpose and our benefit, including our realizing our weaknesses and the strengthening of our faith in Christ.
4. Satan’s intent was to destroy the relationship with Jesus of the disciples and specifically Peter, to separate them from Jesus. But Jesus used Satan’s intention to ultimately strengthen their faith and specifically Peter’s faith, leading him to renew his commitment to and reliance on Jesus.
5. When Satan attempts to destroy us or our relationship with Christ, Jesus, the Son of God, intercedes for us with God His Father.