

The King in control

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[0 : 0 0] For the next few weeks, right up to Easter Sunday, we are going to do a series of sermons on John Gospel, Chapter 18, right up to Chapter 21.

These chapters focus on the events from the arrest of Jesus up to the resurrection of Jesus. So this morning, the sermon is the first one in the series.

All of us have experienced bad situations or difficult situations in our life, all of us. I did a Google search and here is a list of 10 bad situations or difficult situations in our life.

Midlife crisis, any of you gone through midlife crisis? I have. When I reach over 40, 50, you know, there's a low depression in my life. Breakups.

Changing friendship. Firmish. Failures. Divorce. Losing a job. Getting older. Oh, many of us are getting older. Getting injured. Or falling sick.

[1 : 0 7] Losing all that you have in a natural disaster. And death of a loved one. Our Lord Jesus himself is not spared bad situations in his life.

In John Gospel chapter 18, verses 1 to 27, which Eliza read for us just now. He is in real bad situation.

Here, Jesus is betrayed by Judas. Arrested by the temple guards. And denied by Peter. And denied by Peter.

Let's look at the first situation in our passage where things are clearly looking very bad for Jesus. The betrayal of Judas.

Verse 1. When he left, when he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side, there was a garden.

[2 : 0 7] And he and his disciples went into it. Jesus said a prayer. And after Jesus' prayer, this prayer is found in John chapter 17.

And after this prayer, he crossed the Kidron Valley into the Garden of Gethsemane. Now we come to verse 2. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

Judas knew this place. Judas must have sat there, sat in this garden many times, listening to Jesus talking about the Father's kingdom.

And in other places, Judas has seen Jesus performing miracles. Many miracles. Miracles such as casting out demons. Feeding the 5,000 men.

Healing the sick, the blind, the deaf, the mute. Stealing the storm. Raising the dead, Lazarus. Then why in the world did Judas betray Jesus?

[3 : 1 1] Why? Some people question why. You have seen so many miracles in his life. Why did Judas betray Jesus? There are three possible reasons.

Firstly, Judas was greedy. He was greedy for money. John chapter 12 verse 6 tells us that Judas was a thief. And since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often took some money for himself.

Judas betrayed our Lord Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Secondly, Judas was disappointed. Disappointed with Jesus' mission.

Jesus talked so much about his death, his suffering. You know, I'll be suffering. I'll go through suffering. I will... Somebody will kill me. I'll be arrested. And they will kill me. They'll torture me. Jesus talked so much about his death and suffering.

And Judas saw no sign of Jesus overthrowing the Roman government. Jesus, no plan. No strategy.

[4 : 16] Thirdly, Judas may want to force Jesus to set up the Jewish kingdom. When the soldiers arrest Jesus, hopefully Jesus will fight back with all his powerful working miracles, you know.

He'll fight back and restore the Jewish kingdom. Whatever the reason. Anyway, whatever the reason. Judas was wrong. Judas betrayed Jesus.

From the human point of view, Jesus seems to have lost control of the plot. And Judas is not anybody, you know. Judas is not an outsider.

He is a close friend of Jesus. One of the closest friends of Jesus. Who has spent three years of close contact with Jesus. In fact, Jesus handpicked.

He handpicked Judas to be his disciple. And finally, after three years, Judas decides to sell out Jesus.

[5 : 20] Jesus seems to have lost control of the plot. Is this true? Is this true? Is this true that Jesus has lost control? Let's go back to the passage to find out.

Verse 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.

Jesus is not in the city at this time. Jesus was outside the city. In the dark, he's able to see this group of people coming after him. You know, in the dark, you see they're carrying lanterns and torches.

Jesus in the dark can see them coming after him. Jesus could have escaped. Just like the previous occasion. For example, in John chapter 10 verse 39. Once again, they try to arrest Jesus.

But he got away. Jesus got away and left them. Jesus could have escaped. But this time, in the garden of Gethsemane, it looks like Jesus has lost control.

[6 : 24] But he hasn't. He hasn't. For Jesus already knew that Judas would betray him. And Jesus purposely go to a place. He went to a place where Judas could find him.

