

October 22nd, 2017

"THE GOD WHO WOULD BE ARRESTED THAT WE WOULD BE SET FREE

John 18:1-12

As Jesus leaves Jerusalem with His disciples and enters the Garden of Gethsemane, we must allow two critical truths to penetrate our minds. The first truth is that all these events are both true historical events and symbolic signs of something deeper. They are historical in that every thing the Scripture records about what happened Jesus Christ actually happened in the exact way it records. Jesus Christ was arrested. Jesus Christ was tried. Jesus Christ was crucified. Jesus Christ did rise from the death. These historical facts are the epicenter of all history and the most certain things that you will ever hear.

However these historical events are also signs of something much deeper. *There are invisible realities that we cannot see or know unless God makes them visible by some physical representation.* This shouldn't surprise us. The book of John is a book of signs. After Jesus turned the water into wine in John 2, v.11 says "This, the first of his *signs*, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him." Jesus performed miracles that were signs showing the world who He really is. And these events are also highly symbolic. B.F. Westcott says

"John fixes the attention of the reader upon ideas which the several events bring out and illustrate. The Passion and Resurrection are for him revelations of the Person of Christ. The objective fact is a "sign" of something which lies deeper...It is...like the rest of the Gospel, an interpretation of the inner meaning of the history which it contains."¹

F.W. Krummacher says

¹ quoted in John MacArthur's *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 304-305

“[Jesus] being taken prisoner, His being brought before the bar of judgment, His condemnation by the Sanhedrin, and His passage to the cross, are only symbolical representations of infinitely more exalted events...He who is unable to regard the individual scenes of our Lord’s passion from this point of view does not penetrate through them, and will never find his way in the labyrinth of the history of our Savior’s sufferings.”²

Jesus Himself describes these events with very symbolic language. Look at v. 11. He asks “...shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?” Jesus describes *these events* as the cup of wrath given to Him from His Father. Dear congregation, how can we see the anger of the invisible God poured out against the invisible soul of Jesus Christ? We can’t. But we must. If God would have secretly punished the Son on behalf of sinners, His righteous anger and His abundant mercy would be hidden from us. The cross is the most terrible and most wonderful display of God conceivable. He gave us all of these events so that we could see behind the veil with spiritual eyes. That is the first truth: all of these events are both historical and symbolic. God wants His unseen wrath and His unseen love to be seen, so He appointed Jesus to be a spectacle before the whole universe.

The second truth as we approach Gethsemane is that Jesus is absolutely in control. Judas was not in control. The Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling assembly) was not in control. Rome was not in control. Jesus was not a victim. That is one of the most destructive views of the gospel of Jesus Christ that exists: that the cross was a horrible, horrible mistake. That it was never God’s intention to have His Son slain. But rather it was perpetrated by evil men, and God absolutely hated it. This view is not the view of the Bible. **Acts 2:23** says “this Jesus, [was] delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,” Jesus Christ came to planet earth not to live a long and prosperous

² F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 119. Krummacher goes on to say “We see in every single stage of our Savior’s passion, some particular part of the salvation He accomplished brought before us in a clear and obvious light.” *ibid*, pg. 117

life. He did not come to be *merely* a moral example. Jesus Christ came for one main reason: to die in the place of rebellious sinners like you and me. "...The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all...it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief;" (**Isaiah 53:6, 10**) This was always God's plan. So as Jesus walks into the garden in John 18, He is entering as the God-man who has full and unmitigated authority over every single detail. v.4 says "Then Jesus, *knowing all* that would happen to him, *came forward*."

So as we approach this text, I am fully aware that there are only two types of people in this room. Those who are being sanctified, and those who need to be saved. And this passage is a sign to both of you. If you are being sanctified, behold what manner of love Christ has poured out upon you! Jesus as a conquering hero charges into the garden of suffering, ready to be arrested, ready to command the Roman army to release you, ready to tell you to put down your sword. The wrath of God is not for you to bear. He Himself has already bore it for you. His life for yours.

