

Life in His Name – Part 44

The Savior Stepped Forward - John 18:1-12

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Jan. 28th, 2024

Intro:

- This morning, we are looking into the account of the arrest of Jesus through the eyes of John the apostle, written in John, chapter 18. Before we jump into that passage, I am going to tell you a story about a self-sacrificing hero named Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan friar during World War II. Kolbe was imprisoned in the Auschwitz concentration camp for his activities in aiding Jewish refugees and the Polish underground resistance.

In July 1941, a prisoner escaped from the camp, prompting the Nazis to select 10 men at random to be starved to death as a punishment and deterrent. One of the chosen men, Franciszek Gajowniczek, a Polish army sergeant and father, pleaded for mercy, explaining that he had a wife and children. At that moment, Maximilian Kolbe stepped forward and volunteered to take the condemned man's place.

Kolbe's offer was accepted, and he joined the other nine men in a starvation cell. Despite the harsh conditions and the impending threat of death, Kolbe maintained a spirit of hope and encouraged his fellow prisoners through prayer and hymns. After two weeks of starvation, Kolbe was the last one left alive in the cell. To expedite the execution, the Nazis injected him with a lethal dose of carbolic acid on August 14, 1941.

Maximilian Kolbe's selfless act of sacrificing his own life for a stranger exemplifies the true spirit of heroism. His actions go beyond the call of duty and showcase the power of compassion and courage, even in the face of extreme adversity.

- Heroes step forward and sacrifice themselves to benefit others, and we honor and revere them for it. Whereas villains sacrifice others to benefit themselves and we disdain and despise them for it.
- Jesus of Nazareth is a hero. He is more than a hero; He is a savior. He is more than a savior; He is The Savior, the only one qualified to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29) by willfully taking our just punishment upon Himself.
- John the apostle and the Holy Spirit want us to understand the resolve, power, and willingness of Jesus as He stepped forward as the Savior, and I hope that you will love, honor, and esteem Him as your Savior and Lord.

John 18:1-12 NIV

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, stepped forward and asked them, “Who is it you want?” 5 “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. (And

Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) 6 When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they said. 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” 9 This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11 Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” 12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus.

- Now in reading this, you may say, “What about Jesus praying in the garden asking that the cup pass from Him?” John did not include that heart-wrenching struggle because that was not his focus. You may ask, “What about when Judas kissed Jesus to betray Him?” John did not include the pain of being betrayed by a very close friend because that was not his focus. And you may also say, “What about the part where Jesus healed the guy's ear?” This compassionate mercy was not John’s focus, so he did not include it.
- From what John did include, we can determine a few things about Jesus that John wanted us to see. First is the resolve of Jesus.

The resolve of Jesus

John 18:1-4 NIV

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4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, stepped forward and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

- Jesus had resolve. He was determined to redeem His creation from their own rebellion by displaying the goodness of God through His sacrifice. This took courage; this took strength; this took love.
- Jesus could have hightailed it out of there, gone into hiding, and saved Himself. Or he could have sounded the alarm and gathered people to come to His defense and overthrow the government. He knew what Judas was going to do, and He had time to flee or to gather His supporters to fight, but He didn’t. He did the exact opposite.
- First, Jesus went across the Kidron Valley. He went away from the city, away from the likelihood that people would see what was happening to come to His defense. He was the most well-known and sought-after person on the planet, and people would have rallied to Him. He intentionally moved away from all of that.

- Second, Jesus chose a place that He knew that Judas knew about. A place where He had gathered with His closest friends, a place where Judas and company would have checked, as they did.
- Then John includes this important detail, that Jesus knew “**all that was going to happen to him**” (v. 4). This wasn’t Jesus hoping for the best, or thinking nothing would happen, or that it would all be okay. He knew all that was going to happen and that it was going to happen to Him.
- He knew that His hands were going to be pierced (Isaiah 53:5). He knew the punches would come, the spitting, the beard-pulling (Isaiah 50:6). He anticipated the lashings, the beating beyond human recognition, the oppression (Isaiah 52:12). He rightly feared the crushing of His Father (Isaiah 53:10; Matthew 10:28). He knew he would have no rest (Psalm 22:1).

