

The Arrest of Christ

18:6-11

Part Two

We have now moved on in our examination of the Gospel of John, from the upper room discourse and the high priestly prayer of Christ, to John's account of His arrest. This account is recorded for us in **John 18:1-11**.

And what did John choose to emphasize in his account of Christ's arrest? John chose, in his account, to emphasize Christ's mastery over everyone and everything that was involved. In fact, one bible commentator, as I shared with you last week, entitled it "**Who arrested whom?**"

So what did John want to communicate in His account of Christ's arrest? He wanted to communicate Christ's supremacy. This is what John wanted to communicate and in the process of communicating Christ's supremacy, John highlighted for us certain features of Christ's majesty. So how many features did he highlight?

The Apostle John, in pointing out Christ's supremacy in his account of Christ's arrest, highlighted four different features of His majesty (John 18:1-11). This morning we will continue our examination of those features. So what was the first?

Christ's courage was the first feature John highlighted (John 18:1-5). And where was this? We found this particular feature highlighted in **John 18:1-5**. So let me read these verses for you and this is what they say. "**When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. (2) Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. (3) Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. (4) So Jesus, knowing all things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, 'Whom do you seek?' (5) They answered Him, 'Jesus the Nazarene.'** He said to them, 'I am He.' And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them." So how was Jesus' courage highlighted in these verses?

Jesus knew that if He went to the Garden of Gethsemane that night He would be arrested, but He went anyway. And why did He do this? He did it in order to fulfill righteousness, because He knew that His arrest was all a part of His Father's eternal redemptive plan. He therefore willingly and courageously submitted Himself to that plan, both by going to the garden and then by going forth from the garden in order to confront those who came to arrest Him. Was Christ courageous? Absolutely! Praise God!

And may we as the disciples of Christ manifest this same kind of courage as we seek to follow in His footsteps and to fulfill His will. Following Christ and seeking to live a life pleasing to Christ is not for wimps.

This morning we will consider the three remaining features of Christ's majesty that John highlighted for us in his account of Christ's arrest.

Again my hope for us as we consider these next three features is not only that we might find ourselves falling more and more in love with Christ, but that we, by the grace of God, might be personally challenged to manifest these same qualities. So what was the first feature that John highlighted in order to portray Christ's majesty? His Courage! So what is the second feature?

Christ's power was the second feature John highlighted (John 18:6). Is this an important quality for Christ to have manifested? Is it a quality that we can take comfort in? Of course!

We are presently in the midst of a presidential election. Those who are competing for the nomination and ultimately for the presidency are as usual making some extraordinary promises. But the question that begs to be answered is this: Do they have the wherewithal or the power to deliver on their promises? I don't know how you might answer that question but I know how I would answer that question. And I would say that they have no power to deliver on their promises. This is not to say that the promises that they have made might not work out, but if they do work out it will have nothing to do with the power that resides within them. They are just as weak and frail and flawed as we are. But this is not true of Christ. He does, in fact, possess power and is able to deliver on His promises. And we will see that power this morning.

Let us once again go back to our text and see if this is not so, but before we look at **verse 6** let us review for a moment **John 18:5**.

So what happened in **John 18:5**? This is what happened. Jesus, after having gone to the garden and after having gone forth from the garden to confront those who had been sent to arrest Him, said to them, in **John 18:5**, **“Whom do you seek?” They answered Him, “Jesus the Nazarene.” He said to them, “I am He.”** That last phrase **“I am He”** is very significant especially in light of what we are going to examine in **John 18:6**. So what was so significant about the words **“I am He”** that Jesus used in order to identify Himself?

Grammatically in the Greek, the “He” is not present in John 18:5 and therefore what Jesus literally said in response to their question was “I am,” which was a common designation for God. That is why the phrase was so significant. And if there is any doubt about the implication of this phrase, let us now begin to examine **John 18:6**.

And what does it say? **“So when He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground.”**

So what happened here? Some people would say that someone or perhaps several of those who had come to arrest Christ stumbled and everyone else lost their balance and fell over. This does not seem to be the point that John was making by his inclusion of this particular incident within this text.

John is not trying to portray the clumsiness or stupidity of those who had come to arrest Christ when he tells us that those who had come to arrest Christ **“drew back and fell to the ground.”** No, this was not what he was attempting to do. Rather he was attempting to highlight the power of Christ.