Jesus knew what was going to happen. Jesus didn't stumble into the trap. He did not stumble into the trap. He deliberately stepped. He deliberately, purposely stepped into the trap.

He was in complete control. John 13 verse 3 tells us, Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, under his control.

And that he had come from God and was returning to God. And then chapter 18 verse 4 says, Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, Who is it you want?

Here we see Jesus going out of the garden of Gethsemane to confront the soldiers. You know, it is not one or two soldiers, you know. It is a detachment. The number of soldiers in a detachment can range from 200 to 600.

[7 : 35] 200 to 600 men in a detachment. This sounds like a lot of people for a small task, for such a small task. Just to arrest one person, you need 200 men.

But the Romans always want to have the strength, the strength of numbers in every situation. The bigger the numbers, the stronger they are. A riot may occur, you know, when they arrest Jesus.

A riot may occur. The disciples may fight back. So it is better to have big numbers. To play safe, it is better to have 200 soldiers for crowd control.

You know, crowd control, 200 soldiers. But the Romans, so it looks like, so it looks like the Romans can maintain control. But Jesus is going to show that even if 200 soldiers, they are not in control.

Jesus is the one in control. He is the one directing the events, not them. Jesus asked them, who is it you want? They said, Jesus of Nazareth.

[8 : 44] Then Jesus steps forward. Jesus says, I am he. The literal translation is, I am. At these words, 200 mighty Roman soldiers, you know, mighty, strong soldiers, 200 fighting men, 200 well-trained soldiers, all of them draw back and fall to the ground.

They fall to the ground when Jesus said, I am. This, here, there are two important truths. There are two important truths. Firstly, Jesus is the I am.

In John Gospel, in the book of John, in the John Gospel, Jesus uses seven, seven I am phrases. Number one, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Number two, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

Number three, I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. And number four, I am the good shepherd.

[10 : 00] The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. Number five, I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though they die.

Number six, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. And number seven, I am the vine. You are the branches.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing. I am. I am all of this and so much more.

I am the total answer to the needs of humanity. I am your life. I am your hope. I am your security. I am your direction.

I am your support. I am your foundation. I am your confidence. I am your refuge. I am your guide. I am your light. I am your peace. I am your forgiveness. I am your acceptance. I am your provider.

[10 : 56] I am your member. I am the Alpha and Omega and the beginning and the end. This is our King Jesus. This is our King Jesus.

After the soldiers have fallen, Jesus waits for them to recover. You know, he just waits for them to recover. He didn't run away. Jesus could have run away, you know. He waits. Come, come, come. Wait for them to recover.

And then they ask again. And Jesus asks again. After they have recovered, Jesus asks them again. Who is it you want? Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus say, I am. That's the second important truth. This great I am can only be arrested if he gives himself up.

This great I am can only be arrested. You can only arrest Jesus if he gives himself up. He could have escaped. He could have escaped. Just like the previous occasion.

[11 : 57] He didn't. Now, the time has come. John chapter 13, verse 1 says, Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.

His time has come. It's time to give his life. It's time to fulfill his calling. It's time to secure salvation for all those who call upon him.

After the soldiers got up and asked a second time for Jesus to Nazareth, Jesus answered, I told you that I am he.

If you are looking for me, then let this man go. This happened so that the words he has spoken will be fulfilled. I have not lost one of those you gave me.

where did Jesus say these words? I have not lost one of those you gave me. Where? It's in John Gospel chapter 6, verse 39.

[13 : 04] And it says, verse 39, John 6, 39. And this is the will of him who sent me. I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

But compare these two verses. One is about spiritual protection and one is about physical protection. Just compare these two verses. John 89 is about physical protection.

It talks about Jesus protecting the disciples from being arrested by the soldiers. And then John 6, 39 says about not losing them from a spiritual point of view.

I will raise them up at the very last day. How do we reconcile that? One is about not losing them physically. The other one is about not losing them spiritually. How do we reconcile that?

One theologian, Calvin says this. Calvin explains by saying the note is in your sermon the notes. He explains that by saying the disciples he says this, the disciples were not yet spiritually strong enough to endure persecution or martyrdom.

