

The Time Has Come

John 18:1-14, 19-24

Early in his ministry Jesus often tells his disciples and those whom he heals to keep quiet. For example, the healing of the leper in,

Mark 1:41 “Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” 42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. 43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.” 45 However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.”

That seems strange, since you would think that the priority would always be the proclamation of the gospel. Telling people about Jesus. But Jesus knew that as soon as he was fully made known publicly, there would be much greater opposition. And he knew that his time has not yet come. The reason for Jesus’ requirement to keep quiet was obvious.

John 7:1 “After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. 2 Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” 5 For even His brothers did not believe in Him. 6 Then Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me

because I testify of it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.” 9 When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.”

“My time has not yet fully come.” That was then. But now, in our text this morning, the situation has changed. His time has come. He has come to the Garden of Gethsemane. He has already observed the last passover supper with his disciples. Here in John’s gospel, we’ve been studying his extended final discourse with those men as he prepared them for his death and departure. And now the time has come to offer his life as the sacrifice for our sins.

But first, his betrayal.

I. JESUS IS BETRAYED BY JUDAS.

Judas had already left the band of the disciples, as we studied in,

John 13:21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” 22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. 25 Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?” 26 Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.” And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 27 Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.” 28 But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. 29 For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, “Buy those things we need for the feast,” or that he should give

something to the poor. 30 Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.”

So now Judas returns.

v.1-2

Notice the depth of his wickedness. Judas came to betray his master. He came to hand him over to the authorities, arriving with the Roman soldiers and the leaders of the Pharisees.

v.3

Judas was one of them! He stood among them, according to the end of verse 5. He was their ally, the informant who led them to Jesus to be arrested. But how did Judas know where to find Jesus in the middle of that night? Well, he knew Jesus’ habits. He knew that it was Jesus’ custom to be in that garden, praying.

v.2

What horrible wickedness there is in that. He betrayed Jesus at the place set apart for communion with God. It was the place Jesus’ prayed! J.C. Ryle notes “that the heart of Judas must have been desperately hard, when, after so many seasons of spiritual refreshment as he must have seen in this garden, he could use his knowledge for the purpose of betraying his Master. He ‘knew the place’...from spiritual associations, and yet turned his knowledge to wicked ends!”

And he came with a detachment of troops, perhaps from the actual words, a Roman cohort, a battalion of 600 men! A tenth of a legion. Those troops, of course, belonged to the governor, Pontius Pilate, and they were loaned to the high priests for his occasion. They were the armies of this world, and they carried the weapons of this world. And yet, the emphasis here is that,

A. Jesus’ authority is evident despite the wickedness of Judas.

Notice a few things here. First of all,

v.4

It’s stated pretty matter-of-factly. But the obvious reality is important. Jesus knew “all things that would come upon Him.” He never lost his omniscient, his knowledge of all things. He never lost any of those attributes of his deity. He knew everything that would happen, which, of course, intensified the grief he felt as he prayed in that garden, recorded in the other gospels.

Mat. 26:36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.” 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. 38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

In that sorrow, in that consciousness of all that would happen to him, he shows forth his deity. And, thus, his authority as God over all these circumstances.

Notice another verse that seems to get hidden in here,

v.5-6

When Jesus identified himself freely, “they drew back and fell to the ground.”

Ryle comments, “It was a miracle purposely wrought at this juncture, in order to show the disciples and their enemies that our Lord was not taken because He could not help it, or crucified because He could not prevent it; but because He was willing to suffer and die for sinners...The effect of the miraculous influence put forth by our Lord, seems to have been that the party who

came to seize him were for a little time struck down to the ground, like men struck down, but not killed, by lightning, and rendered so helpless that our Lord and His disciples might easily have escaped...That it also made the whole party of Judas without excuse, is equally clear. They could never say they had no evidence of our Lord's divine power. They had felt it in their own persons."

Then, with a continued emphasis upon Jesus, we see that,

B. Jesus' faithfulness to his sheep is evident despite his betrayal.

Judas betrayed him. But he remained ever faithful to the work his father gave him on behalf of his sheep.

v.7-9

We saw that same idea of protection for the disciples in Jesus' prayer in,

John 17:12 "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

Jesus is faithful, and the Scripture is always fulfilled. That's a very edifying and encouraging reminder, even in the context of this most treacherous betrayal by the son of perdition. With one additional point here about the way in which Jesus conducted himself when he was betrayed. Simply put, humble submission. And the contrast is with Peter.

C. Jesus' humble submission is evident despite the actions of Peter.

Here is Peter, doing what Peter does. Namely, taking matters into his own hands, without much thought or wisdom. His actions are pretty obvious. He's going to defend Jesus with his sword.

v.10

What a foolish thought it was to defend Jesus, and even more foolish, to do it with a sword. We can assume that Peter was aiming for the head of Malchus, and when he ducked out of the way, the sword grazed over his ear, cutting it off.

Now, on a human level, it was a good thing for Peter that he missed, and it was a good thing that Jesus repaired the damage, so to speak, by performing his final bodily miracle of healing when he touched the ear and healed the man, as Luke tells us in Luke 22:51. For if Peter had killed Malchus, you can only imagine the opposition and persecution, not to mention appropriate prosecution, that would come upon Peter and the other apostles.