The reason why those who came to arrest Christ in John 18:6 fell down was because Christ, as an expression of His power as the great “I AM,” wanted them to fall down.

And why would this so important? He wanted His disciples to know that He was not a victim, but a victor fully in control of everything that was taking place and would, in fact, be able to deliver on His promises to them both in this life and the life to come.

And this is something that I want for us to understand this morning. We are in the midst of a presidential election and the candidates are going to make some extraordinary promises, but let us know this: they have no power within themselves to deliver on those requests, but Christ does. And there will not be one promise that He has made to us that will not, in fact, be fulfilled. Hallelujah!

So what have we seen so far in our text in terms of those features that John has chosen to highlight as He presents to us the majesty of Christ? First of all, he highlighted His courage; and secondly, he highlighted His power. So, what is the third feature that John chose to highlight?

Christ's love was the third feature that John chose to highlight (John 18:7-10). Is this an important quality? Is it a quality that needs to be highlighted? Of course it is.

Knowing that we are loved is not only an important thing; it is a necessary thing! It is what makes us feel connected; otherwise we will feel isolated and alone. So who should we look to in order to supply us this love?

If it is your husband, wife, parent, child, friend or neighbor, I know what will happen. You will at various times be disappointed. It is inevitable. But there is someone who we can look to for this love and that is Christ. Let us now look at **John 18:7-11** and see if this is not so.

Let us begin with **verse seven**. So what does it say? **“Therefore He again asked them, ‘Whom do you seek?’”**

What an interesting scene. Even as those who had been knocked to the ground by the power of Christ were getting back up to their feet, Jesus repeats the same question that He had just asked, **“Whom do you seek?”**

At this point you might think that they would, in fact, be fearful to answer the question in the very same way they had answered the question before. But this is not so. Let us go back to **John 18:7**, but this time we will read the entire verse. And what does it say? **“Therefore He again asked them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ And they said, ‘Jesus the Nazarene.’”** So rather than adjusting their answer, in light of Christ's earlier demonstration of

power, they proceeded forward as if nothing at all had just happened. So what do we learn from this?

Just because someone might have a personal encounter with the power of Christ does not mean that they will necessarily respond to the encounter in a positive way (John 18:7). This is something that we must understand: faith is a gift of God; it is not the product of an irrefutable argument or an incredible display of miraculous power, and certainly that was the case here.

These men had earlier, upon responding the first time to Christ's question, "**drew back and fell down,**" but their personal experience had not caused their own hearts to recede from their evil intention and purpose.

But the resolute evil intention and purpose of these men is not the only thing on display for us in **John 18:7**. We also see Christ's love for His disciples also on display. So how did John put Christ's love for His disciples on display in **John 17:7**?

In order for us to answer this question we will now need to read **John 18:8**. "**Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way.'**" So now do you understand why I said that Christ's repetition of the question "who do you seek" was an expression of love?

Jesus protected His disciples from arrest by making His captors repeat the instructions that they had been given by those in authority over them (John 18:8). And why would Christ do this? Let us keep reading our text.

Let us go back and read **John 18:8** but this time we will add **verse 9**. So what does it say? This is what it says, "**Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,'** [And why was this? Let us now read verse 9] **to fulfill the word which He spoke, 'Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one.'**"

Jesus' thwarting the possible arrest of His disciples outside the garden of Gethsemane was seen by the Apostle John as a fulfillment of Christ's word in John 17:12 that He had lost none (John 18:9). So how would protecting His disciples from arrest keep His disciples from becoming lost?

If Christ's disciples had been arrested they, apparently from the standpoint of Christ as well as the Apostle John, would have been plunged into a spiritual test that was at this time altogether beyond their strength exposing them not only to physical but spiritual destruction. This is how Christ, by protecting His disciples from arrest, would keep His disciples from becoming lost.

Christ loves His sheep, all of His sheep, without exception. And He will protect every sheep completely, thoroughly, and eternally from becoming lost or from spiritual destruction. And He will do this by keeping them from any situation or circumstances that might destroy their faith.

But even though Christ loves His sheep, all of His sheep without exception and will protect His sheep completely, thoroughly, and eternally, this does not mean that we as sheep always make it easy for Christ to extend His protective care to us.

