18 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” 5 They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” 8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.” 10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11 So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

You know, the strongest most powerful act that Jesus ever did, was lay His life down. The most powerful move of leadership was to give His life, to humble Himself to the point of death on the cross. In doing so He showed He was worthy to be our Savior.

I had the opportunity to ride a horse last year. I remember sitting on it and feeling like I was on top of the world. I remember feeling like I was king of the mountain. Here I was, sitting high looking over the field in a dominating strong position. Then the guide who was showing me how to ride the horse said, you know the average horse weighs about 700 pounds and the reason why you can sit there in peace and not be bucked off and trampled is because the horse is deciding to let you sit on him. In reality the horse is bigger, stronger and faster than you, and can take charge at any moment. What we have to realize is that when this horse is called to serve, that calling is power under control.

Today as we continue in our walk through the book of John. We come to a deciding moment. We are at a place where Jesus is confronted and met with a decision. He could end all this nonsense, exhort His authority and with his power take over this situation, or He can show us what it looks like to be in authority and yet have a calling that is under control.

We have been on this journey through the book of John, following the life of Jesus. It is now at the point where Jesus will be arrested. Jesus has sat with the disciples and shared with them in the Upper Room. They have partaken in the last Passover meal of Jesus’ earthly life. Judas has left the building. The prayer of Jesus on behalf of His followers has saw its amen. With all of this behind them, the time has come for them to head to Gethsemane which eventually will lead to the cross.

Jesus has promised the coming of the Holy Spirit. He has promised the disciples would be protected, he has promised a return for His beloved disciples, he has promised salvation and a prepared place for them, but none of that is possible, if Jesus does not go to the cross. And this moment begins the journey to the crucifixion.
Chapter 18 begins with the stage set for what is about to take place. John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

Then Jesus and the disciples crossed the Kidron Valley. This valley or ravine was a typical Middle Eastern valley that carried water during a rainy period but was basically dry during most of the year. It lies east of the Old City of Jerusalem and separates the city from the Mount of Olives. It is believed that the fluids from the temple sacrifices ran through this valley.

At the foot of the Mount of Olives is the traditional site of Gethsemane. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the synoptic gospels, indicate that this was the place where Jesus was troubled and prayed his agonizing prayer in which He accepted that even though in His humanity, He would have chosen a different route, He accepted, not His will but God’s will be done.

Matthew tells us that soon after He finished this prayer, Judas and the crowd entered the scene.

Matthew 26:47 While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

R. Kent Hughes in his commentary on John records his understanding of this passage in relation to the Genesis accounts as such:

The Lord deliberately chose Gethsemane. John’s specific mention of it as a “garden” in verse 1 suggest that the apostle has in mind a deliberate comparison with the original Garden of Eden. The symbolism is this:

- The first Adam begin life in a garden. Christ, the second Adam, came at the end of his life to a garden.
- In Eden Adam sinned. In Gethsemane the Savior overcame sin.
- In Eden Adam fell. In Gethsemane Jesus conquered.
- In Eden Adam hid himself, in Gethsemane our Lord boldly presented himself.
- In Eden the sword was drawn. In Gethsemane it was sheathed.

This symbolism is not accidental or incidental to Jesus’s death. It was an assurance for future generations of readers that Christ was in control.

We are not sure if John intended on making these comparisons, but the similarities are worth noting.

Jesus is surrounded. He is surrounded by disciples who at the moment, probably feel like they have been hoodwinked. He is surrounded by religious leaders looking to do Him in. He is surrounded by Roman soldiers simply doing their job coming to arrest Him. Yet though He is surrounded, this is what He came to earth for. This is what He was called to do. He is surrounded, but He is still in control.

Jesus teaches us that Your calling may come with trouble, but you are never out of God’s control.

There are four lessons from this encounter I want us to learn today...
1-Betrayel is sometimes part of the calling.

John 18:2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Get the scene. Jesus has just finished praying and here comes Judas, followed by the crowd who paid him off to give up the man who is causing all these rumors they have been hearing about.

He is said to be healing the sick. He is said to be giving sight to the blind, and the straw that broke the camel’s back was this notion that he raised a man from the dead. This heretic needs to be put away, but these people will cause a huge commotion if we do this in public.

The place had to be specific, and Judas knew just the place. The olive grove was a place where Jesus and His disciples came each night to camp when they were in Jerusalem according to Luke 21:37.

Jesus used it to call His disciples to rest. Judas thought, what a perfect place to have Jesus arrested. The religious leaders did not want this arrest to create a big scene and cause a riot, so this was a secluded place. Judas knew that Jesus would be there because this is where they hung out.

Matt 26:14 tells us that Judas initiated this plot. When he was given the price of betrayal, he then sought after an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Matthew 26:48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him.