And if you are not saved, behold the terrible warning that this passage presents. Jesus simply has to speak "I AM" and you will fall on your face in terror one day. You are not in control. Your weapons, your finances, your good standing in society, your job, your family, NOTHING can protect you from the One who will call you to account. There is a cup of wrath to be drank. If Jesus doesn't drink it for you, you will have to drink it yourself.

Dear congregation, this is your God. Jesus Christ is the God who would be arrested that we would be set free.

The Big Idea...

Jesus Christ was arrested so you could be set free, so surrender your heart,
your life, your all to Him

☆ The Two Scandals in Arresting God

☆ The Two Designs in Arresting God

I. The Two Scandals in Arresting God

The set-up

Before we look at these two scandals, let's understand our context. **v.1** "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered." So imagine the scene. There's a full moon out. We know that because there is always one at Passover (a delicious irony that Jesus is captured on this night).³ Jesus leads His disciples over this brook in the Kidron Valley which is just east of Jerusalem. There is a garden there, and the disciples were used to Jesus taking them there. It was one of Jesus' prayer closets. Now there are so many details that take place in the garden which the other gospels fill in. We see Jesus and His disciples singing. (**Matthew 26:30**). How unbelievable is that? Jesus singing on the way to His slaughter. Jesus obeyed the command perfectly "Rejoice in the Lord always" (**Phil. 4:4**) Within minutes He is sweating blood and praying in agony "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me." (**Luke 22:42**) What are his disciples doing? Sleeping. They were called to watch and pray with Him, and they failed. What a picture of us. They had willing spirits but weak flesh.

John leaves all these details out, because He has a different point to make. Look at **v.2** "Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples." So here's the question: Why would Jesus go to that garden? Out of all the places He could have gone in Jerusalem, why

³ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), pg. 577

Gethsemane? Because Jesus knew Judas would look for Him there.⁴ Jesus went to the one place the betrayer could count on finding him.⁵

The bodyguard of Satan

Let's look at this bodyguard of Satan that accompanies Judas. v.3 says "So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons." The Romans had a greater presence during Passover week because of the thousands of Jews that came to celebrate, and there was always a chance of insurrection. So this band of soldiers that accompanies Judas are Romans. And although we don't know the exact number, R.C. Sproul points out that this detachment of soldiers on paper numbered one thousand men.⁶ The text doesn't specify but **Matthew 26:47** says it was a "great crowd." The soldiers represented the hired thugs. People who are seduced by the glamor and glitter of this world, who unthinkingly go along opposing Jesus. "Why are you opposing Jesus?" "Because that is what everybody else is doing." But there were also some officers from the chief priests. The chief priests hated Christ. Jesus constantly undermined their power over the masses. He relentlessly taught that their white-washed religion was nothing, and they were no better than the Samaritans and sinners they despised. There were also representatives

⁴ John MacArthur gives other compelling reasons why Jesus left Jerusalem: "The Lord had another reason for choosing this specific place to allow His enemies to seize Him. Jerusalem was teeming with pilgrims, many of whom had fervently hailed Him as the Messiah just a few days earlier. His arrest could have sparked an insurrection by the passionately nationalistic crowds. That is exactly what the Jewish leaders feared would happen, hence "they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him. But they were saying, 'Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people.'" Neither did Jesus want to be a catalyst for a revolt of the populace, since He did not come as a military conqueror seeking to overthrow the Romans—He came to die as a sacrifice for sin. Further, the disciple may well have been killed in the ensuing male, and the Lord wanted to protect them." John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 304-305

⁵ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), pg. 577

⁶ R.C. Sproul, *St. Andrew's Expository Commentary, John*, (Orlando, FL.,: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), pg. 338

of the Pharisees. These were the champions of self-righteousness, teaching that observance to the law is what justified one before God. A Pharisee in our day is anybody who thinks that they are a pretty good person. Pharisees are people who think they don't need Jesus. Pharisees hate Jesus, they reject Jesus because Jesus constantly taught that unless you are born again, unless you are given grace, all your best deeds will only accuse you before a holy God.

