

Sunday Morning Message

February 19, 2023

Title – *The Garden*

Text – John 18:1 - 14

Congregational Reading – John 18:4 - 6

Introduction

We have concluded our study of “The Upper Room Discourse” where Jesus prepared His disciples for life and ministry without Him physically being present with them. After Jesus is crucified and risen, He will shortly thereafter ascend back into Heaven, and He will not return until He comes back to set up His Kingdom. In the hours preceding His betrayal, Jesus spent a great deal of time getting the disciples ready for what would be in their future. They would now need to rely on the Holy Spirit of God to guide them; and they would also need the love and support of each other if they were going to survive in the dark and difficult days that were ahead of them. Jesus concluded this discourse by praying for these disciples and us as well, with his famous “High Priestly Prayer.”

In today’s passage we will see the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, which will start the chain of events leading up to the crucifixion.

Chronological Order of Events from this text and the other three gospel accounts:

Though typically in our study of John, we have resisted comparing with the other Gospels, in this case because it is basically an historical narrative, we will examine the other texts and John in their proper order:

"When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples." - (John 18:1)

Note – John does not include the prayer that Jesus made in the Garden.

"And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers

from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons." - (John 18:2 - 3)

"47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. 49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. 50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?"
(Matthew 26:47-50a)

"But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" - (Luke 22:48)

"4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. 10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus."
(John 18:4-10)

"And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him." - (Luke 22:51)

"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" - (John 18:11)

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" -
(Matthew 26:52 - 53)

"Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,"
- (John 18:12)

"But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end." - (Matthew 26:56 - 58)

"13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. 14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people." (John 18:13-14)

Note – this was referenced back in John 11:

"49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." (John 11:49-50)

The final note regarding this post-Garden procession is that there was a young man there who was following them:

"And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." - (Mark 14:51 - 52)

Note – Many believe that this is a reference to a young John Mark.

Transition

In this account of Jesus' arrest, I would like to develop three thoughts that we can apply to our own lives today.

- I. **The Duplicity of a Friend** – Jesus called him "friend" (John 18:1 – Luke 22:48 on chronological list above)

Nothing hurts quite like the betrayal of a friend.

"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." - (Psalm 41:9)

"For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." - (Psalm 55:12-14)

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." - (2 Timothy 4:10)

Yet – Jesus still called him friend. He was willing to forgive Judas. He was still willing to be a friend to Judas, even though Judas wasn't being a friend to him.

II. A Demonstration of Power (John 18:4 – Matthew 26:53 on chronological list above)

Note that true power does not have to prove itself. Jesus demonstrated more power in His restraint of power, than He would have with action.

A. The Power of the Word

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." - (Hebrews 4:12)

B. The Power of Authority

Jesus said that He could call down more than twelve legions of angels. A legion consisted of over 6100 footmen, and 726 horsemen - 6826 altogether. Jesus said that He could call down over 81,912 angels to fight this battle, but instead yielded to the will of God.

Many times, it is best for you not to resist. Sometimes it is God's will for you to go through what you are going through.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." - (Matthew 5:38-42)

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." - (Romans 12:18-21)

III. The Distancing of the Disciples (John 18:12 – Mark 14:52 on chronological list above)

The disciples run for cover. Peter follows afar off.

There will be times in your life when your friends will distance themselves from you.

It could happen when you blow it.

It could happen when you are forced to make an unpopular decision.

Conclusion

In life as well as in the ministry, there will be times when a friend will stab you in the back. When that happens, the best way to demonstrate your power and authority is by using the Word of God and letting God take care of the situation. Defending yourself and seeking vengeance are really demonstrations of weakness and insecurity. Oftentimes, when the attacks come, even your close friends will distance themselves from you, and some may even abandon you. Don't lose heart. Continue to love them and stay faithful to the mission. Eventually, God will turn the tables around.

By the way, if we would be completely honest, we would have to admit that there have been times when we have betrayed our friends as well, even those that we love dearly.