

18. Never out of control

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When the things around us go bad, it is easy for us to wonder if God knows what is going on in our lives or if God lost control over things somehow. This kind of doubt will lead us to despair and confusion. But in reality, He has never lost control in the past and He will not lose control in future.

Colossians 1:17 He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together. NLT

According to this verse, the whole creation is held together by the power of God. Can you imagine what it would happen if God lost His control? From run-away planets to each atom in our bodies will go any direction they want and collide with each other. It would be a massive chaos that would last a split seconds before everything get destroyed.

Since our God never loses control, we can always depend on His will for our lives.

A. STAY AND WATCH WITH ME

Mark 14:32-34 Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."

When most people are about to experience great suffering, they want to have someone with them, to help share the burden. Like many of you, I have sat with people at the hospital, waiting for the surgeon to come with a report to their family members or friends. Being perfectly human, Jesus wanted companionship as He faced the cross, He selected Peter, James and John, the same men who had accompanied Him to the home of Jairus and to the Mount of Transfiguration.

The Garden of Gethsemane is a place just east of the temple mount area in Jerusalem, across the ravine of the Brook Kidron, and on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. Surrounded by ancient olive trees, Gethsemane means "olive press." It was a place where olives from the neighborhood were crushed for their oil. So too, the Son of God would be crushed here.

B. NOT WHAT I WILL, BUT WHAT YOU WILL

Mark 14:35-36 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

Was Jesus chickening out because He was scared what is going to happen to Him? No, it was not death He dreaded but rather the hour of the cross – that moment when sin was to be put upon Him. He was made sin for us. Because of that He had to be isolated from His Holy Father.

Hebrews 5:7-9 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The struggle of the cross was won at the Garden of Gethsemane. This struggle at Gethsemane – the place of crushing – has an important place in fulfilling God’s plan of redemption. If Jesus failed here, He would have failed at the cross.

In the Old Testament, the cup is a powerful picture of the wrath and judgment of God. In v36, Jesus asked the Father, *“all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me.”* In other words, Jesus was asking Him, *“If there is any other possible way to save humanity other than the agony which awaits Me at the cross – let it be.”* This prayer of Jesus eliminates any other way of salvation. If there is another way, His death was not necessary.

“The Word of Faith” teachers criticize such a prayer in the mouth of a Christian, saying it is a prayer that lacks faith. They even have an audacity say that if we ask the Lord for His will is wrong. If that is the case, Jesus was wrong. But Jesus is never wrong, I believe that they are the ones who have a wrong theology. God is not a respecter of person that He should obey us or our wants.

To pray, *“not what I will, but what You will”* is a prayer of complete faith and trust in God. Three times He prayed about the matter, and each time He yielded to the Father’s will in loving surrender. Jesus displayed a complete obedience to His Father in heaven.

C. FELLOWSHIP WITH THE SANDMAN

Mark 14:37-42 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 39 Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. 40 And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. 41 Then He came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

It is easy for us to think that the disciples of Jesus were a bunch of lofty spiritual saints who have glows around their heads and talked about deep spiritual theologies all the times. While I study for each sermon, I spend many hours in reading Bibles, commentaries and other related materials. Reading tiny letters in one sitting position makes me sleepy.

I get comfort to know that these guys were just like me. When they were supposed to watch and pray for Jesus, but there were having a major fellowship with the sandman, brother pillow and sister sheet.

At this moment of great agony, Jesus is all alone. His disciples give Him no support at all.

I don’t believe that Jesus was irritated at His disciples’ sleeping. He said this in love, and in compassionate understanding. He knew them better than they knew themselves.

When we fail our God with our ignorance and sins, God doesn't get irritated by us. Rather, He wants us to learn from it and stay close to Him, so that we wouldn't commit another sin like that again.

Three times Jesus prayed. Three times Jesus checked to see if His disciples would stand by Him in prayer, and pray for their own strength in the coming trial. They were asleep each time. How often does Jesus "check on us" and find us asleep spiritually? Through prayer and companionship, we must stand beside others in their time of need.

