

108. In complete control

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The attention span of the 21st Century people is very short, much shorter than the previous generations. According to the report by Microsoft in May 14, 2015, a human attention span is 8 seconds, showing the affect of an increasingly digitalized lifestyle on the brain. To accommodate that short attention span, movies and even TV news programs switch their camera angles very frequently. Even for our church Youtube teaching videos, our video ministry folks use minimum of 3 camera. If you look around in this sanctuary, we have 5 cameras going at the same time.

This morning we are going to see the arresting scene of Jesus from all 4 Gospels chronologically as if we are watching from 4 different camera angles at the same time. We will start from the Book of John.

A. HERE COMES THE BETRAYER

John 18:2-3 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3 Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Human history began in a Garden as we learned in Genesis chapter 2, and the first sin of man was committed in that Garden. The first Adam disobeyed God and was cast out of the Garden of Eden, but the Last Adam, Jesus was obedient as He went into the Garden of Gethsemane.

1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

History will one day end in another garden, the heavenly city that John describes in Revelation 21 and 22. In that garden, there will be no more death and no more curse. The river of the water of life will flow endlessly and the tree of life will produce bountiful fruits. Eden was the Garden of disobedience and sin; Gethsemane was the Garden of obedience and submission; and heaven shall be the eternal garden of delight and satisfaction, to the glory of God.

The Greek word for 'detachment' is "speira" which is the tenth part of a Roman legion. One legion was 6,000 soldiers, so a detachment had 600 foot soldiers.

What irony! With lanterns and torches, this detachment searched to find the Light of the World. And the Light just stood there right in front of them – without pretense and without protection – and shined openly through the darkness. But those standing in the darkness did not even recognize Him just like the majority of the world population choose not to.

B. THE POWER OF THE NAME OF THE LORD "I AM"

John 18:4-9 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," 9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

If I recall the size of the Garden of Gethsemane near Jerusalem correctly, it is not a very big place. There were only 11 sleepy head disciples and Jesus originally, but all of sudden, over 600 soldiers, plus Jewish religious rulers were in that small garden. Everybody was tense, except one – Jesus.

In front of their drawn swords, Jesus simply and quietly asked, “*Whom are you seeking?*” When they replied, Jesus told them, “I AM.” You may say, “Oh preacher, you missed ‘He.’” No, I didn’t miss it. As you can see, the word “He” is in Italic which means that it was added by the editor of your Bible for your easier understanding.

In other words, Jesus used one of God’s names “I AM.” Ever-present God, Almighty God, all knowing, all powerful God identified Himself as “I AM.” He could add, “and you are not, bye, bye.” But He chose not to do that. Instead, He laid aside the privileges of deity and willingly laid His life down.

Mere mention of God’s name, all these big burly, rough and tough 600 soldiers fell backward like dominos. Can you imagine that? I am sure it was rather comical – in front of one unarmed man, over 600 soldiers falling backward. How embarrassing!

Now who is in control? Jesus. He was in complete control. He knew what would happen. Our God has never lost His control over anything. Even to every little detail, nothing escapes His all-knowing wisdom and all-seeing insight. There is no such word, like “Oops!” in God’s vocabulary.

I don’t know where you are today or what situation you are in. You may be in between the rock and hard place right now. Or you may be sitting alone in a little spiritual or emotional boat surrounded by raging waves of financial difficulties, joblessness, loneliness, sickness, despair, or even suicidal thought. Or you may be facing temptations and problems that seem too great to bear. But remember this: Jesus is interceding for you from heaven. When the hour seems the darkest, He will come to you and He will take you to a safe harbor!

Pain that comes from trials of life often seem pointless, but God assures us that it is always purposeful. Pain is a part of life. In God’s curriculum, it is a course we can neither drop, nor simply skip, nor just take someone else’ painful experience as ours. Our God is in complete control over all of our lives. We cannot find anyone better than Him to trust with our lives, no one.

C. BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF GOD

Matt 26:48-49 Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.” Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

Luke 22:48 But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

It is tragic to see how Judas cheapened everything that he touched. He even used the kiss as a weapon, not as a sign of affection. In that day, it was customary for disciples to kiss their teacher. But in this case, it was not a mark of submission or respect. The Greek verbs indicate that Judas kissed Jesus repeatedly.