But that was not to be, because it was not God's purpose. It was not God's eternal, predetermined plan and the foreordained counsel of his will.

v.11

Jesus is so clear, so determined to obey. Having gone through the struggle of prayer in that garden just hours before, he learned obedience by his perfect and sinless submission to the will and purpose of his father in heaven. He would drink the cup his father had given him. As he prayed,

Mat. 26:42 "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

Here is the fuller record of Jesus' rebuke to Peter,

Mat. 26:52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

A legion is estimated at about 5000 soldiers. Twelve legions computes to about 60,000. So there is Peter, brashly brandishing his sword to protect the one who could summon 60,000 angels by his own authority as God! Pretty foolish, isn't it?

But again, my emphasis is upon Jesus. His humble submission. He knew what his father would have him to do. And he freely, willingly, submitted to that purpose.

I should not that Peter eventually understood God's purpose also, for remember what he preached to the Jews at Pentecost:

Acts 2:22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- 23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it."

This is the preeminent example of how God can ordain the certainty of events that are carried out as sinful acts by sinful men. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the central event in all of God's predetermined counsel. And it was a sinful act for which sinful men shall bear responsibility, even unto the condemnation of their souls in the fires of hell for all eternity. Thus was the destiny of Judas.

Secondly, as we study Jesus as the time came for him to lay down his life, we see that,

II. JESUS DEFENDS HIMSELF BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST.

It's a very obvious defense. Jesus declares his innocence.

v.12-14

This was a mockery of a trial, a complete mockery of justice. There was nothing even remotely representing justice and righteousness in these affairs. And there was little left of the office of high priest, which according to OT regulations would have been a lifetime assignment for a particular man. It seems now that the high priest rotates every year, and in this case, the position is passed from father-in-law to son-in-law, giving every appearance of impropriety and nepotism, politics at its worst.

And they seemed to intentionally ignored all the evidence so as to find him guilty. Again in Ryle's words, "The object of the Jews in bringing our Lord before the high priest and the Sanhedrin first, is very plain. They wished to convict him of heresy and blasphemy, and then after that to denounce Him to the Romans."

And they had the right man in power to bring that about. According to William Hendricksen, Annas "was very proud, exceedingly ambitious, and fabulously wealthy. his family was notorious for its greed. The main source of his wealth seems to have been a goodly share of the proceeds from the price of sacrificial animals, which were sold in the Court of the Gentiles...By him the house of prayer had been turned into a den of robbers."

Look how John describes the situation further. It is Jesus declaration of,

A. The innocence of an open and public ministry.

v.19-21

What a great defense! Don't you wish all our current

politicians would campaign upon that same platform. Just look at the public record! Jesus said, “Everything I have taught, I have taught publicly.” “Everything I have taught is a matter of the public record.” There were no secrets. And, of course, there was nothing in that public record which would be able to condemn Jesus of heresy!

But the court was not interested in evidence and the objective fairness of due process. Instead, Jesus proclaimed his,

B. Innocence is the presence of unspeakable hypocrisy.
v.22-24

Again, the emphasis, the glory, falls upon Jesus. Instead of responding as he was treated, he turned the other cheek, with a courageous and unflinching declaration of innocence. Thus, the wickedness of the actions of his accusers only served to magnify the free and voluntary willingness of Jesus to lay down his life for the sins of his people, according to the will of his father in heaven.

Now, please don't simply think, “How wicked those people were.” Don't just sit there and merely think thoughts of condemnation which would justly fall upon both Judas and Annas and Caiaphas. Do not think to yourself, “God, I thank you that I am not like that.”

Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. It was the Pharisee who prayed, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men.” And it was that Pharisee who was condemned.

Instead, as you study the wickedness of Judas, and the hypocrisy of Annas and Caiaphas, as you observe the wickedness and hypocrisy of men today, pray with that tax collector, who we are told in Luke 18:13 was “standing afar off, [and] would not so

much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”

There is no room for self-righteous pride in the life of a Christian, though that temptation comes upon frequently. There is no excuse for a man to look upon a wicked sinner, and fail to say to himself, “There, but for the grace of God, am I.”

The point of all of this is not so that we can exercise our judgment against the Annas and Caiaphas. The point is not so that we can bewail the injustices done to Jesus, nor clearly not to rebel against the wickedness of those authorities who would put Jesus to death. Because it was God's purpose for Jesus to die.

At the same that Jesus was betrayed and “taken by lawless hands, ...crucified, and put to death.” he was “being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God.” As Joseph even understood upon his father Jacob's death, when he was badly oppressed by his brothers, he said to them, “you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good.”

Joseph's brothers had betrayed him, sold him into slavery and left him for dead. And they repented in the grief of this guilt.

Gen. 50:18 “Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we are your servants.” 19 Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. 21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”

So much more, do we understand the work of Jesus, when his time had come to drink the cup which his father had given him. A

cup of suffering, with humble submission to the will of his father, so well prophecies by the prophet Isaiah.

Is. 53:3 “He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. 9 And they made His grave with the wicked-- But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.”

It is he whom we worship this morning, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.