



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 18:1-11

“The Betrayal and Arrest”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] Now the Scripture reading this morning is a continuation of our previous Scripture reading. We had just finished, you’ll remember, John chapter 17 and we are now looking at the beginning of the account by John of the passion. And beginning at chapter 18 and verse 1 we read, “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.”

As you probably know when the Apostle John, as well as the authors of the synoptic gospels, wrote they did not attempt to give us what we would call a biography of the Lord Jesus. What they intended to do was to present a picture of him with a definite goal in mind. We’ve talked about the Johannine purpose in writing the gospel, and we don’t have to repeat that. The other gospel writers also had specific purposes in writing their gospels. And so we do find in the accounts, both of the Synoptics as well the Gospel of John, that they at times record a certain incident and then at other times skip one or two that the others have recorded. Well you will notice in reading through the Gospel of John that there is no reference to the agony in Gethsemane.

And in John chapter 18, if we wanted to put a little note in, as to where the agony occurred, it is between verse 1 and verse 2 of chapter 18, for when Judas and the officers with the servant

come it is after he has prayed in the garden, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” So, if you can think of that as being between verse 1 and verse 2 we read in verse 2,

“And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.”

Now in order to understand that it is important for us to remember that when the Lord Jesus said, “I am” and it’s proper at times to add the words, “I am he” that was an expression of his Messianic character, as well as his divine character, “I am he.” Simply, our Lord said, “I am.” And one thinks of the name that Moses was given when he asked God what his name was he said, “I am who I am. And if they ask you Moses, who is sending you to Egypt, tell them that ‘I am’ is sending you.” This was our Lord’s way, it was characteristic remember of his teaching to use this expression, it was our Lord’s characteristic way of saying, “I am the Yahweh of the Old Testament, the covenant keeping God who has dealt with the nation Israel, giving them the unconditional covenants of divine blessing.”

“Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”

In our last study, or the study or so before that, I commented upon the fact that in chapter 17 and verse 12 Jesus had prayed, “while I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name, those that Thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost, but (or except) the son of perdition that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” I commented upon the fact that occasionally that has been understood to mean that Judas was also given, “and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.” I tried to point out that the construction was such that it is not justified to say that he was one of the given who was afterwards lost. Well, chapter 18 and verse 9 makes it very plain, because he says, “that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake of them which Thou gavest me have I lost none.” So we are to understand Judas as not being one of the given ones. There were eleven of the twelve who were the given ones, Judas was not. He was an apostle of Jesus Christ in the outward sense, called to that office, but inwardly he never belonged to our Lord, not one of the given ones. Now he John continues with verse 10,

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. (I'd like for you to notice that name, we'll say something about it later on) Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

May the Lord bless this reading of his Word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are so thankful to Thee that Thou hast, in wonderful grace, called us to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are grateful that the Holy Spirit has used the word of God, and has through the infinite power of God brought about a new birth in our hearts. We are indeed grateful for this communication of divine life. And O God, it's such a privilege on the first day of the week to meet as the given ones of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have fellowship in the things that concern the eternal destiny of men. We are so grateful for the divine providence that guards all

of our steps, and we know that even in the deepest experiences of life Thou art with us in the infinite power of the triune God. And we would worship Thy name today. We praise Thee. We thank Thee. We are indeed grateful.

And Lord, we bring before Thee the petitions of our hearts. We pray for our country. We ask Lord that wisdom may be given to our president in the critical [time] in which we are living. We are thankful that divine providence covers all of the actions of men, and that even a Soviet pilot's shooting down of a passenger plane is not a surprise to Thee. We do not understand Lord all of the purposes which Thou hast in dealing with men over the face of this globe, but we know with assurance the word of God and its teaching that all things are within Thy purpose and will. In fact, we remember the apostle says that Thou dost work all things according to the council of Thine own will. And while we are not able Lord with our finite intelligences to enter into the understanding ultimately of the infinite intelligence, we thank Thee for the assurance, for the security that we feel in the will of God. And today we pray for our country. We ask Lord that Thy purposes may be accomplished to the glory of Thy name.

