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Betrayed!

John 18.1-11

Series: Signs of Life

July 10, 2022

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I. Introduction

- A. This sermon is in honor of Dave Nesselroade
 - 1. No, there is no connection with the topic of the message which is “Betrayed!”
 - a. That is not at all what I had in mind
 - 2. The reason the sermon is in honor of Dave Nesselroade is that Dave Nesselroade loves **Alliteration**
 - 3. Preachers use alliteration when all of the points of a sermon start with the same letter
 - a. They often do it as a mnemonic device – to help people remember the points
 - 4. When Dr. Nesselroade preaches, more often than not, he uses alliteration for the points in his sermons
 - a. The favorite letter for preachers who use alliteration is the letter ‘p’
 - b. I don’t know why that’s the case; maybe it’s because so many significant theological concepts begin with the letter ‘p’
 - c. Like propitiation!
 - 5. But he loves alliteration
 - a. And he’s always loved alliteration
 - b. I’ve known Dave a long time
 - c. Our friendship goes back to Morgantown, WV
 - d. Where he was an elder in our church and our family doctor in the early 80’s before he and Julianne moved to Shell Point
 - e. He was a highly sought-after Bible teacher even in those days; and when he taught and when he preached there would be alliteration
 - f. In fact, he may have been the one to introduce me to alliteration
 - 6. So he loves alliteration; I don’t so much
 - a. That’s because when I work through a text of scripture and pull out the main points of a passage, they don’t usually reveal themselves with the same letter
 - b. So I don’t gravitate to the use of alliteration
- B. I made that point this past Wednesday night
 - 1. I was giving a devotional on Psalm 140
 - a. One of the great expositors of the Psalms was the great 19th Century English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon
 - b. His *Treasury of David* – a three volume exposition of the Psalms –

- is one of the great classics of devotional literature
2. In my preparation of that devotional I came across a sermon that Spurgeon had preached on Psalm 140
 - a. And by golly – there it was – alliteration!
 - b. Possession
 - c. Petition
 - d. Preservation
 - e. Protection
 - f. Praise
 3. I made the point that there’s an example of alliteration
 - a. And I also said that I’m not too enamored with alliteration and really don’t use that device to organize my sermons
- C. But then the very next day, when I was working through my sermon preparation
1. I was preparing my outline
 2. And I started listing the points that the text was giving me
 - a. And every point started with ‘p’
 3. So that’s what you’ll get today
 - a. A sermon using alliteration
 - b. Much to my dismay
 4. So the only thing I could do is to dedicate it to my friend Dave Nesselrode

II. **Text – Betrayed!**

- A. Last section of the Gospel of John – the passion week narrative
1. May seem like deja vu all over again (Yogi Berra)
 - a. We, not too long ago, went through passion week
 - b. Triumphal Entry – Palm Sunday
 - c. Good Friday
 - d. Easter Sunrise
 - e. Resurrection Sunday
 2. But here we are looking at the week again – in July!
 - a. Why?
 - b. Because we just finished up the Upper Room Discourse in John
 - c. And our study of the wonderful prayer of our Lord in John 17
 - d. And John 18 is the next chapter
 3. So here we go again!
- B. **John 18:1–11** (ESV) —
1. 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.
 2. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples.
 3. 3 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.

4. 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?”
5. 5 They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.
6. 6 When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.
7. 7 So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”
8. 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.”
9. 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.”
10. 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.)
11. 11 So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

