

**John 18v1-18**  
14<sup>th</sup> October 2018 am Hill and Arcadia  
**Jesus on mission**

Changing water into wine or raising Lazarus from the dead are the achievements that we readily see as **among the greatest** of Jesus good works.

Even today in our technologically advanced era, there aren't any men or women able to feed 5000 men with 5 loaves and 2 fish. What **Jesus accomplished** in the years of His public ministry was unique and amazing.

But what we do need to see and realize is that **the greatest achievement** of Jesus was not so much the miracles but actually His death. The death of Jesus lies at the very heart of the reason for His coming.

When Peter steps up to the plate **to prevent His arrest**, Jesus declares *John 18:11* "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

Drinking that cup – referring to the cross and His sufferings and His death – was **the very essence** of His mission.

As John records **the unfolding saga** of Jesus arrest and trial leading to His execution (by Judas, the band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and Pharisees); the impression so easily could be one of a failed mission.

Taking a closer look at Jesus in this passage reveals something very different. **His death** is not an unwelcome intrusion or an unexpected failure but the means of accomplishing the mission.

## 1 The total control Jesus has over the mission

As Jesus leads His disciples across the Kidron valley into the Garden, **it seems** for a moment that Jesus has walked into a trap.

*John 18:3 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.*

Jesus however is **not surprised**...

*John 18:4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"*

Whatever Judas and others may have been thinking; nothing was happening that was not according to **God's foreordained** plan and purpose of God.

Earlier on before Jesus **washed His disciples' feet** we are told that... *John 13:2 During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; Jesus is fully aware of ...John 13:3 ...that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God.*

Jesus has **full control** over the unfolding circumstances.

The penny of **God's control** over the mission via the cross only drops for Peter after Pentecost. He then says in his sermon... *Acts 2:23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.*

They did it and they are accountable for their evil actions. But the plan is **God's plan**. There is not a single step that is outside of the control of Jesus.

Back in **the garden** Jesus continues to demonstrate His power and sovereign control in response to the invading group's assertion that they are looking for Jesus.

By **asserting His deity** ("*I am*" v5) they are compelled to draw back and fall to the ground.

Even when Peter attempts to **take matters into his hands** by attacking the High Priest's servant with the sword and cutting off his ear (v10), he only invites Jesus's rebuke...

*John 18:11 "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"*

Jesus knowing what would **happen to Him** – suffering beyond any kind of human comprehension – also knew this was what the Father sent Him to do.

Jesus is not a victim of circumstance. Jesus is not at the wrong place at the wrong time. Jesus is on a mission sent by His Father and is **in total control** each step of the way... and that is to die.

## 2 The driving concern Jesus has for the mission

I have heard many people comment (speaking about every day life) that **it is a blessing** for us that we do not know what tomorrow will bring. That would be so bad...

**Imagine you knew**... driving from church you would be hijacked and stabbed, you would suffer persecution in 2 years' time and then finally necklaced to death, your child away on holiday would fall asleep in a barn and be burned to death...

**Knowing any of that** in advance for any of us would be frightening and horrifying, which prompts a question...

What was it then that fueled **Jesus's determination** to undergo *drinking the cup that the Father had given Him* – knowing all that was to come in betrayal, denial, false accusations, gross injustice, humiliation, alienation, physical abuse and ultimate God forsakenness?

**The obvious motive** generally speaking, is that it was the Father that put this cup in the hands of Jesus. And since it is the joy and delight of the Son to please the Father this would certainly motivate Jesus to do the will of the Father.

*John 4:34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.*

*John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*

And so it is clear that no matter **what it would cost Jesus**, nothing would stop Him from doing what His Father sent Him to do.

There is however **another specific clue** that John gives in this passage to help us understand why Jesus was so compelled to complete His mission.

As John describes what happened after Jesus had been **bound and led away** to Annas, the father in law of Caiaphas, he adds the comment...

*John 18:14 It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.*

This seems like such **a random** and unnecessary statement in the flow of the narrative.

And so the only **logical reason** for its inclusion is that John deliberately puts it there.

He does so to show that the unfolding developments **must be understood** against the larger backdrop of the purposes of God.

This comment points to Jesus as the **substitute for sinners**. He is *the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (1:29)*. He is the long awaited Saviour to rescue people from bondage to sin and death.

Any Jew reading John's gospel would **recognize** this comment by Caiaphas as the language of atonement.

The death Jesus was about to die was the death of **a sacrificial victim** making perfect atonement for the sin and guilt of sinful people.

- This was the concern that brought Him through thirty years **of preparation** in the obscurity of Nazareth.
- This is what directed the course of His **earthly ministry** over the past three years.
- This now was the driving concern that was about to bring Him through **the darkness** of the coming hours.

The concern that if there was to be **reconciliation** between a holy God and a sinful people, a perfect sacrifice was needed and only He (Jesus) was qualified and authorized to become that sacrifice.

### 3 The extraordinary compassion Jesus has for His people

With all that Jesus knew about what was ahead He still showed and **obvious concern** for the wellbeing of the 11 disciples. Jesus is not preoccupied with Himself but is eager to see that His disciples are safe.

*John 18:8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."*

Jesus commitment to **the safety** of His followers stands in **striking contrast** to the fickle resolve of Peter.

*John 18:17 The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."*

The level of Peter's outspoken loyalty in the upper room was high. Even initially in the garden he is keen to fight for Jesus; but **it all soon fizzled**. With Jesus arrested his bravado crumbles in a shameful fashion.

But this failure of Peter serves to highlight **the loving commitment** of Jesus to His disciples.

**The final incident** of, after Peter's 3<sup>rd</sup> denial "*at once a cock crowed (v27)*", powerfully reminds us that even this tragic failure was not outside of the scope of Jesus knowledge and neither is it an obstacle to His extraordinary compassion for His disciples.

When we compare the story of Peter crumbling under cross examination to the unwavering endurance of Jesus under the severest scrutiny it serves **to magnify the loving resolve** that kept Jesus true to His mission.

The Saviour **is loyal to His flock**, not because they were faithful to Him, but because of His unconditional love for them.

**He would be faithful** in life and He would prove faithful even unto death, all the way to obtaining all that He had promised them.

## 4 Implications

### 4.1 There is no gospel without the death of Jesus

Without the unwelcome intrusion **of the means** (death) for accomplishing His mission none of what Jesus promised could materialize.

**M Taylor:** *“Without these two chapters (18 & 19), none of the precious things which have thrilled the heart in the previous chapters could be possible; nay more, none of His own assertions as to what He would be and do, of giving eternal life, of having any of the world, of coming again for them, of sending the Holy Spirit, of preparing a place for them, of having them in glory with Him, or having that glory at all; there would be no assembly of God, no gathering of the nations, no new heavens and new earth, no display of grace, no salvation, no revelation of the Father – all these and more were contingent on His death and resurrection”.*

The death of Jesus is **an achievement** without which there can be no gospel.

#### **4.2 Jesus can be trusted to deliver all that He promises**

Since Jesus has sovereign power, nothing or no one can be **an obstacle** to there being people from every nation tribe and tongue in heaven.

Since Jesus has shown Himself compelled to do the will of His Father as well as compelled to accomplish redemption for sinners by His **substitutionary atonement**; that work will not be wasted. All that the Father has given Him will come to Him.

Since Jesus has proved Himself faithful in having **loving concern** for His people, He will see to it that it is well with their soul.

Look therefore **to Jesus** who alone is able to save.