We pray for the church of Jesus Christ, the whole body of believers, and pray that Thy blessing may rest upon them, upon those who are new believers, perhaps needing many, many hours of instruction in the word of God, but nevertheless having the same life as the mature believers. We pray for them. We pray for the whole body. May the needs of the body be met and may we grow together into the perfect man as the apostle has set out in the Word. We thank Thee for those who are listed in our calendar of concern with their desires, and aspirations, and problems, and difficulties. We ask Thy blessing upon them, particularly upon some who are bereaved. We ask especially Lord that Thou wilt strengthen them and encourage them.

And Lord, we pray for the ministry of Believers Chapel. We thank Thee for the privilege that Thou hast given us over these past years of ministering over the radio here in Dallas, as well as in other places, and we pray that Thou wilt give direction to us if it be Thy will Lord that we continue. May something satisfactory open up, if not Lord, we rest again in Thy will and we pray

that the new broadcasts in places like Jacksonville, Florida may be places where there is an unusual response to the ministry of the Word. We commit all of the ministries of the Chapel to Thee; the teachers, the Bible classes, the Sunday school, the publications ministry. O God may Thy hand rest upon it in such a way that we may give praise and thanks for all of the blessings of life through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior in whose name we pray. Amen.

[Message] It is clear from the reading of the Scripture that the subject for this morning is the betrayal and the arrest of our Lord Jesus Christ. One of course, in coming to John chapter 18, notices also another very significant thing, and that is that after the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus John the apostle turns his attention to the passion and the suffering of our Lord. Thoughts of suffering and of the scattering of the disciples are the thoughts in our Lord’s mind as well, because in Matthew chapter 26 right at this point Matthew points out that the Lord Jesus cited the passage from Zachariah chapter 13 in which the prophet says, “Smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered.” And so it is clear that thoughts of suffering and thoughts of the scattering of the disciples are the thoughts that hold our Lord Jesus Christ. We have been saying constantly that the reason our Lord gave the upper room discourse was to prepare the disciples for the future when the Lord Jesus would not be with them in a physical way.

Well, after preparing the disciples, we assume that he has given them the teaching that he feels that they need, he now turns to the struggle that faces him. And looking at the text of the word of God, it’s clear that his struggle is not simply with men. His struggle is also with God. Because in Gethsemane he will say things like, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done.” So our Lord must struggle with the will of God.

One of the things that we sometimes overlook is the fact that Jesus, as one who possessed a completely human nature apart from sin, fully human apart from sin, had to find the will of God for himself as you and I must find the will of God for ourselves. Now there is of course a major difference. Our Lord did not possess a sin nature, and when the will of God was revealed to him he

always perfectly obeyed the will of God. Now you and I of course fail often. In our Lord's case he never failed, but he had to wait upon God for direction with regard to the things that he would say and the things that he would do, he says over and over again, so in that sense our Lord must find the will of God as you and I must find the will of God. And in the agony of Gethsemane it is obvious that there is a struggle that is going on that accounts for the agony, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not my will but Thine be done.”

Now he struggles of course with men, and he struggles with Satan. In fact, Peter some weeks later, preaching on the day of Pentecost, lays stress on both sides of these things. In his sermon preached on that great day he said,

“Ye men of Israel hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him, in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know, him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, (that's the divine side) him being delivered by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, you have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain (that is the human side).”

So our Lord then must struggle with God, as in Gethsemane, and he must struggle with men, as we see here in John chapter 18. The power of darkness is rapidly encompassing him. He had said, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.” It is rapidly encompassing him. Satan will fiercely attack his faith, and Satan will use the instrumentalities of someone who is in the inner company of the apostolic group, Judas. There is a great deal of emphasis on Judas in these last accounts that John gives us, and one notices the same thing in the Synoptic Gospels as well.

