

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 07.23.2023

THE TRUE COST OF FREEDOM – John 18:1-9

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

The Bible has its own share of villains and traitors. For example, David’s long-time counselor Ahithophel famously betrayed the king and threw his support behind David’s enemy, Absalom. There are others we could mention, but of all the traitors who have ever lived, none is more despised or infamous than Judas Iscariot. His name has become synonymous with betrayal and treachery. The thing that makes his betrayal of Jesus so heinous is how undeserved it was. Jesus handpicked Judas to be one of His disciples. Talk about being blessed! Then Jesus gave him a position of authority within the group. We know that’s true, because of all the disciples, Jesus chose Judas to be the groups treasurer. Jesus never treated Judas any differently than the other disciples. He genuinely loved him. Yet despite the special access he enjoyed and the unique privileges he was afforded, Judas never surrendered his heart, and in the end, he chose to betray God’s Son for a mere 30 pieces of silver. Today, we’ll look at his story and Jesus’ arrest in Gethsemane. Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel’s sermon?
2. What is the most difficult decision you’ve ever had to make? What made it so difficult?

For most of us, the bigger the decision the longer the time it takes to make it. We weigh out alternatives and options, carefully examining the fallout of the choices we make. For the Christian, one of the questions we must ask in every decision regards the will of God. But even if we know what the will of God is in a given situation, we might choose an alternative, particularly if the will of God seems difficult. Thankfully, Jesus never strayed from God’s will, though He was tempted to do so.

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 18:1-3

1. Why do the Pharisees want to take advantage of the night to arrest Jesus (see John 3:19-20; 12:35; 13:30)?
2. Why do you think such a formidable force was sent to arrest Jesus? What does this reveal about His reputation at that time?
3. John points out that along with the Pharisees, a group of Roman soldiers accompanied Judas. This meant that both Jews and Gentiles played a part in Jesus’ arrest. Why do you think John pointed this out? What does this little detail tell us about Jesus’ effect on people? About human nature?

Judas’s group included a detachment of Roman soldiers stationed in Jerusalem and some temple officials or temple guards from the Sanhedrin (18:3). Judas, the Roman soldiers, and the temple police must have appeared a formidable force, whatever their total number. This group was prepared for trouble and equipped to meet it. These verses illustrate the universal rejection of Jesus on the part of humanity.

“PROMISES” in 2023

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 18:4-9

1. Jesus used many “I Am” sayings (vine, light, bread). How do you explain verse 6? Read John 8:24,28,58 for additional insight.

Jesus’ response demonstrated His complete control of the situation. The phrase I am is the designation by which God revealed Himself to Moses (Ex. 3:14) and from which is derived the name Yahweh, translated “LORD.” Thus, some of those present may have recognized Jesus’ words as His affirmation of His deity (see also John 8:24,28,58). John also reported that Judas was standing there with the soldiers and others (v. 5). Judas, the betrayer, was the son of Simon Iscariot (6:71). Although John didn’t report it, the other Gospel writers recorded that Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. This act of betrayal was a turning point for Jesus’ disciples, followed later in John 18 by Peter’s denial.

2. Mark 14:43-46. What does this scene tell you about Judas’s misunderstanding of Jesus’ mission?
3. We can only speculate about what motivated Judas to betray Jesus. What are some possible motivations?
4. In what ways are we motivated to betray Jesus today?
5. On the other hand, when have you openly and boldly identified yourself as a Christian when you knew that such identification might bring you ridicule or harm?

John emphasized Jesus’ bold testimony about His identity to the group who came to seize and arrest Him. In contrast to Judas’s deception and Peter’s future denial, Christ boldly identified Himself, knowing such identification would start the process of His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Those who seek to follow Christ live truthfully when they openly and boldly identify themselves as His disciples.

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Someday, Jesus is going to come back to this earth. When He does, what happened to these soldiers will happen to everyone. On that day, the Bible says that ‘every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.’ That means every angel, and demon, and man and woman is going to hit the floor and acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus. Some will be doing it willingly while others will be doing it begrudgingly, but we’re all going to bow before Him. My encouragement to you would be not to wait until that day to worship Him but to choose to do it now.

1. How specifically can you be more conscious this week of Jesus’ sacrifice on your behalf?
2. How does Jesus’ decision to “drink the cup” help you in your obedience to God?
3. How would you describe the difference that Jesus’ death and God’s forgiveness has made in your life?

PRAYER – Praise Jesus this week for His commitment to the will of God. Thank Him for remaining strong, despite the temptation. Ask God to continue to open your heart more and more to appreciate the greatness of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

“ Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care.” {Psalm 95:6-7}