C. Pray

III. **The Place**

- A. The first thing we notice about the betrayal of Jesus is The Place
 1. The place is a garden
- B. This is not just any garden
 1. We know it as the **Garden of Gethsemane**
 - a. And it’s very interesting that John would mention it
 - b. And it’s very interesting *how* John would mention it
- C. We know the Garden of Gethsemane as the place where Jesus struggled through the better part of the night in prayer with the Father
 1. Asking that the cup of the suffering that Jesus was about to drink could be taken from Him
 2. And yet we know that in the final analysis, Jesus knew that in order to fulfill His calling, and redeem a lost humanity, He had to drink that cup
 3. And so He told the Father, “Not my will, but Yours be done”
 4. And through the agony of that struggle He accepted the task
 5. And would drink the cup of the wrath of God that everyone who ever believes in Jesus deserved
- D. And John was there! He was at Gethsemane when Jesus struggled in prayer before the Father
 1. He was, in fact, one of the three Jesus took with Him, beyond where the other disciples were, to watch with Him in prayer
 2. And of course, he was one of the three that fell asleep!
- E. But what’s interesting about that – John is the only gospel writer who doesn’t include the prayers of Jesus in Gethsemane
- F. But Gethsemane is not only the place of Jesus struggle in prayer
 1. It is also the place of His betrayal
- G. This is significant – because of how gardens figure in redemptive history

1. It all started in a garden – the **Garden of Eden**
 - a. That was the first place of betrayal
 - b. The place where God had wonderfully provided a most perfect environment for the flourishing of the human race that had been created in His image
 - c. The place where Satan entered in the form of a serpent
 - d. The place where the temptation to transgress God’s probationary commandment – You shall not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
 - e. The place where Adam and Eve betrayed their creator
 2. Yet it was also the place where God put in action His plan of redemption
 - a. Promising that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent
 - b. And God sustained the human race
 - c. Putting humanity on a course where a redeemer would be provided
 3. That redeemer finds Himself in this garden – the Garden of Gethsemane
 - a. Having to face another temptation
 - b. But instead, He was victorious – accepted the will of the Father
 - c. And came out of the garden heading for the cross
- H. Arthur W. Pink: The contrasts between them (the two gardens) are indeed most striking.
1. In Eden, all was delightful; in Gethsemane, all was terrible.
 2. In Eden, Adam and Eve parleyed with Satan; in Gethsemane, the last Adam sought the face of His Father.
 3. In Eden, Adam sinned; in Gethsemane, the Savior suffered.
 4. In Eden, Adam fell; in Gethsemane, the Redeemer conquered.
 5. The conflict in Eden took place by day; the conflict in Gethsemane was waged at night.
 6. In the one, Adam fell before Satan; in the other, the soldiers fell before Christ.
 7. In Eden the [human] race was lost; in Gethsemane Christ announced, ‘Of them whom thou gavest me have I lost none.’
 8. In Eden, Adam took the fruit from Eve’s hand; in Gethsemane, Christ received the cup from His Father’s hand.
 9. In Eden, Adam hid himself; in Gethsemane, Christ boldly showed Himself.
 10. In Eden, God sought Adam; in Gethsemane, the last Adam sought God!
 11. From Eden Adam was ‘driven’; from Gethsemane Christ was ‘led.’
 12. In Eden the ‘sword’ was drawn (Genesis 3.24); in Gethsemane the ‘sword’ was sheathed (John 18.11).
- I. Pink is not the first nor the last to see the parallels and contrasts between the two gardens
1. The place of contest
 - a. Where good v. evil
 - b. God v. Satan

2. The place response
 - a. The fall of Adam
 - b. V. The triumph of Christ
3. The place of consequential result
 - a. The loss of the humanity – in which all those descended from Adam were lost
 - b. V. The redemption of humanity – in which not one of those given to Jesus was lost
- J. The place of betrayal was significant
 1. The place where a critical moment in redemptive history took place