One of the men who has meant a lot to me is the Dutch theologian Klaas Schilder. He is a man who is now with the Lord, but for many years he served as a professor of systematic theology in the Netherlands. He was one of the men associated with a very strong form of Calvinism, and an outstanding expositor of the word of God. He has written many books, but he wrote three books on

the sufferings of Christ which have been translated into English and published by the Eerdmans Publishing Company. Those three volumes, so far as I know, are the finest exposition of the details of the suffering of our Lord Jesus that I know. There are a number of other books that are very useful, but those books of Schilder are outstanding. He wrote *Christ in His Sufferings*, *Christ on Trial*, *Christ Crucified*, three rather large volumes. Now when Mr. Schilder comes to this particular section he entitles his chapter “The Harmony Profaned, The Perfect Round is Broken.” And what he alludes to is the fact that here we have twelve apostles, like the twelve tribes of Israel. And the twelve apostles have that beautiful harmony of the number twelve, but here the harmony is profaned, for Judas now carries out the nefarious scheme that Satan has introduced into his heart. He says, “The Harmony Profaned, The Perfect Round is Broken.”

It’s obvious now that there are no longer twelve apostles. In fact, of course, there never were from the standpoint of the inward relationship to our Lord, but now the outward perfect round is broken. Eleven apostles stand with our Lord Jesus Christ, the other apostle, Judas, stands with the officers of the chief priests, and the scribes, and the Romans, as over against the eleven. So, one of the twelve has now broken the harmony and there are eleven.

Now that might not seem to be very much of a problem, until we think about some of the things that the Lord has said in his previous ministry. Let me show you. One of us, or all of us no doubt, remember the statement that Jesus made earlier in his ministry when he said to the Jewish people, “Verily I say unto you that ye that which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also (he was speaking specifically to the apostles) ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” “You shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Now how is it possible for such a prophecy to be fulfilled if there are no longer twelve apostles, but eleven apostles? And so our Lord Jesus himself, you see, even in this experience here must believe in some form of a resurrection of the twelfth apostle. Now we know what happened of course, because we can look at this from the vantage point of nineteen hundred years. We know that

after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ Peter said, “Now we must do something about this, there are only eleven of us now.” And no doubt thinking about the fact that Jesus had said there would be twelve apostles sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, he said, “We’ve got to select someone to take Judas’ place.” And in fact, he pointed to two passages in the Old Testament, Psalm 109, and also Psalm 69, and in both of which reference is made to the fact that there would be an apostasy, and also another should take his place. It all is in accordance with the unfolding of the plan of God in the Scriptures, and so as you know, Mathias was chosen by Lot to take the place of Judas who fell and went to his own place. You see, our Lord himself, as the God-man, must enter into all of the experiences of men in humble dependence and obedience to the word of God.

Well another thing before we look at our text. One could not help but notice the parallel between this incident of our Lord now being taken and ultimately being crucified with Abraham taking Isaac on to Mount Moriah and offering him there. Here is the antitype of all that Abraham did with his son Isaac.

Looking at the first few verses of chapter 18 of John, John describes the coming of the band of men led by the servant of the high priest with the officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees. He said,

“When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into the which he entered with his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.”



Now you notice of course, the prominence that Judas has in the account through these sentences that John is writing. Turn to the Synoptics and Judas has again a similar place of importance.

The other person who is important in the unfolding of these events is, and I'm sure that practically everybody in this audience could answer who is the other important person other than our Lord, and you would answer Peter, because Judas and Peter do stand over against themselves here in the account. Now you remember that Jesus said with reference to Peter, when he told the Lord on one occasion that he should not go to the cross, in the midst of conversations with Peter he said, “Satan hath desired that he should have you, that he might sift you as wheat.” Now that's an interesting expression, “Satan has desired you Peter, that he might sift you as wheat” not as chaff, as wheat. So we know from that statement of our Lord that he regarded Peter as wheat, as the real thing, but he did need sifting. On the other hand, Judas illustrates a person who is lost. He was not one of the given ones. Peter is one of the given ones, and he needs sifting. Peter is a person who will deny our Lord three times, but then he will go out and weep bitterly, because there was a fundamental relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