Let us now read **John 18:10**. And what does it say? **“Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave’s name was Malchus.”**

Luke 22:38 tells us that there were two swords in the hands of the disciples. And it should not be surprising to us that Peter carried one of those two swords, and here in **verse 10** we see him wielding it. Obviously, in light of what we just read, we can all see how Peter's access to a sword became problematic.

Though Christ was willing to voluntarily submit Himself to His captors, His disciples, especially after Christ's demonstration of power, were not nearly so willing (Luke 22:49).

Luke 22:49 makes it very to us that Christ's disciples, seeing what was coming, asked Jesus whether to strike with the sword. But before Christ most likely could even answer, Peter had already drawn his sword and had cut off the ear of the high-priest's slave.

This was all done in an instant. It is easy to imagine what a calamity this blow might have participated. All that Christ had done in protecting His

disciples at that instant could have been undone. But this was not the end of the story.

Just as quickly as Peter had removed the ear of the high priest's slave, Jesus replaced it (Luke 22:51). This particular account is not recorded for us here in **John 18:10** but it is recorded for us in **Luke 22:51**. Let me read this verse for you. **“But Jesus answered and said, ‘Stop! No more of this.’ And He touched His ear and healed Him.”** So how do you visualize the words that we have just read? This is how I visualize it.

I do not believe Jesus reached down and picked up the ear that according to **John 18:10** had been cut off, rather I believe that He simply put His hand on the stump that had been left on the right side of the slave's head and created for him a new ear.

Knowing that we are loved is not only an important thing; it is a necessary thing! And who is the only person who can supply us that love without wavering both now and forever? Christ and Christ alone. Will He do this even in when mess up? Yes! Absolutely! He will continue to love and He will continue protect us if we, in fact, are true disciples of Christ.

So, what have we seen so far in our text in terms of those features that John has chosen to highlight as He presents to us the majesty of Christ? First of all, he highlighted His courage, and secondly, he has highlighted His power, and thirdly, he highlighted His love. So what is the fourth feature that John chose to highlight?

So what do you think? Would such an action on Christ's part put down this very short-lived insurrection? Absolutely! In fact, I believe that if He had wanted to, after this last expression of power, could most likely have simply walked away. But this was neither His plan nor His Father's.

Christ's obedience was the fourth feature that John chose to highlight (John 18:11). Let me read for you **John 18:11**. **“So Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?’”**

Christ, in effect, told Peter, “This is what My Father has planned. Don't fight against it” (John 18:11).

I am certain that this is something we are often times guilty of as well. So many times I know that I get out in front of the Lord thinking that I know best. And how can we know when we are crossing the line? We can know when we are crossing the line when we begin to manifest attitudes and actions that are unbecoming of a disciples of Christ.

Notice the word “cup.” The idea of the cup, in the Old Testament, is associated with judgment (Jeremiah 25:15). So, what does this have to do with Christ?

When Jesus told Peter that He had to drink His Father’s cup, He was saying He had to drink the cup of God’s wrath against sin. And why was this? It was all according to God’s eternal redemptive plan. If Christ was unwilling to drink this cup then He would have failed in His redemptive mission and we would still be dead in our sin.

Jesus willingly drank the cup. And He drank it to the bottom. He died our death in obedience to His Father even though it meant that His Father would turn His back on Him. He died our death even though it meant that His disciples would turn His back on Him. He died our death even though it meant that the Gentiles would mock Him and scourge Him, and that His own people, the Jews, would cry out, “Crucify Him!” He still was willing to drink the cup that His Father had given Him.

Never has there been a greater expression of obedience than when Christ, in obedience to His Father’s will, drank from the cup that He gave Him, the cup of His wrath against sin.

In this passage, as the Apostle John emphasized the complete mastery that Christ had of everyone and everything involved in His arrest, He highlighted four different features of Christ’s person.

He highlighted His courage in **John 18:1-5**. He highlighted His power in **John 18:6**. He highlighted His love in **John 18:7-10**. And he highlighted His obedience in **John 18:11**.

So how are we going to respond in light of all these things that we have considered this morning concerning the person of Christ? Hopefully we will not be like those who came to arrest Christ, who remained unmoved and

unchanged, but rather may we find ourselves being molded and shaped through His word into the people that God would have us to be.

May we by the grace of God, in viewing the courage, power, love and obedience of Christ, find ourselves being molded and shaped into His image.