IV. **The Person**

- A. **Judas Iscariot – The Betrayer**
 1. What can we say about Judas?
- B. On the surface he was indistinguishable from the other disciples
 1. He was with Jesus for the full three years of earthly ministry
 2. He was just as devoted to following Jesus as the other disciples
 3. He was trusted – as it turns out erroneously – to care for the finances of the disciples
 - a. Served as treasurer for the 1st Church of the Disciples
 4. He heard every sermon that Jesus ever preached
 5. He had a ringside seat to all of the miracles of Jesus
 6. When Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray Him, they all wondered who it was
 - a. And they all were distressed that it might be themselves
 - b. None of them said, “Oh of course, we know who it is. We never trusted that Judas guy!”
 - c. No! That it might be Judas never even entered their minds
 7. You can be as close to the Savior as anyone
 - a. You can go to the greatest seminary in the world – Judas studied with the Master Rabbi Himself!
 - b. You can be a member of the greatest church in the world – Judas was! The First Apostolic Church
 - c. You can be an officer in the greatest church in the world – even a treasurer
 - d. And you can still be lost
 8. All of those things are wonderful
 - a. But unless you trust Jesus Christ alone as your Savior
 - b. You could go the way of Judas
- C. Judas was the **Son of Destruction** Jesus said
 1. He alone of the disciples would be lost “that the Scripture might be fulfilled”
 2. This doesn’t mean that God put evil into the heart of an otherwise good man
 - a. Absolutely not!

3. Remember – Judas is a fallen human being
 - a. As Paul reminds us in Romans 3 – all have sinned; none is righteous – not one; no one seeks for God; all have turned aside
 - b. No one does good – not even one!
 4. God doesn't have to put evil into the heart of Judas
 - a. Evil is already there
 - b. God just has to let Judas do what Judas wants to do!
 5. But bottom line – Judas was never a believer
 - a. In spite of appearances – he did not entrust himself to Jesus
 6. That's the bottom line for you and me also
 - a. Unless God changes our hearts – we would be just like Judas, just as lost as Judas
 - b. As Paul says in Ephesians – we were dead in sins and trespasses
 - c. But God made us alive together with Christ!
 7. Unless God makes us alive spiritually, we would be just like Judas, the betrayer
- D. That's the person who betrayed
1. A religious person
 2. On the surface a Jesus follower
 3. A trusted member of the fellowship of disciples
 4. And yet, not a believer
 - a. Capable of delivering Jesus to His enemies
 - b. Capable of collaborating with evil to effect the crucifixion of our Savior

V. **The Posse**

- A. So there is the place of betrayal; there is the person who betrayed
 1. Now let's see the posse
 - a. That's the best 'p' word I could think of
 2. It's the group soldiers and religious officials commandeered to effect the arrest of Jesus
- B. The first thing we notice about this militia was that they came prepared for a fight
 1. Lanterns, torches, weapons
 - a. Doesn't say what kinds of weapons
 - b. Weapons – plural; probably swords and knives and spears as would be typical in that day
 - c. The “assault rifles” of their day
- C. Why would they come prepared for a fight?
 1. That's one of the curious things about this arrest
 2. What were they afraid of?
- D. One theory is that they were afraid of the people
 1. Jesus was fairly popular with the people
 - a. That's one of the reasons they sought to arrest Jesus at night, out of the public view
- E. They were afraid also of Jesus and the disciples leading an insurrection

1. So they came prepared
- F. But I think they were most afraid of Jesus Himself
 1. Many of them didn't just know about His miracles
 - a. They had witnessed them!
 2. Even the one most recently – raising Lazarus from the dead
 - a. If Jesus could raise the dead, why couldn't He do the opposite
 - b. Kill the raised?
 3. Of course, if Jesus had wanted to do that, all the weapons in the Roman arsenal wouldn't have been enough
- G. They had also remembered how Jesus had evaded previous attempts at capture
 1. John 7: The chief priests on one occasion had dispatched a posse of temple guards to go to Jesus and arrest him
 - a. After a while they bunch returned empty handed
 - b. "Why didn't you bring Him in?" They asked them
 - c. They replied, "No man ever spoke the way this man does"
 - d. Jesus' mere words repulsed His supposed captors
 2. John 8: A mob tried to stone Him
 - a. "But Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds"
 3. John 10: "Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp"
- H. It's likely the religious leaders thought Jesus was somehow untouchable
 1. That they couldn't arrest Him
 - a. So they had to bring out the local SWAT team
- I. Not only that, but the posse was in a hurry
 1. They had a limited amount of time to pull the trigger on their arrest
 2. Remember – the goal was to get Jesus arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced to death, crucified, and buried
 - a. And they had to do it before Passover
 - b. And there had to be two trials
 3. The first trial was the Jewish trial
 - a. And they had to do that at night – which was illegal to begin with
 4. And then they had to essentially drag Pontius Pilate out of bed early in the morning to conduct His trial
 - a. And they had to get Him sent to the place of execution
 - b. And He had to die; get taken down from the cross
 - c. And buried before sundown before the Passover Sabbath
- J. So they couldn't pussy foot around; they had to get the job done
 1. And they brought out the big guns to do it
- K. So there they were, led by the betrayer, Judas Iscariot
 1. Into the place of betrayal – the Garden of Gethsemane
 2. The posse playing their own role in this drama of betrayal