[14 : 14] So keeping them from physical arrest also kept them from falling away spiritually. That's how they tie these two verses together, they reconcile these two verses together.

Now we come to verse 10. Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, threw it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus commanded Peter, put your sword away.

Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? It is time for Jesus to drink the cup the Father has given him.

The cup that contains the wrath of God. The cup that contains the anger of God. We should be the one drinking it. We should be the one drinking it because of our sins.

But Jesus is drinking it on our behalf. He is absorbing all the wrath of God onto Himself. He is absorbing all the anger of God onto Himself so that we do not have to bear the wrath of God.

[15 : 15] He is saying, Peter, I am drinking this cup for you. Benjamin, I am drinking this cup for you. Clinton, are you here Clinton? Yeah, Clinton, put your hand, yeah.

I am drinking this cup for you. Melissa, I am drinking this cup for you. Elisa, I am drinking this cup for you. I am drinking this cup for all of you.

So that you do not have to be destroyed by God's wrath because of your sins. Yes, Jesus controlled the events, controlled the events.

You know, Jesus controlled the events in such a way so that He can drink this cup of wrath for all of us. Verse 12, then the detachment of soldiers with his commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus.

They bound him and brought him first to Anas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

[16 : 20] After his arrest, Jesus was immediately brought before Anas. But Anas was not the official high priest. He was once a high priest, once a high priest.

But then the Romans removed him and replaced him with Caiaphas, his son-in-law. But in the eyes of the Jews, the position of a high priest, the post of a high priest is for life.

You hold the post for life. So in the eyes of the Jews, Anas still wielded considerable power, even though he was not the official high priest.

Verse 14 says, Caiaphas was the one who advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people. In John 11 49-50 says this, Then one of them named Caiaphas who was a high priest that year spoke up, you know nothing at all.

You do not realize that it is better for you that one man died for the people than that the whole nation perished. When Caiaphas said this, he said it's not because he believed that Jesus is dying for the sins of the world.

[17 : 29] He doesn't believe that. It's not because of that. He said this because he was frightened of the Romans. He feared the Romans. He was afraid that the Romans may think that Jesus is recruiting people.

Jesus is recruiting people to overthrow the Roman government. The Romans may think that Jesus is a troublemaker. and this may cause the Romans to overreact and clamp down on the Jews and this means that the Jews, the Jewish authorities will lose their power, will lose their privileges, will lose their prestige.

So, it would be good if one man died for the people, get rid of Jesus so that there will be peace in our land. That's the meaning of Caiaphas. What Caiaphas says, get rid of Jesus, there will be peace in our land.

But what Caiaphas said is also prophetic. In fact, John made the remark in verse 51 and 52, he says, he did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God to bring them together and make them one.

Indeed, Jesus is dying for the people to save them from their sins. He is dying. As our substitute, he dies so that we can be free.

[19 : 00] Verse 19, Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teachings. The trial before Annas was illegal and brutal.

Imagine a guard being allowed to strike a prisoner. a prisoner. You see this, if you read that, he just slapped. Just slap is not just like a small slap, you know, or a light slap, you know.

When they slap you, it's really full force. It's full force. Imagine a guard being allowed to strike a prisoner.

Imagine a man not holding official position. Annas has no official position. interrogating a prisoner. It is brutal. That's why it's brutal and illegal.

What did Annas question Jesus about? His disciples and his teaching. Annas question Jesus about his disciples. The authorities did not want any rebellion.

[20 : 05] Annas may have wanted to know how many disciples Jesus had. How big was the group? How big was the rebellion? Were they an organized group? Were they ready to overthrow the Roman government?

Were they ready to overthrow the Roman government? Didn't one of them use a sword to attack the Roman soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane? Jesus was careful to say nothing about his disciples so as not to implicate them.

And then Annas also asked Jesus about his teaching. What kind of doctrine was Jesus teaching? Was he subversive? Was it heretical? Jesus did not want to be trapped by the questioning.

So he said, I have spoken openly to the world. Jesus replied, I always taught in synagogues or at the temple where all the Jews come together.

