

Meant for Evil - Meant for Good

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[0:00] please take your bibles and turn to john's gospel john's gospel john chapter 11 if you're visiting with us or left your bible at home they're in a seat pocket in front of you down below you'll see a black bible you can pull that out go to page in back of that bible page 82 page 82 john chapter 11 this morning john chapter 11 john's gospel chapter 11 we're going to start in verse 45 and go to the end of the chapter 45 to 57 john chapter 11 45 to 57 page 82 in that black bible thanks john chapter 11 verse 45 to 57 john 11 45 let me read and we'll jump in therefore many of the jews who had come to mary and saw what he had done believed into him but some of them went away to the pharisees and told them the things which jesus did therefore the chief priests and the pharisees convened a council and were saying what are we doing this man is doing many signs if we let him go in this way all will believe into him and the romans will come and take away both our place and our nation but a certain one of them caiaphas was high priest that year said to them you yourselves know nothing nor do you consider that one man should die for the people that the whole nation should die for the people that the whole nation should not perish it is profitable for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish sorry excuse me now this he did not say of himself but being high priest that year he prophesied that jesus was going to die for the nation and not for the nation only but also for the children of god who are scattered abroad in order that he might gather them into one so verse 53 from that day they resolve together to kill him therefore jesus no longer walked publicly among the jews but went away from there to the country near the wilderness into a city called ephraim and there he stayed with the disciples and the passover the jews was near many went up to jerusalem out of the country before the passover to purify themselves therefore they were seeking jesus and were saying to one another standing in the temple what do you think surely you won't come to the feast and the chief priests and the pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was he should report that they may seize him story is told this young lady probably her mid-twenties in a different country another country and she was working for this family this family became very fond of her and she actually lived with the family would do some all this work for the family as a husband wife kids and so she lived there amongst the family and did all this work um enjoying her time mid-twenties and yet tragedy struck the husband um forced his hand on her and raped her she got pregnant so she ended up going back home because she was living with that family she went back home and she ended up having this baby girl

and yet unfortunately with some health reasons and the trauma that took place when this baby girl was about two three years old the mom died these people were not christians at all not believers the mom died so here's this little one two three years old so the grandparents specifically the grandpa because then the grandma ended up dying soon after took care of this little girl two three years old she grew up and she decided she wanted to come to the united states so she she got all her papers together and not everything and came to the u.s and became a citizen was working she's meeting this guy and got married the marriage was kind of sketchy but it actually lasted she ended up having two kids a girl and a boy and then now the lady she has grandkids and one of her kids her son pastors a church god loves to turn evil into good doesn't he i mean you take this horrible evil thing that happened to this lady and look at what god did through that god loves to take what's meant for evil and turn it to good as we come to this part in john's gospel where john is calling readers to come and receive jesus believe jesus know jesus today we'll see kind of similar in the vein of what we looked at last week the juxtaposition points excuse me meant for evil slash meant for good it's a paradox meant for evil but for god it's meant for good here's a way to put it in a statement meant for evil meant for good what humans mean for evil god always means for good a salvific benefit to us and a magnification of his glory what humans mean for evil the evil they do god

always brings good good and in reference to his people it's a salvific benefit to us we receive salvation we receive the benefit and then he gets the glory that he's a merciful gracious kind gentle god god i mean we read genesis 50 the story of joseph you remember 17 years old sold into slavery ends up at this house he's in charge and yet he gets accused of going after the guy's wife totally untrue gets thrown into jail he's there for a couple years or so in terms of his dreams nothing and then all of a sudden he's 30 years old and now he's second in command in all of egypt and then a huge famine strikes the whole land and joseph ends up saving his family and they come down to egypt because if it wasn't for joseph there would be no israel there would be no messiah god takes evil and turns it into good here's another statement for you the greatest intention and act of evil will be meant for the greatest good of humanity the death of jesus christ the greatest evil the killing of the son of god god