VI. **The Protagonist**

- A. And so they come
 1. And that's when they run into the protagonist
- B. Now you might think that the protagonist in this drama of betrayal was Judas

1. But that's not the case
2. The protagonist is Jesus
 - a. He's the main character
 - b. And as you'll see, He's the initiator of everything that takes place from here on out
 - c. I would have used the word "initiator" at this point, but it doesn't start with a 'p'
 - d. But protagonist does pretty well
 - e. That's what alliterative preachers have to do from time to time
- C. **John 18:4** (ESV) — 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"
 1. See, Jesus is the initiator – He's the protagonist
- D. Now see what happens
 1. **John 18:5** (ESV) — 5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he."
 2. Now the interesting thing is that Jesus really didn't say, "I am he"
 - a. That's just how the translator puts the Greek into English
 - b. But the word "he" is not in the original
 3. What Jesus really did say is, "I am"
 4. Now those of you who have been Christians for a while, or those of you who are Jewish, understand what He's saying
 - a. When Moses, at the burning bush, asks God to give him a name so when he goes to Egypt to lead the people, and they ask him who sent him, Moses says, "Whom shall I say sent me?"
 - b. God says, "tell them 'I am' sent you"
 - c. The Hebrew "I am" is a four character designation reserved only for God
 - d. Transliterated in English as Yahweh or as Jehovah (depending on if you grew up on the King James version or were raised on a newer translation)
 5. So Jesus asks, "Who are you looking for with your weapons and lanterns and torches?"
 - a. And they answer, "Jesus of Nazareth"
 - b. And He says, probably in Hebrew, "That's me – I'm Jehovah"
 - c. And that gets translated into the Greek as "I am"
- E. That explains what happens next
 1. **John 18:6** (ESV) — 6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.
 - a. They're stunned; they're in shock
 - b. It's as if they've been in an earthquake
 - c. "I am"? "Jehovah"? "Yahweh"?
 - d. Whoa!
 2. **John 18:7** (ESV) — 7 So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."
 3. **John 18:8** (ESV) — 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he..."

- F. It's become a fairly common practice in organizations and corporations, when engaged in meetings and conferences, to analyze the power relations among the participants
 - 1. If you were to have analyzed the power relations in this meeting, who do you think is in charge now?
 - 2. That's why Jesus is the protagonist
 - a. Judas may have thought he was leading the meeting
 - b. But it was now officially out of his control

VII. **The Protector**

- A. But then right away, the protagonist becomes the protector
- B. **John 18:8** (ESV) — 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go."
- C. The posse had come prepared for an insurrection
 - 1. There was no doubt, based on the number of people and their weapons and other militia-like paraphernalia, that they had expected to arrest, not just Jesus, but the eleven disciples as well
 - 2. Jesus knows that even before any attempt at an arrest
 - 3. So, again, the protagonist – He cuts them off at the pass
 - a. "Let these men go"
- D. And guess what?
 - 1. They comply
 - 2. And that was all by design
 - a. Not their design
 - b. But by God's design
 - 3. **John 18:9** (ESV) — 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."
- E. Of course, what Jesus prayed in John 17 expands the meaning of this verse to a spiritual guarding of all those who would ever believe in Jesus
 - 1. But as a down payment on that promise, it applies to preserving the disciples during this time of danger and vulnerability
- F. So Jesus is the protagonist
 - 1. And He is the protector of those who believe in Him

