

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

A Volunteer for Death

John 18:1-11

1 Lord Jesus loves you very much. 2

Philippians, chapter 2, verse 8 says, And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! 3

He loves you so much that He went to the cross for you as a volunteer! 4

First . . .

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

He went to a well-known isolated location.

Verses 1 through 3, When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some

officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

The Garden of Gethsemane is located on the side of a mountain just east of and facing the City of Jerusalem. ⁵

It was well known to Judas. ⁶ In fact, the word “knew”¹ in verse 2² means to know by observation. The verb tense in the original language³ implies that Judas had been there enough times to know precisely where the Lord hung out. ⁷ This was a favorite place for the Lord to meet with His disciples. ⁸

It was also isolated enough for a secret arrest to take place. ⁹ Previously no one dared to arrest Jesus in public because of His popularity. John, chapter 7, verse 32 and 44 through 46 states, **The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple**

¹ οἶδα.

² v2 - Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

³ Pluperfect.

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. ¹⁰

Again, in John, chapter 7, verses 25 and 26 and then, verse 30, it says, **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.** ¹¹

So, in verse 3 ⁴ we find that Judas led a huge mob there! ¹²

⁴ So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

The **officials** were the temple police. They were the priest's private garrison charged with keeping order on the temple grounds. ¹³

The **detachment** were Roman soldiers, typically about 200. ¹⁴ They were armed to the teeth with “torches, lanterns and weapons”. Obviously, they were prepared for armed resistance! ¹⁵

Then . . .

II. He Walked Right Up to His Enemies – v4

He walked right up to His enemies! Notice verse 4, **Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”** ¹⁶

He could have escaped if He had wanted to! ¹⁷

He knew what was going to happen. ¹⁸ He had avoided arrest and capture before.

In His hometown of Nazareth they wanted to throw Him over a cliff, but He miraculously walked right through the crowd unharmed. ⁵ ₁₉

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?** ⁶ ₂₀ A Roman legion or regiment ⁷ consisted of from 3000 to 6000 infantry and 100 to 200 cavalry. So this would have been about 72 thousand angels! ₂₁ Verse 6 tells us that when Lord Jesus responded to this mob, more than 200 heavily armed soldiers **drew back and fell to the ground**. He could have very easily escaped. ₂₂ But He came right into the open alone and asked, **Who is it you want?** ₂₃

Finally . . .

⁵ Luke 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.

⁶ Matthew 26:53.

⁷ σπειρα.

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

He identified Himself beyond any doubt. ²⁴ Verses 5 through 8 continue, **“Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,”** they replied. **“I am he,”** Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, **“I am he,”** they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, **“Who is it you want?”** And they said, **“Jesus of Nazareth.”** **“I told you that I am he,”** Jesus answered. **“If you are looking for me, then let these men go.”**

He specifically presented Himself to the mob! ²⁵ He initiated the dialogue by asking, **Who is it you want?** ²⁶ When they replied, **Jesus of Nazareth,** He responded, **I am He!** ²⁷

Notice, He had to ask this twice to remove all doubt! ²⁸

So, **why is this important?** ²⁹ Because some would compare the merit of the founders of the great religions to justify not surrendering to the Lord! ³⁰

Buddha was a great philosopher who laid down good basic principles for life. Some of those principles are worth following. ³¹

Mohammed was a man who taught his followers to worship only one god. Christianity wasn't doing a good job of emphasizing that at the time. All of us need to understand that. ³²

And then, they say, in comparison Jesus was accused of being a common crook. He was arrested, tried and executed as a criminal. Compared to these other founders of great religions, why should we follow Him? ³³

Why should we follow Him? ³⁴

Because **Jesus is God in flesh! Several Bible passages depict this, but one of the best is Colossians, chapter 1, verses 15 through 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. ³⁵

The cross was the only to forgive our sins, make us righteous and bring us back to God forever. We continue with Colossians, chapter 1, verses 19 and 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.** ³⁶

Lord Jesus didn't go to the cross against His will. He deliberately **set His face toward Jerusalem.** ⁸ He was determined and volunteered to pay that price! ³⁷

Then, **He requests us to follow that same example of humility** in our lives. Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5

⁸ Luke 9:51.

through 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! ³⁸

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!