D. THE ARREST OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN

Mark 14:43-52 And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely." 45 As soon as He had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. 46 Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. 47 And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 48 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then they all forsook Him and fled. 51 Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, 52 and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

Obviously Jesus was not a handsome man. If He was that good looking guy, Judas could tell the soldiers just to look for a Mr. GQ. Jesus didn't have a halo above His head, nor blonde hair with blue eyes like some silly portraits of Jesus. According to Isaiah, this is what it said about the appearance of Jesus:

Isaiah 53:2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

Judas chose to identify Jesus by greeting Him with a kiss. This was a cruel pretense to affection, especially adding "Rabbi, Rabbi!" to the greeting.

John 18:10 identifies this unnamed swordsman as Peter. Here Peter is a great example of someone who, wielding the power of this world in his hands, could only cut off ears. But when he wielded the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2, he could pierce hearts of three thousand men and brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ for God's glory.

Dr. Luke tells us that Jesus had to do a damage control for Peter had done. Had Jesus not healed Malchus' ear, Peter would have been arrested as well. And there might have been four crosses at Calvary.

E. THE SERIES OF KANGAROO COURTS

Mark 14:53-59 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. 54 But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire. 55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found

none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree. 57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'" 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

Jesus had to go through six kangaroo courts – three Jewish trials which were all illegal and three Roman trials also were done in improper ways:

- 1) The Jewish trial was opened by Annas, the former high priest. – John 18:13-24
- 2) It then moved to the full council to hear false witnesses in the middle of the night. – Mark 14:53-65
- 3) They had an early morning session for the final vote of condemnation. – Mark 15:1
- 4) Jesus was then sent to Pilate. – Mark 15:1-5
- 5) Pilate sent Him to Herod. – Luke 23:6-12
- 6) Herod returned Jesus to Pilate. – Mark 15:6-15

After questioning and insulting Jesus, Annas sent Jesus bound to his son-in-law Caiaphas, the high priest for another trial. This trial of Jesus was terribly illegal according to Jewish law. There was much in the Jewish legal process to protect the rights of the accused, and all of this was ignored and deliberately broken by those who were determined to put Jesus to death.

The words of Jesus' false accusers – "*this temple made with hands*" were never uttered by Jesus. Essentially, they accused Jesus of being a terrorist who wanted to destroy the temple.

F. ARE YOU THE CHRIST?

Mark 14:60-65 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" 61 But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" 62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." 63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. 65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

The high priest realized that the trial had been a dead failure up to that point, and was hot red with rage. Now he attempts to bully Jesus that he may extract some declaration from him to end the matter.

Some Bible critics argue that Jesus has never declared that He is God. In v62, here is His declaration in His own voice. They might say, "He didn't say that He is God, but the Son of Man." If that is the case, it shows their ignorance of the Scripture.

The title "Son of man" is messianic according to Daniel 7:13, and the members of the council knew exactly what Jesus was saying: He was claiming to be God come in human flesh! This claim, of course, was blasphemy to the Jews, and they declared Him guilty and worthy of death.

I am absolutely positive that those who spat at the face of Jesus and struck Him with their hands are being tormented in Hades right now. I am sure that they are wishing that they didn't do that.

Some of you might think that you are OK, because you've never spat at Jesus, nor punched Him. But if you are not a born-again Christian, you are continuously refusing to accept His invitation to receive salvation through Him, it is the same as spitting at Him. Don't walk out that door without knowing Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

Let me ask a question to you all. Do you feel like you are being crushed from every direction? If there is anyone who can understand your situation, it would be Jesus. He understands all of our anxieties and sufferings, because He had gone through Himself for us. Instead of worrying and agonizing about the situation, why not turn to Him who has everything under control. Our God has all the answers and He gives us peace beyond belief.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Philippians 4:7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

G. APPLICATIONS

1) We should be more willing to bear pain and humiliation for the sake of Jesus.

Jesus knew what needed to be done to save us from eternal condemnation. I believe we can take a few rude remarks and jabs against our faith in Him from the non-believers around us.

2) We should be more diligent to seek God's will over our own.

It is plain insane to think that our will is better than God's and He is obligated to fulfill our desires like some Faith Movement teachers proclaim. That is a damnable heresy and it is from the pit of hell.

3) We should be more assured and confident to receive the finished work of Jesus for our redemption.

We cannot add or subtract anything from the work Jesus had done on the cross. If we try to add our work or rituals on top of God's grace, it becomes nothing, no salvation. That is a basic Christianity 101.