I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said. Jesus tells Annas, check, check, check with the people who listen to me. Just check with them.

[21 : 14] Ask them. Don't have to ask me. Ask them. I spoke nothing in secret. I spoke publicly. Everybody knows what I'm teaching. When Jesus said this, one of the officials, when Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face.

Is this the way you answer the high priest? He demanded. If I said something wrong, Jesus replied, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why do you strike me? Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Eventually, Caiaphas and the Jewish council condemned Jesus to death. They condemned Jesus to death. But one day, one day the table will be turned, will be turned on them, will be turned on Caiaphas and the Jewish council.

One day our Lord Jesus will come back again to be the judge of the world. I wonder what Annas and Caiaphas are going to say to the judge of all judges.

I wonder what they are going to say to our Lord Jesus when he comes in his glory. Annas and Caiaphas represent people who have power.

[22 : 30] They represent people with power, with position, with prestige, but are blinded by them. They are so blind that they cannot see God's hand at work in their lives.

They would oppose the things of God because they make them feel uneasy. They are so afraid of losing power. They are so afraid of losing prestige and position.

Are we blinded? Are we ourselves blinded by the things that we have that we cannot see God at work in our lives? Are the things we have?

The power, the position we have, the prestige we have opposing God's work in our lives? You know the position we have, the prestige and the things we have can oppose God's work in our lives, you know?

You better believe that. Are they opposing God's work in your life? Now we come to the denial of Peter. Simon, Peter and another disciple were following Jesus because this disciple was known to the high priest.

[23 : 36] he went with Jesus into the high priest courtyard. But Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple who was known to the high priest came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you? She asked Peter. He replied, I am not. It was cold and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm.

Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. Then we move on to verse 25. Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, you aren't one of these disciples too, are you?

He denied it, saying, I am not. One of the high priest servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, didn't I see you with him in the garden? Again, Peter denied it and at that moment, a rooster began to crow.

What happened to our brave Peter? This was the man who just a few hours earlier, took out a sword in front of 200 Roman soldiers and started to attack them.

[24 : 41] At that point, he was ready to defend Jesus at all course. He was ready to defend Jesus with all that he had. and if Jesus had not intervened, Peter would have been dead already.

Imagine one fisherman with a sword against 200 well-armed soldiers. Peter is not Jet Li, you know. Peter is not Bruce Li, not Iqman, Optimum Prime, Optimus Prime for younger people.

He's not Rambo, you know. Peter is just an ordinary fisherman with a sword against 200 soldiers. It talks about courage, bravery, willing to die for Jesus.

But, but, at the high priest courtyard, Peter is not being confronted by a soldier. He's confronted by a servant girl.

A servant girl has very low status at the time. Peter has much more position in the community than she does. As a servant girl, what does she compare to a seasoned fisherman like Peter?

[25 : 53] A servant girl has no status, no power, and she hasn't, she isn't armed with weapons. She hasn't brought a group of guards. She said, are you a disciple?

Are you a disciple? I am not. It doesn't take long for Peter to deny Jesus. what happened to our brave Peter?

What made him deny the Lord? He was willing to die for Jesus, wasn't he? Just a few hours ago. What made him lose courage?

Firstly, his pride caused him to fall. Pride always goes before a fall. when Jesus warned Peter and his friends that they will all fall away.

You know, Peter boastfully claimed that even if all of them fall away, I, Peter, the rock, I, Peter, the rock, will not fall away. Even if others have become chicken, I will remain as a rock.

[27 : 00] Master, you make a mistake. Peter, the rock, will not be moved. I will never fall away. Peter wanted to contradict what Jesus had just said.

Can a man ever contradict Jesus? When Jesus says something will happen, then something will surely happen. Peter was overconfident in himself.

When pride swell in our heart, when pride swell in our head, be prepared for a big fall. Secondly, Peter was disillusioned when he saw Jesus powerless and helpless before the Jewish council.

This was not the Messiah he expected. He expected a powerful Messiah, a Messiah that cannot be bullied, a Messiah that will overpower the Jewish council.

Now, all hope was gone. Jesus had become a lame duck before the Jewish council. Peter thought to himself, I better save my skin before it's too late.