Judas did not really understand Jesus. Judas thought they would have to search for Him in the Garden and fight off His disciples in order to arrest Him. That is why Judas came with a detachment of soldiers. But Jesus came to them and calmly surren-

dered. It would not even have been necessary for Judas to betray Jesus with a kiss, because Jesus told the soldiers who He was.

Before we go on to the next portion, I'd like to ask you a question: Do you kiss God repeatedly, yet betray Him? You will say, "I would never betray Him. What do you think I am, a Judas?" Maybe. When you come to church and sing worship songs, that is "Kissing God's face." The root word of worship is "Kissing forward." So, if you worship Him with your hands lifted and sing worship songs, but deliberately continue in your sins after you leave this church service, you are doing exactly what Judas did. You need to stop sinning and repent from it.

There are no more hollow, hypocritical words in the Bible than "Greetings, Rabbi!" from the mouth of Judas. The loving, heartfelt, loving words of Jesus – calling Judas "Friend" – stand in sharp contrast. Jesus is giving him one last chance to repent.

D. A WRONG WAY TO PROVE HIS LOYALTY

Luke 22:49-50 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

John 18:10-11 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 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"

While we admire Peter's courage and sincerity, it was certainly a demonstration of zeal without knowledge of God's will. Why did Peter not know the will of God? Because he slept when he should have been praying; and he talked and inserted his foot in his mouth when he should have been listening. Do we not often do the same?

Later Peter discovered the true Sword of the Spirit which God's servants use in fighting in their spiritual battles – the Word of God – at the Day of Pentecost and won 3000 souls for the Lord.

According to Luke chapter 22, Jesus had to heal the high priest's servant Malchus' ear, otherwise Peter might have been arrested or killed. This was another act of God's grace. This servant came to arrest Jesus with the soldiers. It was our Lord's last public miracle before the cross.

This brings an important question: Does our God need our protection? Like Peter tried to do, or some well-meaning but ignorant Christians decided to blow up an abortion clinic or kill an abortion doctor to protect unborn babies? No way!

By the way, in case you didn't know, our church is the most well armed and secure church in the world. Many of our congregation carry their weapons.

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" To understand what Jesus meant, we must go to the verse that came from Jesus to the Father during His prayer prior to this situation:

Luke 22:42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

Jesus was able to accept the cup because it was mixed by the Father and given to Him from the Father's hand. He did not resist the Father's will, because He came to do the Father's will and finish the work the Father gave Him to do.

E. NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER BUT BY MY SPIRIT

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

Luke 22:51 But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

In an attempt to protect Jesus, Peter – a better fisherman than a swordsman – lopped off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Luke writes that following Peter's show of force, Jesus touched Malchus' ear and healed him. In other words, Jesus was doing a damage control for Peter like He does it for us all the time. I think that's perhaps the miracle Jesus still does most: healing people who have been needlessly wounded by His other followers who have used the sword of Scripture foolishly.

How often we hurt one another in our attempts to protect Jesus. Ears fly everywhere, and the body of Christ is maimed because well-meaning Christians like Peter unsheathe their Bible verses and start chopping away at each other. Listen to the words of Jesus. If you are using the Sword of the Spirit to slice other people up and put other people down, please stop and put it away.

When Peter moved in the power of the world, he only cut off ears. But when he was filled with the Spirit, using the Word of God, Peter pierced hearts for God's glory.

Acts 2:37-41 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

A legion being 6,000, Jesus was talking about 72,000 angels at His disposal – quite a force, considering it took only one angel to wipe out 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night according to 2 Kings 19:35. I don't think that there were enough people on the earth at that time for each angel to get his quota.

We must realize that He is perfectly capable of defending Himself. Our job is not to protect, defend, or avenge for Jesus. Jesus calls us to do one thing: to love others.

F. THE ARREST OF JESUS IN THE GARDEN

Mark 14:48-49 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."

Luke 22:53b But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

John 18:12 Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him.

Mark 14:50-52 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.

G. APPLICATIONS

1) There is no such thing as too late to turn away from sin. If you are in sin, turn away from it now.

Jesus called Judas "Friend" even at the moment of betrayal. Even here, Jesus gave Judas an opportunity to turn away and to change his mind. In other words, Jesus was giving Judas one last chance to change his mind.

2) Let's be careful how we use the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God to one another.

The Word of God is powerful and living and sharper than any double edged sword. It can hurt fellow Christians if we are not using it carefully. Please remember, knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

3) Our God is in complete control over all of our lives. We cannot find anyone better than Him to trust with our lives, no one.