This was the group that came armed with weapons and torches seeking to arrest God: the betrayer Judas, the Roman mercenaries, the power hungry priests, and the self-promoting Pharisees. And so we arrive to our first scandal.

1. The scandal of created men seeking to murder the God that made them

The arrogance of man is perhaps not seen any clearer than right here. Who do you think *you are* opposing the Son of God? If these men were not convinced that Jesus was God, they soon would be when they fell flat on their backs. What explains this mindless opposition?⁷ It certainly can't be what the world says. The world believes in the basic goodness of humanity—that given the right circumstances, and perhaps the right opportunities, man will choose right. But what were the circumstances that attended this? What did Jesus do? He healed the sick, He raised the dead, He taught people the way to eternal life. He committed no crimes. Why did these blood thirsty men come after Him?

⁷ Calvin speaks here about being given over to a reprobate mind: "Hence it appears what is the powerful effect of that blindness with which God strikes the minds of wicked men, and how dreadful is their stupidity, when, by a just judgment of God, they have been bewitched by Satan. Oxen and asses, if they fall, are touched with some kind of feeling; but those men, after having had an open display of the divine power of Christ, proceed as fearlessly as if they had not perceived in him even the shadow of a man; nay, Judas himself remains unmoved. Let us learn, therefore, to fear the judgment of God, by which the reprobate, delivered into the hands of Satan, become more stupid than brute beasts. Nor can it be doubted that Satan hurried them on, with wild fury, to such a desperate hardihood; for there is no insanity that drives a man with such violence as this kind of blindness; Wicked men, after having been *given over to a reprobate mind*, ([Romans 1:28](#).) care no more about rushing against God than if they had only to do with a fly. They feel his power, indeed, but not so as to be disposed to obey; for sooner will they be broken a hundred times than they will yield. In short, their malice is a veil to hinder them from observing the light of God; their obstinacy renders them harder than stones, so that they never suffer themselves to be subdued." Calvin's Commentaries Vol. XVIII, (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 192-193

Because His main message was this: “unless you repent, you will perish” (**Luke 13:3**) You are not good. “No one is good except God alone” (**Mark 10:18**) “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (**John 14:6**) That message causes the world to revolt. And thus the second-greatest scandal is born. The scandal of created men seeking to murder the God that made them.

2. The scandal of a righteous God planning the death of His innocent Son

I say second greatest scandal, because there is one greater: *the scandal of a righteous God planning the death of His innocent Son*. Hugh Martin, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland in the 19th century asked “In view of the personal innocence of Jesus, how can it possible comport with the righteousness of God that he should load his Messiah with the...reproach and the...retribution of guilt”⁸ from the cross? Righteous judges don’t punish innocent people. Nor do righteous judges plan for the death of innocent people. But God planned these events. **Acts 2:23** “this Jesus, [was] delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” But not only did God punish and plan for the death of His Son, He gave the power for men to do it. Jesus told Pilate “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above” (**John 19:11**). The righteous God planned, gave the power necessary for, and partook in punishing His innocent Son Jesus Christ. There is no greater scandal than this.

How do we explain this? Why did the righteous God punish His innocent Son as a judge punishes the worst of criminals?⁹ Because the Father and Son

⁸ Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth, Reprint 2016), pg. 94

⁹ “The doctrine which thus at once vindicates the personal innocence of Jesus and the public righteousness of God, and transforms the scandal into glory, and the shame into moral loveliness, is the suretyship and substitution of Jesus in the room of his people, with the imputation to him, thereon, of his people’s transgressions.” Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth, Reprint 2016), pg. 96

agreed¹⁰ that Jesus would stand in the place of sinners. That *all the sins of all God's people for all time* would be imputed to Jesus. Meaning Jesus became the greatest sinner the world has ever known, by imputation. Not because He committed any sins. No, Jesus was and is and will always be the pure white Lamb of God. But rather because all our sins were reckoned to His account. **2 Cor. 5:21** “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Beloved, God made Jesus legally responsible for all your sins. This is the doctrine of *penal substitution*. Penal meaning “inflicting punishment.” Substitution meaning “putting one person in the place of another.”¹¹ Jesus was punished in your place. The greatest scandal is the greatest glory. That is what is on display in this text. The scandal and glory of your sins being imputed to the innocent Son of God.