He heard the dogs approaching (Psalm 22:16), the stampede of bulls surrounding him (Psalm 22:12). He knew the lions were coming to devour (Psalm 22:13). The beasts of men would soon wag their heads at His anguish (Psalm 22:7–8). He knew His very soul would be poured out to death (Isaiah 53:12). He knew His disciples would soon desert Him (Zechariah 13:7). And, most terrifying of all, he knew His Father would forsake him (Psalm 22:1). (Adapted from <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-savior-stepped-forward>).

- Knowing all of these things, He stepped forward into the “line of fire” into the “crucible” to save those He loved. He did not run away. He did not hide. He did not defend Himself. He stepped forward. This is remarkable. This is a hero.
- He is the archetype and substance of every story we love, from Gandolf the Grey / Frodo Baggins (LOTR), Lilly Potter / Harry Potter (Harry Potter Series), William Wallace (Braveheart), Maximus (Gladiator), King Leonidas (300), Katniss Everdeen (Hunger Games) to Aslan the Lion (Narnia) . . .
- And it was not because He was defenseless and had no choice, He had great and awesome power.

The power of Jesus

- John now gives us another detail: after Jesus asked them “who they wanted,” this happened.

John 18:5-6 NIV

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) 6 When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

- When Jesus replied, He did not say, “I am he.” **SO I IMMEDIATELY WANT TO KNOW WHY IT’S TRANSLATED I AM HE.** According to the Greek He replied, “I AM” (ego eimi). These were the exact words that God used with Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:14). That was not just an indication of His name but showed who He truly was. It showed His real identity.
- There was so much power wrapped up in that name that it caused this assembled crew of grown men and trained soldiers armed for battle to draw back and fall to the ground. This was a flash of the glory of God and the power of His might. This was the voice that spoke into the darkness and created the light. This was the voice that spoke creation into existence. This was the voice that thundered over the waters and cracked the highest mountains.
- This was the voice that could destroy them all with just a word, if He had so desired. This was the voice and power of God, and with just a drop of the weight of glory, it caused their knees to

buckle and their legs to give way. This is the name of names. The name that is above all others. The name that every knee will bow to (Phil. 2:10).

John 18:7-9 NIV

Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they said. 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” 9 This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”

- With a flash of His awesome power Jesus stepped forward in meekness—the great lion who became a lamb—all the while looking out for those He loved and protecting them with His own life. “Take me, and let these men go.” This is the power of God. This is the love of God. This is the word of God. Jesus keeping the promise that not one of those He was given would be lost (John 6:39, 10:28). Jesus keeps His word. And what He has promised to you, He will keep as well. He is resolved, He is powerful, and He will keep His word. No one or no thing can or will stop Him.

The willingness of Jesus

John 18:10-12 NIV

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11 Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”

12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus.

- Jesus chooses to drink this cup to display the goodness of the Father. No one forced Him to do so, and no one tricked Him to do so. He did so of His own accord, willingly stepping forward to lay down His life. No one would stop Him from doing so, even those who wanted to fight to stop Him from doing so. Jesus said:

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep . . . No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.” (John 10:11, 18)

- And this is what He was going to do as He stepped forward to lay down.

John 15:13 NIV

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Conclusion

- I want you to know this love, because there is no love greater than the love that Jesus has for you. Say “yes” to Him. This is a love that you can trust. This is a love that you can follow. This is a love that is worthy of you giving your life for. He is the true hero and savior. Know Him, follow Him, sing His praises, honor Him. He is worthy.

Benediction

“Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let us say among the nations, “The Lord reigns!” (1 Chron 16:29-31)

Questions for Growth Group

1. What in this message stood out to you?
2. What from this passage gave you a new understanding of Jesus?
3. What would be a great response to what we have seen in this passage?
4. What will you choose to treasure in your heart?