One other thing that marks out Judas is the fact that the Synoptic Gospels, without exception, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, when they describe this incident that is before us, they add a little phrase to describe Judas. He is called, “one of the twelve.” John omits that, but they each write it down, “He was one of the twelve.” In order to emphasize the horror of the fact that the betrayer of the Lord Jesus is his own familiar friend, to use the word from Psalm 41 that our Lord cites back in the upper room discourse. Just as Ahithophel in the Old Testament betrayed David and then hanged himself, so now the greater than David, the Messianic King himself, the one to whom David the King of Israel pointed, he has his betrayer too, his name is Judas, and he too will hang himself. So there is a parallel between them, and Judas, one of the twelve, betrays his own familiar friend.

It seems too terrible to us, but you know what is so striking about it to me is the fact that we sometimes turn the message of Judas and make the wrong application from it. We speak about Judas

and then we talk about the world and its disobedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. That to my mind is a legitimate use of the incident of Judas, his life and his ministry, if we may call it that, but the special reference of Judas is this, Judas is a message to the church of Jesus Christ. Judas is a message to people who are on the inside of the Christian profession, not to those that are outside. Judas was an apostle. He was one of the twelve. He was that close to our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is he who betrayed the Lord. One can look at the history of the Christian church and find that the greatest enemies of the faith have not been those outside the profession of Jesus Christ, but those within. It is they who do the greatest damage. And let's make it a little more personal. Judas is a message to Believers Chapel. It is entirely possible that there are in our audiences, constantly, individuals who are not yet ones of the given ones. And furthermore, it is possible for those who make an outstanding profession to be actually traitors to the cause of Jesus Christ. That's the message of Judas, one of the twelve, one of the twelve. It's a solemn thing to think about.

Now John doesn't describe what happens when Judas comes with his little band, but in Matthew chapter 26 verse 48 and 49 we read these words, “Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.” So the sign that Judas said would mark out Jesus for the officers did not know him that well, and of course it was night, was the kiss. And so when Judas came into the garden with his little band of men the traitor went over to the Lord Jesus, greeted him, and then kissed him.

That verb, incidentally, is an intensive verb in the Greek text. It is a verb that either means he kissed him frequently, in other words, he put his cheek up against our Lord's right cheek and then up against his left cheek and then did it again a couple of times, or else it means to kiss fervently, that is he went out of the way to greet him with a great deal of attention. It was what one of the commentators said, “A heartless overdoing of the matter.”

I think of the statement in the Proverbs, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” It's nice to have a friend who will point out our faults and flaws, we certainly need them. And we certainly need

the kind of disposition that can respond to them, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” The friend is not the person who’s always patting you on the back. The friend is the one who faithfully, under God, is willing also to give us some words of rebuke.

But the text goes on to say in Proverbs 27, “The kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” This is the ultimate fulfillment of that text to my mind. Judas kisses him. And then the conversation follows and one cannot help but sense the sovereign glory of the Lord Jesus in the midst of this conversation. He is there in all of the poised majesty of a mind that is settled upon the will of God and therefore able to withstand all of the buffetings of men. Jesus knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, he took the lead. He didn’t stand off and wait for them to speak. He went right out to them and said, “Whom are you seeking?” They answered Jesus of Nazareth. “Jesus saith unto them, I am. And Judas also which betrayed him stood with them.” What a picture of the apostle who companied with our Lord Jesus for at least three years, but now one finds him standing with the enemies of Christ.