would bring about the greatest good of humanity for humanity jesus would die on behalf of his people which consists of both jews and gentiles the church remember last week we talked about god's purposes for us even when it means we suffer must not be seen as outside of the intentional love for us in other words all god does for us is out of love for us and to glorify himself remember we talked about that last week we talked about this though heartache sickness death is outside our expectations it doesn't mean god is incompetent insensitive or unloving it means sickness and death befits his greater and unseen purposes we saw that last week okay that's for circumstances but what about evil the evil that people do in general ah let's get personal now what about the evil people may do to you is god still incompetent insensitive and unloving to allow that evil thing to happen to you no of course not god controls all things even our evil intentions and actions so we can trust christ because he is in control of all he's in control of it all knowing that he works all things together for our good and for his glory always romans 8 28 god works all things together for good to those who love him and those who are called according to his purpose all things according to the counsel of his will ephesians 1 11 god is in control and that's what you're going to see from this text god is in control and what's meant for evil god's going to mean that for good let me show you this notice the first point meant for evil verse 47 to 50 you also see in verse 53 verse 57 we'll look at that in its chronological order of the text but i want us to see this is the main point here in verses 47 to 50 what's meant for evil we'll go back to 45 and 46 oh it went out again there goes ally it's okay i just have the appointment for evil you're good you're good ally's great yay alley look at verse 47 people believed and people don't believe they were reported to the pharisees blah blah blah verse 47 therefore the chief priests and the pharisees convened a council let's stop there this is an official gathering the high priests were the leading guys the leading priestly family mostly consisting of sadducees a minority among the group was the pharisees jesus had become the common enemy so they put their differences to the side and now the whole focus is upon jesus and the the center region this council they were the ruling council they they had final authority they were the primary decision makers in israel for administrative issues and judicial issues obviously they couldn't do anything really radical because they needed the approval so to speak of rome because they were under rome but they would give the final say about jesus so this council they came together and notice verse 47

what are we doing in other words we're failing why because this man notice they don't name jesus you see that the hatred they won't even name him this man is doing many signs they hated jesus so this is bad he's doing many signs doesn't that seem odd to you don't you think that would be a reason for them to believe in him not to hate him it's amazing how this remarkable sign would not convince them listen friends no matter how much evidence we present to people about jesus it is completely and totally up to the spirit of god to work in their heart you cannot do that you cannot work in their heart you can give them all the evidence till you're blue in the face it won't mean squat the spirit of god needs to work in their heart god do you see that from the pharisees it's right before their eyes they they heard about lazarus being resurrected from the dead oh we need to kill him wait what did i just hear you right verse 48 if we let him go in this way if we don't stop him two things are going to happen one all men will believe in him oh that's a little bit of an exaggeration but people will continue to believe in him and second the romans will come and take away both our place in our nation see there were huge political ramifications with what jesus was doing causing people to believe in him see the romans would view this belief as heralding a christ king or actually even worse a warrior king which would threaten their power and authority so they come and take away israel's freedom their rights so to speak that rome gave them remember during this time in the first century messianic expectations were red hot people were like oh oh messiah's gonna come oh

they're gonna kill all the romans and jews are gonna be like raw raw raw raw raw wish come all well here we go and then so with jesus on the scene doing these signs rome could potentially come and lay upon israel the full force of their power rome would not put up with a rebellion no now for these council members it was truly all about them because notice it says in the text our place the the the the truth comes out the romans would take away their power take away our power as a ruling council especially their power in the temple would be gone they didn't like that they wanted the money coming in verse 49 50 a certain one of them caiaphas who was high priest that year well he was high priest for 18 years what do you mean high priest that year john we talking about what do you mean he was high priest for 18 years that year in other words that year that jesus died he was in the chair of the council and he rebuked him you yourself know nothing you guys don't know anything you don't understand anything you don't get it and look at what he says verse 50 nor do you consider that it's profitable for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish it's profitable advantageous that one man died for the whole nation then for the whole nation to perish in other words