II. The Two Designs in Arresting God

There are two designs or purposes in Jesus' arrest. They are seen in the the two times Jesus speaks to this crowd. The first design (v.4-6) of Jesus arrest is to display His absolute obedience to the Father. The second design (v.7-11) of Jesus arrest is to display His absolute rescue of His people.

1. The first design: Jesus' absolute obedience to the Father (v.4-6)

Look at v.4 “Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” Two things to note here. First notice that Jesus is the one who takes the initiative. He's not waiting for them to speak. He “came forward” v.4 says. They aren't the one's doing the questioning,

¹⁰ In the covenant of redemption—Jesus underwent the sufferings of the cross as a result of His Father's counsel. F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 122

¹¹ Both definitions from Webster's 1828 Dictionary online

He is. “Whom do you seek?” They were not capturing Jesus. Any god who can be captured is not God. Jesus is surrendering Himself.

Secondly, notice that v.4 says “Then Jesus, *knowing all* that would happen to him *came forward*.” This should immediately make us consider the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (**Eph. 3:19**) Jesus surrendered Himself to all the consequences of crucifixion in our stead. There is no greater love than this. **John 15:13** “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” But there is something deeper here than Jesus’ love.

v.4 says Jesus knew all that would happen. *Then* He “came forward.” Jesus *came forward* because He could not be a “passive sufferer or a victim.”¹² He could not be caught off guard, or go unwillingly, or incognito. His obedience to the Father required absolute voluntarism.¹³ Jesus was not *merely* the lamb that was led to the slaughter (**Isaiah 53:7**); He is our great high priest who Himself must offer the sacrifice. **John 10:18** “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

So what happens? Look at v.5-6 “They answered him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am he.’ Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.” By now you should recognize this “I am” language.¹⁴ Jesus is not merely the suffering Lamb, but He is the roaring Lion. What an amazing contrast in this passage! Jesus is willingly putting Himself forward as a sacrifice, but lest anyone forget His Divine status—He speaks the words that belong to God alone—*egō eimi* “I AM WHO I AM.” And when He spoke those words, the large crowd with all their weapons involuntarily lost all strength and fell backwards to the ground. This is not *merely* a display of omnipotent power. It

¹² Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth, Reprint 2016), pg. 102

¹³ “Jesus offers up his life in obedience to his Father, not as a pathetic martyr buffeted by the ill winds of a cruel fate. In full knowledge of what was to befall him.” D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), pg. 577-578

¹⁴ The word “he” is added

is that. This is not merely a sign of the coming judgment when **2 Thessalonians 2:8** says that Jesus will kill the lawless one with the mere breath of His mouth. It is that. This is proof to the world that Jesus did not go to the cross through compulsion or weakness, but rather as a consequence of His own free determination.¹⁵ That is the first design seen in Jesus' arrest: He was voluntarily and absolutely in obedience to the Father. This was, as v.11 says, the cup the Father had given Him. Let's look to the second design.

2. The second design: Jesus' absolute rescue of His people (v.7-9)

Oh that small little space between v.6-7! The angry crowd lay there on the ground in the moonlight, and nothing could have prevented Jesus from "walking triumphantly over them."¹⁶ It was only by His Divine permission that they are able to get to their feet.¹⁷ When they do rise, shockingly, they don't run.¹⁸ And so Jesus takes the initiative again. There is no question who is in control. Look at v.7-8 "So he asked them again, 'Whom do you seek?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.'" Jesus wasn't suggesting that His disciples be set free, He was commanding it. He's saying 'My arrest, *means* their freedom. Those are my terms.'