I wonder if Judas looked Jesus in the eye when he kissed Him. I wonder if Judas was concerned about what the other disciples would think of him after this betrayal. In this moment it didn’t matter. Jesus needed to go down and any other thoughts surrounding this plan didn’t matter.

Leon Morris in his Expository Reflections on the Gospel of John says, “It is not without its interest that none of the Evangelists goes out of his way to criticize Judas; none of them vilifies him. They content themselves with recording the facts. Perhaps we might notice at the same time that the Gospels never praise Jesus. We never read of how wonderful Jesus was; none of the Gospel writers says that he was a great and good man. They simply recount the facts. Those who wrote our Gospels were interested simply in telling their readers what happened; those readers could work out for themselves how good or how bad were the people whose deeds were recorded.” What we have, the scene that is explained is simply the facts.

Notice that when Jesus is betrayed, we don’t read that Jesus begin throwing profanities at Judas. Because Jesus knows that though He is being betrayed, this betrayal does not hinder His Father’s will, it assures His Father’s will.

This fulfills messianic prophecy according to Zechariah 11:12-13:

Zechariah 11:12 Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver. 13 Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the lordly price at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.
The prophecy in Zechariah states that the Messiah is to be betrayed and for 30 pieces of silver, which was the cost for a slave according to Exodus 21. So, Judas did not even get top dollar. His heart was dark, and it really didn’t matter what they offered, his wheels were set in motion to betray Jesus. The enemy had already secured his soul.

What would you have done? How would you have responded knowing that someone you trust is trying to shut you down from doing what you know God has called you to do. Though we want to believe that all people have our best interest in mind, we have to understand that when you decide to follow your calling, it may come with those who are irritated by your joy. When you decide to follow your calling, it may come with people who are upset at your happiness. When you accept your calling, there are those who want to see you fail and are willing to do whatever it takes so they don’t have to hear you share your faith one more time.

I hate to break this to you. Everyone is not on your side. Betrayal by those you trust may be a part of what God is calling you to do. What you have to know is that though there are those who seek to betray you, that betrayal is still in the will of God. That even when there are people who wish you harm, they are still under the control of a sovereign God who is not surprised and not caught off guard.

Remember you are called by God to be His light. Being His light may draw people to be upset with you and try to put your light out, but because it is His light, it can’t be put out.

1-Betrayal is sometimes part of your calling.

2-Suffering comes with the calling.

John 18:4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” 5 They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

We, here again, see the one who is in control. Judas is standing with them. Showing he has chosen a side and it was not the side of Jesus.

This contingent of soldiers approaches and the pictured peasant they were looking for comes forward in a powerful stance and makes a clear declaration that the one they were looking for was He Himself. There was no fear in his eye. He did not shudder or fall when they were approaching. This man was totally in charge of this situation.

John states, “knowing all that would happen to him”. Question, if you were to be approached by a band of men with weapons looking to harm you, and you knew what their intentions were, What would be your response?

Jesus knew suffering was in His future, Jesus knew that He was about to endure a kangaroo court, Jesus knew He was about to stand before crooked rulers. Jesus knew that He was called, and a part of that calling included Him enduring the pain of ridicule, disappointment and the cross, but He did not back down. Because suffering comes with the calling.
We can’t ignore the question and answer. Jesus asked, “Whom do you seek?” 5 They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” 6 When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

His words were “I Am He,” literally, “I Am”. This is the language of deity. His statement literally drove them to their knees. This scared them. So much so that they fell backward to the ground. They were struck by the majesty of His words. They had heard tales of his power, they have been told stories of his miracles. Now that they were in His presence, His simple response to their question brought them to their knees. His words were “I Am He,” literally, “I Am”. This is the language of deity. His statement literally drove them to their knees. This scared them. So much so that they fell backward to the ground. They were struck by the majesty of His words. They had heard tales of his power, they have been told stories of his miracles. Now that they were in His presence, His simple response to their question brought them to their knees.

The phrase I am may or may not be intentionally pointing to the I Am statements of John that specifically point to the deity of Jesus, but they were given in such an authoritative manor by Emmanuel, God with us, that what they heard was nothing they had experienced before.

Notice Jesus Didn’t say...He is not here...nor did He run because He was caught by surprise. It did not say that He Hid himself in hopes that He would not be found. Knowing all that would happen, He came forward. Why, because He knew that suffering, was a part of His calling to be our savior.

We have to understand that a part of being a believer is knowing what will happen to us. I wanted to say may happen, but James 1:2 says, Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

The key word here is ‘when’, not if, not maybe, when. It is a part of the calling. Jesus walks into this scenario knowing that He is about to encounter suffering. And He tells us we should be ready also.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you...