VIII. **The Peter**

- A. Then we have "The Peter"
 - 1. Now I couldn't think of a 'p' word for Peter, except, of course, Peter
 - a. So to make the outline work, I just added the definite article and made it "The Peter"
 - 2. That's not so out of the box, is it? Remember when they used to call Donald Trump "The Donald"?
 - a. I don't say that to indicate that there's any particular similarity between Mr. Trump and St. Peter
 - b. Although, based on what's about to happen, maybe you think there is

- B. **John 18:10** (ESV) — 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.)
 - 1. Peter was being Peter
 - a. He was clearly the most impulsive of the disciples
 - b. He was of the “ready, fire, aim” school of theology
 - c. He was accustomed to doing stuff without consulting his Rabbi
- C. But the bottom line is, what Peter did was not in Jesus', or God's plan
 - 1. **John 18:11** (ESV) — 11 So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”
- D. Jesus had settled before in the Garden of Gethsemane the way this should go down
 - 1. And Peter's sword, or any other thought that any other disciple might have had to defend Jesus, had no part in redemptive history
- E. So Jesus, the protagonist and protector, gave Himself up to the posse of betrayal, having been betrayed to the posse by the person of Judas, in the place of betrayal, the Garden of Gethsemane

IX. **The Potentate**

- A. What does all this mean?
 - 1. What is the big picture here?
 - 2. The big picture, the main point, of this entire episode is rooted in the final ‘p’
 - 3. The Potentate
 - a. The Ruler
 - b. The King of kings
 - c. The Omnipotent One
 - d. The Sovereign
 - e. The Almighty God
- B. Everything that takes place in this episode has been orchestrated by the Grand Conductor of the universe
 - 1. In fact, it began well before
 - a. When Jesus, prompted by an encounter with Gentiles back in Chapter 12, knew that His time had finally come
 - b. His time when He would glorify the Father
 - c. Glorify the Father by the crucifixion
 - 2. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem to fulfill scripture was all according to God's redemptive plan
 - a. His riding on a colt of a donkey fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah
 - b. Riding into Jerusalem at the same time as the Passover lambs were being led into the city for their mandatory three days of assessment and probation
 - c. He, of course, being the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
 - 3. His taking the Passover meal and transforming it into the Lord's Supper

- for the disciples
- 4. His sending Judas off to do what Judas had purposed to do in betraying Him
- 5. His arrest, timed to bring Him to His crucifixion most likely when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered
- 6. His death unfolding in a way that fulfilled scripture
- 7. His burial taking place in order to fulfill scripture
- 8. His three days and nights in the grave according to the scriptures
- 9. Everything from His arrest onward one could claim He had no control over
 - a. But in fact, only the Divine hand of Providence could have orchestrated and conducted it all
- C. All of this fulfilling the words of Jesus:
 - 1. **John 10:17-18** (ESV) —
 - a. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.
 - b. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.
 - c. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.
 - d. This charge I have received from my Father.”
- D. Jesus Christ, the Potentate of Time
 - 1. Matthew Bridges hymn “Crown Him with Many Crowns”
 - a. Crown Him the Lord of Years, the Potentate of Time
 - 2. Indeed, He is the potentate of everything
- E. Who killed Christ?
 - 1. Some say the Jews
 - 2. Some say the Romans
 - 3. No!
 - a. Jesus gave Himself up
 - b. He laid His life down
 - c. For us
 - 4. And brought every single event to pass
 - a. That would fulfill the Triune God’s redemptive purposes