

THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

(A Study of the Gospel of John)

The Source of Jesus' Strength

INTRODUCTION: In our study of the Gospel of John, we are in chapter 18, and Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane.

I want to walk you through the next things that happened to Jesus by reading the Scriptures in chronological order. Understand that to get the complete story we must go to several gospel accounts.

Each of the human authors of the gospels are like four observers that God placed at different points to offer us a four-dimensional perspective, each inspired by the Holy Spirit and perfect in its accuracy, yet incomplete by itself. That is why God gives us all four, so we can learn everything we need to know about Jesus from what He has given us in the Word of God.

For our purposes today, we will go back and forth between John and Matthew.

John 18

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. 2 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3 Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

Matthew 26

49 Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. 50 But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. 51 And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. 56 But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

John 18

12 Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. 13 And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-

law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. 14 Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

19 The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

20 Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. 21 Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."

22 And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"

24 Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Matthew 26

59 Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, 60... at last two false witnesses came forward 61 and said, "This *fellow* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.' "

62 And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

64 Jesus said to him, "*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! 66 What do you think?"

They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, 68 saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

If you can bear it, I want you to think about what happened during these religious trials to Jesus.

- The betrayal of a friend
- Cruel soldiers tying hands and arms and shoving you as they march you to trial
- Every question asked, not to elicit the truth, but to convict by implication
- Answers given met with a brutal slap across the face
- False witnesses called by prosecutors in collusion with the judge
- Having so called men of God spit in your face
- Strike you with their fists
- And condemn you to the most cruel and agonizing death ever devised by men

Out of this, I want to raise a single question.

WHAT GAVE JESUS THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE?

The question is hardly academic. We all must endure times of trial. They are probably not as big in comparison to what Jesus had to endure, even before the cross itself, but they are big enough to us.

The only ones who would call our trials small are those who do not have to feel the hurt and pain we feel.

So how did Jesus do it? How did He get through it? What gave Jesus the strength to endure?

And do not think that Jesus could endure this as He did because He was God in the flesh.

- He was and is God.
- But He was also man, and He was 100 % man.
- When Jesus was slapped in the face, it hurt just as much as if you are slapped in your face.
- When Judas betrayed the Master, the heart of Jesus ached like your heart aches when someone you love betrays you.
- Being God did not make Jesus immune to pain and suffering.

That is a sad truth, but it is a truth that helps you and me. Because that means that whatever it was that gave Jesus the strength to endure can also be a help to us.

It can help us endure. It can help us get through.

So, in a bit, we will come back to this text, because it not only tells us of Jesus' suffering through these trials, it reveals what it was that gave Jesus, ... and what can give each of us, the strength to endure.

WHAT GAVE JESUS THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE?

I believe the Scripture reveals three things. The first two we find in Jesus' reaction to Peter cutting off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest. Listen to what Jesus said.

Matthew 26:52–56 52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you

did not seize Me. 56 But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

I. JESUS WAS CONFIDENT THAT HE WAS PART OF THE FATHER'S SOVEREIGN PLAN.

A. That is why Jesus rebuked Peter.

Jesus was saying, Peter,

I know you are trying to keep Me from suffering,

but that is not what this is about.

If this were about preventing My suffering, the Father has 60,000 angels assigned to My protection detail.

Father and I just worked through all of this. I told Father that if the plan could work without My suffering so much, that's the route I want to go.

But I also told Father that if My suffering, dying even, was the only way for the plan to be fulfilled, I was willing.

Peter, Father has assured Me, it's the only way. And I know He speaks the truth.

- I remember when Father, Spirit, and I talked about, before Adam and Eve were put in the garden, even before there was a garden or there was an earth or a sky. We talked about it.
- Before I set up the foundations of the universe, I agreed to be the Lamb of God Who would take away the sin of the world.
- We have been working this plan ever since.
- I have to suffer or you can never be forgiven.
- I have to die, or you will be justly condemned to eternity in hell.
- The plan is not about keeping Me comfortable or even reducing My pain.
- The plan is about your salvation.
- And the salvation of the whole world.

B. Jesus had the strength to endure because He knew it was a part of the plan of God.

- Father wasn't just being mean.
- Father wasn't being inattentive.
- The devil had not won over the Father.
- The suffering and the pain were a necessary part of God's plan.

May I tell you an uncomfortable truth?

C. Oftentimes, we too quickly determine that suffering and pain are not in God's plan for us.

- How many times have you said to someone, "Oh God loves you. He would not want you to hurt like that."
- How many times has someone said to you, "It is not God's will for you to suffer like that."
- Oh, really? How can we be so certain that times of pain and suffering are not a part of God's plan for us when it was so clearly part of the plan for God's own dear Son?
- I hate to admit it, but some of the deepest changes in my own life have come by way of times of pain and suffering.
 - I am not one given to many tears and much crying, but when God convicted my heart about His love for the world and His call for me to be an Acts 1:8 Christian and an Acts 1:8 pastor, it was after nearly a whole week of weeping and heartbreak. In all honesty, if God had not broken my heart in such a way, I would not be engaged in training pastors in Brazil or Africa, and I would not be your pastor.
 - I grew more in my faith and understanding of God's provision following Hurricane Katrina, when I never had less in my entire life. I was in a city with every building of my church under water, my home flooded, my son's home destroyed, but God's providential care became more real and personal than ever before.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: ...

- It is God's will for every person who has been saved to be sanctified, made more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. The simple truth is that sometimes that happens best when things are difficult.

How does that help us endure in times of trial and tribulation?

By knowing that God is working a plan in each of our lives as He was in the life of Jesus. It is a different plan, but a plan none the less.

God is working to save us.

God is working to sanctify us, to transform us to be like Jesus.

God is working to use each of us to be witnesses for Christ, here, there, and everywhere.

If we are suffering, if we are in pain, **we can pray the prayer of Jesus,**

“Father, if it be Your will, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not my will but Yours be done!”

What gave Jesus the strength to endure?

II. JESUS DID WHAT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO DO.

Jesus knew not only that even in the midst of His suffering, God was working His plan,
Jesus knew what His own part of the plan was.

Jesus knew what He was supposed to do and He did it.

- He did not fight back.
- He did not try to escape.
- He healed the severed ear of Malchus.

When what is happening in your life had to be endured rather than enjoyed,

- **Pray, “Lord please remove this, but your will be done.”**
- **Open you heart and life to see how God is wanting to change you, grow you.**
- **Take the next step of obedience in that growth**
- **Be a witness of Christ to someone else.**

What gave Jesus the strength to endure?

III. JESUS WAS CERTAIN ABOUT THE OUTCOME.

Matthew 26:63–64 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

64 Jesus said to him, “*It is as you said.* Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Jesus knew that the suffering was for a season and for a purpose.

But the purpose would be accomplished, and God's victory would come.

We who are in Christ will share in that victory.

Even if the rest of our days upon this earth are days to be endured, they shall be like a single moment in comparison to a lifetime.

No one else has a certain home like we do. One day every tear will be wiped away and all things made new, and the joy of that day shall last for eternity.

We can endure, because we know the outcome!