Here is where it is important to see that this is not merely a historical event, but also *a sign* of something much deeper. The arrest of Jesus Christ

¹⁵ F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 124

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ Jesus "held his very captors in his power" Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth, Reprint 2016), pg. 109

¹⁸ "Now, mark in this the grievous hardness of their hearts: for, to prosecute a guilty purpose after the grace of God interposes obstacles and restraints, whether on the conscience secretly, or by obvious providences, argues that the hardening of the heart, and that following of an evil course greedily and with resolution, which points in the direction of judicial blindness and abandonment, and which approaches fast towards the sin which is unto death. Beware how you deal with such restraints; for the manner in which you deal with them discloses very much of your moral and spiritual state, and deeply and solemnly and very dangerously affects it." *ibid*, pg. 107

means the *actual purchasing* of His people's freedom. And this is seen more clearly when we consider v.8 and v.9 together.

v.8 "...if you seek me, let these men go";

v.9 "This was to fulfill the word [John 17:12] that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."

v.9 makes it clear Jesus is using symbolism in His speech. "I have lost not one" does not *simply* mean that the physical safety of the disciples was secured. In the book of Acts, all physical safety is lost.¹⁹ No. **Jesus is showing what is happening at the invisible level.**²⁰

There are two invisible realities in this passage. 1) As Jesus is voluntarily giving Himself over to these wicked men, that is, He is beginning to drink the cup the Father has given him (v.11). 2) As Jesus is voluntarily giving Himself over to these wicked men, He is securing salvation for all of His people such that none can be lost (v.9). Dear congregation, this is doctrine of definite atonement.

Definite atonement is definitely out of step with much of evangelicalism. But it is the doctrine of the reformers and all the great creeds and confessions throughout church history. The atonement considered by itself answers the question: "What did Jesus' death accomplish?" There are two views.

The first view—universal atonement—is the view that Jesus' death makes men *saveable*. Jesus died for all men such that they have an *opportunity* to be saved. His death didn't actually purchase salvation. It purchased a chance for men to be saved. Pardon is only available upon the condition of repentance and faith.

¹⁹ Nor do I understand this to mean that they would shipwreck their faith if they were arrested (an impossibility being God's elect—John 17:9; 6:37-40), but rather the deeper meaning is that in Jesus being arrested He was going to suffer the condemnation of God in the place of His disciples.

²⁰ D.A. Carson says here "In one sense, the disciples' safety is secured by Jesus' arrest and death. But this is not simply the substitution of physical safety for eternal salvation. Rather, it is a symbol of it, and illustration of it—more, it is the first step in securing the eschatological reality." D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), pg. 579

The second view—definite atonement—is the view that Jesus’ death actually secures salvation. Jesus did not purchase *a chance* for humans to be saved, He purchased actual humans. Jesus died for all whom the Father has given Him. Yes we must repent and believe the gospel, but that repentance and belief was purchased by Christ Himself. **Philippians 1:29** “...it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should...believe in him.”

Jesus is teaching us so clearly here that His arrest means the actual freedom of all His children. His death bore actual fruit. How dishonoring to the work of Christ is much of the preaching of the cross in our times. As Hugh Martin has said:

“How dishonoring to the work of Jesus! How dishonoring to the righteousness of God!...For if [Jesus] died for the lost, and yet his death did not secure them from being lost, it must be *something else* than his death that secure the saved unto salvation. So that if Jesus died for all alike, *it is not his death* that secures salvation of any, it only secures, it seems, the *possibility* of salvation to all!”²¹

When Jesus gives Himself these who arrest Him, His is snatching all His people out of their hands, so that (v.9) not one of them would be lost. Beloved, Jesus didn’t half way save you. And the rest of our text makes this plain.