The early church made a great deal over this. And one of the ancient interpretations of the statement, “Judas stood with them” has Judas either blind or paralyzed, and unable to move because of the sovereign majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ when he replied, “I am he.” Later on we will talk about that confession, but you can see that it is a tremendous confession of his Messianic dignity. It is more than simply, “I’m the one you’re looking for” but “I am he” the Messianic King. The evidence of this is clear in the Synoptics, because Jesus replied to Judas, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” It was more than a simple denial of a friend. It was actually a denial of his Messianic dignity. Now when the Lord Jesus said, “I am he” identifying himself with the Yahweh of the Old Testament who called Israel out of the land of Egypt, brought them into the promised land with magnificent unconditional promises of blessing to them, when the Lord Jesus said, “I am” they went backward and fell to the ground.”

The same kind of moral ascendancy characterize him as it did when he went in his earlier days into the temple area with the money changers at the time of the feast and made a scourge of

small cords and with that whip, overturned their tables and drove them out of the temple area, one man against the multitude of men making a profit out of the service of God. It was a miracle you can be sure, a divine miracle that he was able to do it. It was almost as if God had drawn the veil just a little bit so that men might see something of the infinite majesty of the eternal God.

Well that is what transpires here when the Lord Jesus makes that magnificent confession. When Moses heard those words, “I am who I am” there was a bush burning nearby. Well I want you to know that it was hotter than that when Jesus here makes the ultimate confession, “I am the Messianic King.”

Now he also goes on to say, “I am he” and further, “let these go. I’ve told you that I am he, if therefore you seek me, let these go their way.” I like that, because that is just an indication of the care that the Messianic King has for his own. Here he has just made this magnificent confession, “I am the Messianic King” and at the same time he is the God-man and cares for that little band of weaklings who were with him, “If you have heard me say that I am he and if you wish me then let these go their way.” In other words, he purchases their safety at the cost of his. It’s kind of an acted parable of John chapter 10 and verse 11, where he said, “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth.” We laid stress on the fact that it was a voluntary sacrifice that Jesus offered. We laid stress upon the fact that it was a penal sacrifice. He was bearing punishment. That is, he had to give his life for lives, infinite life for the vast company of the given ones. And it was also vicarious in that he bore their punishment to the full so that heaven is able to bring no further judgment against those for whom Jesus Christ died. I say it’s an acted parable, it is, and further it stresses the divine initiative in it, for Jesus went forth to them and took the lead in it.

You know, at this same general time they said with reference to him, “He saved others, himself he cannot save.” Ah, how little they understand. It was General Booth who said something like, “The Jews said that they would believe in him if he would come down from the cross. We

believe in him because he would not come down from the cross.” Well that was essential for his atoning ministry.

Now then, there follows this rather interesting, I think, extremely interesting and startling miracle that Jesus performed. It is the last, so far as I remember, of our Lord’s miracle in the days of his flesh, the last Messianic sign, the healing of an ear. We read in verse 10, “Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.”

Now, John adds to the synoptic the name Simon Peter. The others have simply Peter. Simon of course, stresses the weakness. He was a zealous man, Peter, but the other apostles were too. When they came, the apostles together said, “Shall we pull out our swords and fight these men?” They were zealous, they were faithful, but they were ignorant of themselves. They were ignorant of Jesus Christ. If they had done what they offered to do, it would have almost overthrown the movement, speaking from the human standpoint.

But Peter did pull out his sword. He couldn’t resist it. He was impulsive. Now, there were some Roman soldiers, evidently, with them, and Roman soldiers wore a helmet, and the weakest point of the helmet was right down the center, because that was where it was put together. So it was a very skillful way to divide a man into two, to take your sword and bring it straight down, hit the weak point, and just go right through the skull. And so Peter obviously had heard about that, and so he drew his sword out, and he slashed like this, and of course, being an unskilled man, he missed, and cut off the right ear of Malchus the servant of the high priest. Well, that’s just an illustration of Peter’s failings of course. He does what he should not do now. Later on when the denial comes, when he should have given his testimony, he does not do it. At one moment he does what he should not do, at another moment, when he should do something, he doesn’t do it. It illustrates of course what Paul says in Romans 7 about a believer. That is, there are forces within him that cause him to wish to do the will of God, but he finds that he cannot do it, and on the other hand these same

forces that seek to tell him not to do certain things, are unable to keep him from doing them. Peter is again playing the part of Satan. He cut off his right ear.