Though He knew suffering was at the hands of those who have approached Him, he did not back down. When you decide to walk with the Savior of the world and carry His message, the same spirit that wanted Him out of the way, seeks to keep you from sharing that message.

I asked an honored pastor about his thoughts on suffering and the calling. He said, “until you have had a hole torn so deep in your life that only God can fill it, can you fully be used by God.”

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

It is in suffering you learn about the God who comforts, it is in suffering, you learn of the God who never leaves nor forsakes. It is in suffering, you are perfected to minister to those who are also suffering.

Suffering comes with the calling.

1-Betrayal may come with the calling, 2-Suffering comes with the calling.
3-Protection is promised because of the calling

8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.”

Jesus is faced with this crowd, but He doesn’t flinch. Because at best, all they could do is take His physical life. The arresting band may have been a strong human force armed with weapons, but the person being arrested is here clearly represented as being in charge of the entire process. The King was not being captured; he was giving himself over to his enemies.

He then turns His concern to those who He called to follow Him. We have seen Jesus identify Himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus laid down His life for the sheep. His protection of His followers was a priority. He would die not only for them but in their place. As the Good Shepherd He did not lose any of His sheep.

He prayed this in chapter 17, He now follows through on the completion of that statement by taking the wrap and getting his disciples out of harms way. “Let these men go”, I am the one you are looking for. I am the person that you are threatened by. These men are not your problem. Let them go. By doing so he fulfills His promise of not losing one.

No matter where you think you fall in the socio-economic line of succession, God knows your name and He knows exactly where you are. And no matter how alone you may feel, He is with you. Not only is He with you, He will never leave you. When you become one of His children, a sheep of His fold, you are placed in the protective arms of the creator of Heaven and Earth. You are hollowed in the hand that carved out the valleys and molded the mountains.

He is the Shepherd of Psalm 23, protecting and caring for His sheep.

It’s amazing to see, with the complexity of billions of stars and galaxies down to the minute details of cell organisms and atoms that make up our matter and physical realm. With every particle that makes up the clouds and the system that uses plants to produce oxygen for us to breathe, with all that goes into making our world go around and our manhood remain in existence, we still read in Psalm 23, The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.

When you accept the call to follow and serve our God, it comes with the promise of being kept. It comes with the promise of being secure, it comes with the promise of protection.

Accepting God’s calling over your life has the benefit of having His covering over your life.

1-Betrayal may be a part of the calling 2-Suffering comes with the calling 3-Protection is a benefit of the calling.

4-Willing submission empowers you for the calling.

John 18:10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) 11 So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

We again see Peter jump into action without thinking. He has the heart of a lion and the patience of a nat. Peter promised he would die for Jesus. Now, in this moment he thought he needed to save Jesus.
You know Peter, let’s protect Jesus or go down fighting. Peter most likely went for the kill shot, but obviously was a better fisherman than swordsman, because he ended up cutting off an ear of a servant. The text tells us the servant’s name was Malchus. There is no significance to his name. This is just John’s way of validating the details of the story. For instance, both Luke and John recorded that it was his right ear, again this is incidental evidence of the historical reliability of the book.

Peter’s loyalty was impressive, but it missed God’s plan. Earlier that same night Jesus had rebuked Peter, now He rebuked him again, this time for not understanding God’s will. The cup which the Father had given Jesus refers to the suffering and death He would experience under God’s wrath against sin.

The words “the cup the Father has given Me” indicated that Jesus saw all the things coming on Him as part of God’s sovereign plan. His rhetorical question to Peter was designed to prod Peter’s thinking. Jesus had come to do the Father’s will and so He must now embrace it.

He came to submit to the will of the Father. By submitting to the will of the Father, Jesus ensures He will experience the power of the Father.

Submission and power do not seem to fit together. But when you decide to submit, you actually position yourself to be empowered. By submitting you position yourself to be used by God to do great things.

Submission may make you look weak to the world. Submission may make other people think you are being stepped on. Submission may look like you are forgotten. Submission may cause you to have some lonely nights. Submission may make you feel like no one understands. Submission may not put your name in lights. But when you look at submission through the lens of our Savior...

This submission will lead to the cross, the cross will lead to the grave, the grave will end in the resurrection, the resurrection will command that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.

This all begin because Jesus submitted to the Father’s will.

Remember they may look at you and see from their perspective weakness. But what they don’t realize is that when they look at a son or daughter of the most-high God, they see someone who is called. Called with power, and the ability to keep that power under control.

The strongest most powerful act that Jesus ever did, was lay His life down. The most powerful move of leadership was to give His life, to humble Himself to the point of death on the cross. In doing so He showed He was worthy to be our Savior.

And the church said, Amen!

Let’s Pray!