let's direct the attention away from the nation onto jesus that's what he's saying he's the source of all this attention so let's put it right back on him guys oh yeah make it look like a roman problem and and jesus is the one who's causing it so pit both israel and rome against jesus let him be the scapegoat i'll put it on the screen let him be the scapegoat for the whole nation let him take it what great evil that is talk about evil what caiaphas said is truly and unbelievably amazing yes jesus would indeed be the scapegoat wouldn't he he would die this was meant for evil but now notice what's flipped here meant for good verse 51 to 52 and he said this not of himself notice how john steps in here the evangelists caiaphas spoke better than he knew well that's a trademark in this gospel isn't it everyone's speaking better than they know yet his statement was huge john tells us the true source of his statement and the true nature as one writer says of his statement as well god used caiaphas like an old testament prophet who spoke what truly would happen what would truly happen what he didn't know or intended god knew and intended because god planned it notice but being high priest that year he prophesied that jesus is going to die for the nation jesus would die for the nation in a ransom redemptive way god used him in that way caiaphas he spoke better than he knew jesus would die on behalf of his jewish sheep this takes us right back to what jesus said in john chapter 10 you remember that john 10 verse 11 john 10 verse 14 i give my life for my sheep jesus said he would die for his sheep he would give his life on their behalf john's gospel continues to be a gospel of irony and here you see the apex is reached here what irony here caiaphas means this for evil to direct this all the evil of jesus and yet what he meant for evil god means for good you see there jesus death would be substitutionary in the place of the nation either jesus died or the nation died now caiaphas spoke politically but john god meant it redemptively the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world caiaphas was not in charge was he god was is and always will be in charge one writer says this i love this quote caiaphas the high priest may have been moving his lips but it was jesus the high priest who was doing the speaking that's a good quote it's like a puppet right oh now look at what john does here in verse 52 this is where you come in and not for the nation only but for the children of god scattered abroad in order that he may bring them into one or gather them together into one see jesus will not only die for the nation but also for the children of god this is interesting this

[20:14] tells us a couple things notice this tells us that those within the nation of verse 51 were our children of god well wait a second how are they god's children before they're gathered do you notice that there are god's children before they're gathered together well how is that possible i'll tell you because they're already his elect sheep they're already his elect sheep here's the doctrine of election coming out again this is how they're god's children before they're even being gathered together they're already god's elect sheep look friends certain ones already belong to jesus even though in time they had not become his disciples for these jesus would die so it tells us this first those within the nation they were his elect sheep but then it tells us something else that jesus would not just die for those children of israel but for others who are the others what is who does john mean what does john mean by the ones scattered abroad who is this it extends out referring to the church church or specifically to gentiles these are the ones jesus spoke of in john 10 verse 16 the sheep who are scattered these two groups will be merged into one united in his identity and his mission jews and gentiles are one one that's what paul says in ephesians chapter 2 what verse 14 and 15 he took the two divisions the two dividing lines and he broke down that barrier and he brought them into one jews and gentiles one god's church so jesus would die for the children of god among the

nation of israel he would die for the children of israel he would die for gentiles too jesus dies for his people and friends this is key these two verses are key to understanding not just this passage but all the passages especially in john's writings that speak about jesus dying for the whole world first john 2 2 he said propitiation for our sins but not for ours only but also for those of the whole world not for ours only jews but also for the whole world gentiles a vicarious substitutionary atonement of jesus would be for jews and gentiles for the church his people his sheep his body he would die on behalf of the gift given to him by the father john 6 37 he would give his flesh and blood for them so he doesn't die for every human that's wrong that's not what the bible says he substituted himself for his sheep i'm gonna put that up there oh man he substituted himself for his sheep notice kaios he meant this for evil but god means it for good a salivistic to you in your life when evil comes against you.

What people mean for evil, God means for good. Notice you see it meant for evil again. It's in parentheses because we kind of looked at that but you see it continuing, verse 53. So from that day on, they all agreed to Caiaphas' political solution to Jesus. They resolved together to kill him. They joined hands with Rome to get rid of Jesus.

He was already found guilty. And John said it with such irony because it was not they who planned to kill Jesus. It was all according to the Father's plan that his son would suffer and die.