Now the response of our Lord to Peter's action is most significant, “Jesus said to Peter, Peter, put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” We are inclined to think that this was an unfortunate accident, that our Lord is here in the garden and the soldiers have come, and they're now ready to take him and they're going to put him to death. But our Lord does not regard this as an accident, he regards this simply as an incident in the plan of God for him. He said, “Look Peter, put your sword into your sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”

Now that is, it seems to me, has some words to say to us today. It's not an unfortunate accident. It is something that is given to them, or given to him, given to them too. There are many people who think that suffering is not the will of God. Unfortunately today in evangelicalism there is a great deal of embracing of this prosperity theology. It's not new, it's old. I can remember over twenty-five or thirty years ago, preaching each spring in Nacogdoches, and then coming back at night in order to get home on Friday night, listening to the radio, and about the only station that I could get in those days was XEG, which was a station which all of the weirdoes and fanatics of a religious character, I rather looked forward to it. Not only because it would keep me awake, but also keep me up with the weird things that were transpiring in other places. Many of them were charismatics, many of them were simply evangelists of a particular ilk.

And prosperity theology was one of the great things that they proclaimed twenty-five years ago. That is, it's not the will of God for anyone ever to be sick, it's not the will of God for anyone ever to have any need of money, it's not the will of God for us to ever have any kind of tragic experience in our lives. One wonders if evangelicals read the Bible. How can they possibly embrace prosperity theology in the light of the Bible? Now it is true that in the Old Testament we do read that God blessed many of the men of the Old Testament times with prosperity. He certainly blessed Abraham. He blessed Jacob. No one could say however that Jacob did not have any trials and

troubles. If you just read the life of Jacob you will see that, and in fact no one can read the life of Abraham without seeing the same thing. Bishop Laten used to say the blessing of the Old Testament was prosperity, but the blessing of the New Testament is adversity. Well, that of course is a general kind of statement, but it is certainly true that God never has promised that men shall have an easy prosperous time upon the earth. In fact, it is given to some of us to have just the opposite kind of experience.

Now I want to read something to you, and it doesn't come from a Calvinist. You might expect a Calvinist to be biblical, but this doesn't come from, I intended that as a joke. [Laughter] Three people smiled. But anyway, this does not come from someone whose theology is like my theology. It doesn't even come from an Arminian who has an intelligent understanding of the relationship of suffering to the will of God. This comes from a person who writes in a generally slanted to the liberal side commentary on the Gospel of John. This is what he said, “There are vociferous voices these day that will have none of the doctrine of an all embracing providence, that resent the idea that everything that befalls us comes upon us of God's ordering or with his permission, dismissing that as an insult to him, and indeed a sheer blaspheme against him, impossible to fit into the belief that he is love. According to this theory the calamities that overtake mankind, sorrow, and pain, and loss, *et cetera*, are not God's will for them at all, but either are so shallow rooted that none of them runs back farther than to what are customarily called their secondary causes, and are due only to human folly and stupidity and malice and sin, or else are the bursting in on us of an eruption of evil things out of the abyss, while breaking through the guard that God has thrown about men work a havoc for them which had no part in God's plan. But God's purpose is to conform men to the image of his Son, and his Son died on the cross. To conform them to that image and save them from trouble, even great trouble, are two contradictory ends, which not even the providence of God can encompass at one and the same time.”

So it is foolish for an individual, it is unscriptural, it is actually a denial of the truth of God to say that God intends for all of us to be rich, to have a lovely estate, to drive Mercedes, it is given to

some to do that, and we of course may envy them a bit, not without some blame of course, but some may, but it's not the will of God that we all should be rich, and healthy, and successful, and happy. Our Lord Jesus is the greatest of all the illustrations, the apostles fall right behind them, and the prophets are with them, and in fact down through the history of the church of Jesus Christ the illustrations are countless that often the finest blessings of God come to us when we suffer with for various reasons. The Lord Jesus said, “Peter, put up your sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me.” Jesus recognized that this suffering on the cross was something that was appointed for him by God the Father, “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? It is my task, my duty; it is my joy to do it.”