[28 : 08] I better save myself before it's too late. Jesus is not going to help me. He's not going to set up the Jewish kingdom. He's a gone case. So, Peter denied the Lord.

When you compare Peter with Jesus, Peter denied the Lord three times. Peter lied three times. Peter said, I am not.

But Jesus always tell the truth. I am. And yet, how amazing it is that Jesus still died for Peter. Not just for Peter.

It is also amazing that Jesus died for you and me who many times behaved like Peter. There are many times we should have stood up for Jesus.

But we didn't. There are many times we should have spoken a word about Jesus. But we keep quiet. Yet, knowing all this about us, knowing all these things will happen to us, even after believing in Jesus, we will still fail him.

[29 : 18] Jesus knows about this. Jesus knows all about us. Jesus knows everything about us. And he is still willing to die for you and me. It's really amazing knowing that we will fail him even after believing in him.

He will still die for us. So amazing. That's why we call it amazing grace. But Peter's failure was not a total failure.

Jesus forgave him and that's another story. Peter went to become the elder of the church. Peter had been transformed by the gospel. Peter had been faithful this time and he eventually died for Jesus.

God can use us again even though we may have failed. God can forgive us and restore us. Restore the zeal. Restore our zeal for him.

Let me tell you this story about Pastor Wang Ming Dao. he was a great Chinese Christian leader. I admire Pastor Wang so much so that I named my son after him.

[30 : 35] That's how much I admire him. I named my son after him hoping that something of Pastor Wang will be passed on to my son. After the Second World War, the communists gained power, the communists ruled China.

They arrested Christian leaders who refused to cooperate with the Chinese government. So Pastor Wang was arrested for not cooperating with the government and he was sent to prison.

In prison, Pastor Wang began to question the mercy of God. He said, why? Why? Why do you allow this to happen to me? Why do you allow your children to suffer unjust punishment?

Where is the goodness of God? Where is the goodness of God in this punishment? Lock up in the prison? He questioned God. And the communist guards applied pressure and brainwashing techniques onto him.

So much so that Pastor Wang crumbled and cracked and he gave up. He signed a confession that he was wrong to oppose the government. He was wrong not to cooperate with the Chinese government.

[31 : 40] Soon he was released but he was so miserable. He was so depressed. He felt that like Peter he had denied the Lord. Just a few months out of prison Pastor Wang repented and then stood up for Jesus.

He stood up for Christ again and this time he paid the price. He was thrown into prison for 20 years. 20 years. Pastor Wang was released in 1980 1980 he was 80 years old toothless no teeth death he died in 1991 at the age of 91 though he has passed on to glory he is still an inspiration to many Christians his influence lives on he has passed on a spiritual legacy to all of us.

Let me close with an exhortation from Pastor Wang quote when I was put in prison I was devastated I was an evangelist the preacher of the gospel I wanted to hold crusades all over China big gospel rally I was an author a writer I wanted to write books I was a preacher I wanted to study my Bible and write sermons but in prison I have no Bible I have no puppet I have no audience I have no pen I have no paper I could do nothing nothing except get to know God and for more than 20 years that was the greatest relationship I have ever known these prison years were my honeymoon with

Jesus I was pushed into a prison cell but you now speaking to the audience but you will have to push yourself into one simplify your life simplify your life so that you have time to know God simplify your life so you have time to know God can you say to one another say to one another say to one sitting beside you say to him simplify your life so you have time to say to each other remind each other our life is too complicated now so they have no time for God yes simplify your life so that you have time to know God yes get to know Jesus who drank the cup of God's wrath for you and me yes get to know Jesus who willingly go who willingly got himself betrayed and arrested so that he could die as our substitute yes get to know

Jesus better and deeper with each passing day let's pray let's come to the Lord in prayer
Lord we thank you for your word thank you for your word we need to simplify our lives
teach us Lord how to simplify in which areas we need to simplify our lives so that we can
get to know you better because it is knowing you that we have eternal life the abundant
life in Jesus name we pray amen toes beyond you on right to grab to Missouri ■■■■ yea
that I do that