The nature of this rescue: not by our works (v.10-11)

After Jesus demands the release of the disciples, the disciples became uneasy. In **Luke 22:49** we read “And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” Peter doesn’t even wait for an answer. Look at v.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.)” Apparently Peter was swinging for the Malchus’ head, but missed and merely took off his ear. Why did Peter do this? What’s

²¹ Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth, Reprint 2016), pg. 111

driving his heart? No doubt Peter loved Jesus. Did Peter unleash his sword because He though his beloved Master was in danger? No. **Jesus was not in danger.** He just said two words and this large crowd of perhaps hundreds fell to the ground.

No Peter swung his sword to save his own honor.²² Earlier this very night, Peter had told the Lord that even if everybody else fell away, he would never fall away (**Matthew 26:33**). Jesus responded by saying Peter would deny Him three times. This was fresh in Peter's mind, so no doubt he was anxious to show his bravery. He was anxious to show His Master that he was as good and able and he claimed to be.²³

Peter swinging his sword was indicative of something much deeper.²⁴ D. A. Carson says "Peter's bravery is not only useless, it is a denial of the work to which Jesus has just consecrated himself."²⁵ Peter is trying to help Jesus save him. He's trying to prove that he's not as helpless, not as untrustworthy, not as dirty as Jesus said he was. Dear congregation, this is us. All of us strive to prove, that we are brave enough, we are strong enough, we are a cut above the rest. "Jesus I'm different than the others. Others may fall away, but I'm strong. Look at me. Your team is stronger because I'm on it."

And to foolishness Jesus offers a strong rebuke. v.11 "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" Jesus is

²² F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 134

²³ If Peter had been truly sincere, he would have waited for Jesus to respond to the question "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"

²⁴ When Peter "...smites with the sword [it is] directed against the very ground and basis of the world's salvation."F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 133

²⁵ D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary, The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), pg. 579

saying ‘Peter you cannot drink this cup.’²⁶ Don’t you see that you are the problem? Dear congregation, don’t you see that you are the problem? ‘This cup is the cup of your guilt. This cup is the entire curse of the law that you earned. The horrors of hell and the sufferings of both body and soul that you deserve. This cup contains the full abandonment and damnation God Himself.’ How are you going to help Jesus with that? Jesus doesn’t require your help. Jesus doesn’t half-way save you. He’s not a half-way Savior. ‘Peter I don’t need your help, you need mine. Believe I don’t need your help, you need mine. And I give it to you freely, graciously, lovingly, eternally. This is the second design in Christ being arrested—to show us that when Jesus was handed over to death, we were instantly handed over to life.

Application

Our Doctrine: There is no greater wrath displayed than in the cup that Jesus drank

Jonathan Edwards wrote a book entitled *A History of the Work of Redemption*. In it, Edwards wrestled with how the OT seems to display greater manifestations of God’s wrath than the NT. You have the worldwide flood killing billions of people in Genesis 7. You have the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by sulfur and brimstone raining from heaven in Genesis 19. You have the angel of

²⁶ I admit that Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 20:23 “You will drink my cup.” However there is an infinitely different quality to this cup. Just as we are to share in the sufferings of Christ—Phil. 3:10, we recognize that our sufferings are not the same sufferings. Likewise the disciples drinking Jesus’ cup meant that they would die a martyr’s death. However they would die the death that atones for sinners like Jesus did. As Krummacher says here “Heaven must fall, the order of the divine government be annihilated, and Christianity be forever destroyed, if the Holy Scriptures compel us to regard the cup which Jesus drank, as essentially the same as that of which Job, Jeremiah, Paul, and many others partook. Jesus’ cup contained something far more dreadful.” F.W. Krummacher, *The Suffering Savior*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), pg. 112

death killing the firstborn children in Egypt in Exodus 12. Yet Edwards asks, where do you see great these great manifestations of God's wrath in the NT? This is how he answered:

“Under the Old Testament there was much more need of some extraordinary, visible, and sensible manifestation of God's wrath against sin **than** in the days of the gospel...since the awful justice of God against the sins of men has been so wonderfully displayed in the sufferings of Christ.”²⁷

In other words, Edwards is saying that the NT has the greatest display of God's wrath towards sin.²⁸ There is no greater display of the wrath of God towards sin than when Jesus went to the cross. John's gospel spends nearly half of it's time, nine chapters (9-20) unfolding passion week. God made His invisible wrath visible in the cross of Christ so that you would feel your need for redeeming mercy. God's vengeance is unavoidable. If the Son has not set you free, you are still in the gravest danger.