Further, it is not recorded in the Johannine Gospel but Jesus also said at this point, “Look Peter, and the rest of you, I could at this very moment pray to my Father and he would send me twelve legions of angels to support me.” Now if you know anything about a Roman legion it contained six thousand men. “I could pray and seventy-two thousand angels could come to help me, six thousand for each of the apostles and six thousand for the one who has apostatized. They would all be there to help me.” And I'm sure he could have added, though he didn't, that one of these angels is enough to handle Judas and this little crowd. “I could have all of them if I wished. But the cup that the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?” It is not an accident; it is an incident in the ongoing plan of God. There are many of you in this audience who have had experiences that are not very happy. Some of you are having them right now. Some of our congregation are bereaved at this very moment. These experiences are experiences that are not accidents, they are incidents in the plan of God for us, and the attitude that is most edifying is to receive them from a loving Father, as that which is given to us, the cup. That's the cup of which our Lord was speaking in Gethsemane, the cup of the cross.

Well, let me just make one last point. The desertion of the apostles follows immediately after this. They all forsook him and fled, and one can see Peter moving off and Jesus saying, “You too Peter? James and John, you too? James and John, even so alas.” What is the chief sin of



Christians? Well, we sometimes say familiarity breeds contempt. No, in Christian circles it's familiarity breeds indifference. That's the chief sin, it seems to me, of so many Christians today. They hear the word of God over and over again, but they are indifferent to the claims of Jesus Christ.

I say, let me notice one last thing. Of course we notice the terrible nature of Judas' sin. It was sin against, not simply a friend; it was sin against the Messianic office. I don't have time to expatiate upon that. But I want you to notice the glorious nature of the love of Jesus right in the midst of this, for Peter, after slicing the ear off of Malchus, sees our Lord take the ear, put it back, and by a miraculous outpouring of divine power, heal him. He doesn't take the attitude only a slave, just an ear. But I want you to notice the irony of the situation. Do you know what Malchus' name means? It means “king.” It's related to the Hebrew word *melek* which means “king.” Malchus' name was king. What was he? A servant. Servants long for emancipation do they not? Here is Malchus a king, who is a servant. That's striking isn't it? He's a king, but he's a servant. And furthermore, he is a servant of the earthly high priest, Caiaphas. A servant of the high priest, who looks forward to the great high priest, he's a servant of the high priest after the order of Aaron, but here is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek standing before him, the eternal High Priest, the emancipator of all men. And here is Malchus, king, Mr. King, dwells in the house of the ruling family, the earthly high priest, he's still a stranger to the Messianic glory, though he dwells in the house of the Messianic forerunner, earthly, Levitical, high priest. He doesn't yet know the glory of the great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, so now he is finally in the presence of the one to whom Caiaphas pointed by his office, and the breath of the true Messianic glory of the great High Priest, the eternal Priest, moves over Malchus, Mr. King, but so far as we know, he is utterly indifferent and doesn't even know it at all. So sad isn't it?

But do you realize, my dear friends, that that same Messianic glory of the eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus, the emancipator of all servants to sin, the breath of the glory of the Son of God has moved over us as we have considered the ministry of the word of God. There is only one response

that is appropriate. Come to the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing your own sin, acknowledging him as the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the emancipator of the souls of men who by the blood shed on the cross will save your soul, come to him to receive, as a free gift, forgiveness of sins. May God help you to come.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for this magnificent account with so many thoughts moving over our heart and mind as we consider it. O we thank Thee for this eternal Priest who offers the infinite sacrifice, sufficient for the sins of men. If there are some Lord who have never come to him, at this very moment in their hearts may they say...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**