

A Volunteer for Death

John 18:1-11

Intro:

1. Phil 2:8 - And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death; even death on a cross!
2. Jesus went to the cross for you as a volunteer!

I. v1-3 - He Went to a Well Known Isolated Location

A. ILL: The location of the Garden of Gethsemene.

B. v2 - It was well known to Judas.

1. Know (Pluperfect) implies that Judas had been there enough times to know precisely where the Lord hung out.
2. This was a favorite place for the Lord to meet with His disciples.

C. v3 - It was isolated enough for a secret arrest to take place.

1. Previously no one dared to arrest Jesus in public because of His popularity.
 - a. Jn 7:32, 44-46 - The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. . . Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him. Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?" "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared.
 - b. Jn 7:25-26, 30 - At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? . . . At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.
2. So - Judas led a huge mob there.
 - a. The **officials** were the Temple police - the priests' private garrison used to keep order.
 - b. The **detachment** were Roman soldiers - about 200!
 - c. They were armed to the teeth with "torches, lanterns & weapons"; obviously they were prepared for armed resistance!

II. v4 - He Walked Right Up to His Enemies

A. He could have escaped if He had wanted to!

1. He knew what was going to happen.
2. He had avoided arrest & capture before.
 - a. In Nazareth. Lk 4:28-30 - All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.
 - b. As the Lord was being arrested, He mentioned, Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? - Matt 26:53.
 - c. A Roman legion or regiment (σπείρα) consisted of from 3000 to 6000 infantry & 100 to 200 cavalry - so this would have been about 72000 angels!
3. v6 - When He responded to this mob, more than 200 heavily armed soldiers drew back & fell to the ground. He could have very easily escaped this time!

B. But He came right into the open alone & asked, Who is it you want?

III. v5-8 - He Identified Himself Beyond Any Doubt

A. He specifically presented Himself to the mob.

1. He initiated the dialogue by asking, **Who is it you want?**
2. When they replied, **Jesus of Nazareth**, He responded, **I am He!**
3. He had to ask twice to remove all doubt!

B. Why is this important to know?

1. Some would compare the merit of the founders of the great religions to justify not surrendering to the Lord:
 - a. Buddha was a great philosopher who laid down good basic principles for life. Worth following!
 - b. Mohammed was a great prophet who taught his followers to worship only one god. Worth following!
2. But Jesus was a common crook; arrested, tried & executed as a criminal. Why should we follow Him?
 - a. Because - Jesus is God in flesh. **Col 1:15-18 - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.**
 - b. The cross was the way to forgive our sins, make us righteous & bring us back to Him forever. **Col 1:19-20 - For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.**
 - b. Jesus didn't go to the cross against His will - He deliberately "set His face toward Jerusalem", determined to volunteer to pay the price! (Lk 9:51)
 - c. **Phil 2:5-8 - Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!**

How can you respond to such a loving act? Surrender your life in gratitude to the One who gave His life for you so willingly!

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