That's our **doctrine**: There is no greater wrath displayed than in the cup that Jesus drank

Our Duty: Surrender and sheath your sword

Let me speak to you are have not closed with Jesus Christ yet. “This account in the garden proves not merely that Christianity is reasonable, but that in the face of the breathtaking reality of life and death and the certain judgment of God,

²⁷ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 1*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 545

²⁸ “Underscoring the crucial importance of Christ's death, the Gospels devote about one-fifth of their material to the last few days of His life. John devotes nine chapters (12-20)—nearly half of his account of Christ's life—to the events of Passion Week.” John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, John 12-21*, (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 304

nothing else is reasonable. Dear **unbeliever**, everything in this life: your family, your culture, your job, your bank account will fail you. Your only hope and peace is to be found in the crucified Christ.²⁹ Consider how tender Jesus Christ is in this passage.

Jesus takes notice of the servant named Malchus. In Luke's gospel, we read that Jesus "...touched the man's ear and healed him." (**Luke 22:51**) The last miracle before Jesus died, he performed on an enemy. The loving compassionate Christ heals one of the men sent to destroy Him.

And it's not just any man, it was a servant—a slave. Jesus is no respecter of persons. It makes no difference to Jesus whether you are of a high reputation or are lowly and forgotten. Jesus sees you.

And he sees you specifically. This account goes to the trouble of naming the servant—Malchus. Why is this important? Because Jesus Christ knows your name dear unbeliever. He sees everything about you. He sees all your secret sins, all your corrupt thoughts, all your future wickedness, and He's calling you to repentance.

What does that look like? Surrender. Sheath the sword of your own self-effort. You cannot bear to drink God's wrath. Your sin is far, far worse than you can imagine. Stop pretending to be ok.

Listen "If you knew how bad I really was, you wouldn't listen to me...and if I knew how bad you really were I wouldn't preach to you."³⁰

But Jesus Christ sees how bad you are, and still invites you to Himself. Jesus said "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." (**John 5:24**)

²⁹ Paraphrased from Iain Murray's *D. Martyn Lloyd Jones: The First Forty Years, 1899-1939* (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2012), pg. 136

³⁰ Allister Begg quoting another preacher

Our Delight: The God-man was arrested so you are now free

Dear believer, what Jesus did in this passage means that you never have to hide from God. When the death warrant came for your arrest, Jesus stood in your stead and said “if you seek Me, let him go.”

He was arrested so that you could be set free.

He was judged so you could be acquitted.

Jesus didn't free you because of your performance. You are just like the disciples. At every point in their garden experience they failed. They slept when their Master told them to pray. They swung their sword when Jesus said to sheath it. That's you. You have failed Christ.

But that is what Jesus took in the cup: your failures, your sin. That is the cup He drank—the entire curse of the Law.

And He doesn't require your help. Just as Jesus told Peter to put away his sword, so He tells you—put away your self-reliance. Put away all doubt. Put away all fear. I obeyed God's law for you. I was punished on the cross for you. Go your way in peace. You are no longer hunted with terror.

“Go as the free child of the Highest, an heir of His house and of His heavenly land for ever. Go; and the shield of your Savior's defense be ever round thee! God they way, and walk in it undefiled. Go, and sin no more. Go on your way rejoicing.”³¹

If the Son has set you free, you are free indeed.

³¹ Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth, Reprint 2016), pg. 116