They were not in charge. God is in charge. And notice you see that unfold for you in verses 54 to 56. God is in control. Therefore, verse 54, Jesus no longer walked publicly among the Jews but went away from there to the country near the wilderness into a city called Ephraim and there he stayed with the disciples.

[25 : 07] Jesus didn't do this because he was fearful. Jesus didn't do this because he was scared of what they were gonna do. No, he did this by his own authority, his own power.

They're on his schedule, not theirs. He'll control what they will do to him. It was all according to God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge.

Peter says this in Acts 2, verse 23. All according to predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross. It's God's plan. He's gonna do it when he wants to, not when they do.

He stayed at Ephraim, 12 miles northeast of Jerusalem, but look at verse 55. And the Passover of the Jews was near. And he went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover to purify themselves, verse 56.

Therefore they were saying, excuse me, they were seeking for Jesus. They're saying to one another, standing in the temple, oh, what do you think? Surely he's not gonna come to the temple. Well, Jesus could not stay away very long because Passover was coming and this would be the last Passover.

[26 : 17] He would celebrate with his disciples and the Passover that he would fulfill himself where he would give himself for his people on his watch, not theirs.

And because of this significant feast of Jews, they knew he would be coming. They were looking for him. Yet their questions show that they doubted he would come into the temple. And they were seeking him, not necessarily because they wanted to be his disciples or his followers, people were more interested in being wowed by Jesus than in loving or trusting him.

But you see, God would be in control of the time when his son would die. The evil that God places upon us that happens in our lives, God's in charge of that too.

God's in charge of that timing. He knows what he's doing. What people mean for evil, God will mean for good. And you might not see it right now. It might take years.

But remember, God controls all things, even our evil intentions and actions. But we can trust Christ because he is in control of it all. Knowing that he works all things together for our good and his glory.

[27 : 36] Always. We'll notice now the last point, verse 57, which is again meant for evil, verse 57. The chief priests Pharisees, they gave orders.

If you knew where he was, if you saw Jesus report it, Jesus was, one writer says, a wanted criminal. I mean, the social and religious tensions were so thick, you could cut it with a knife.

It's thick. The tensions were high. And they wanted them to report it so they could seize Jesus. Yet Jesus would direct them to do that because it would be at this Passover that his hour would come. He would go to the cross for us. They meant it for evil. God meant it for good. Now, how will we respond? Here's a question I pose to you.

Will we trust him? Look at verse 45. Go back to verse 45. Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to Mary and saw what he had done believed into him.

[28:46] There's two responses here from what happened with Lazarus being resurrected from the dead. To Jesus' sixth amazing, unbelievable, awesome sign.

One. One. Many people believed into him. Now, it could be true belief or, as we've seen this in John's gospel already, those first 10, 11 chapters, it could be shallow belief.

John doesn't tell us. It could be a belief in him for giving them a good show. Oh, cool, Jesus, wow, that's awesome. Give us another show, Jesus. But, this response is definitely superior to the second one.

Verse 46. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things that Jesus did. They reported it to them.

Now, we're not told, but it's obvious their intent was more malicious than the previous. So, it's questionable if these, in verse 45, if they believed Jesus, but, if we can take this, and apply it to this whole section that we've seen this morning from verses 47 to 57.

[30:05] Will we trust God and his plan to turn evil into good? Will we trust God and his plan to turn evil into good and his glory? Will we trust him?

Christian, Christian, this is for you. This is for me. This is for us. Will you trust God when the evil things come against you?

Because it will. And not just the evil that you see in this world, but the evil that might come against you personally that's done to you. another question.

And, will you repent and trust Jesus? Because there may be someone here who does not know Jesus. You've not trusted Jesus. You've not given Jesus your life.

Jesus should condemn you, but he doesn't. God showed amazing grace and mercy. He went to the cross on behalf of sinners. Sinners like you and me. He died so you could be forgiven of all your sin.

[31:10] Repent and trust Jesus. He'll save you. There's the gospel. Or, will you deny him and his mission? Friends, God controls all things.

Even our evil intentions and actions, but we can trust Christ because he is in control of it all.

Knowing that he works all things together for our goodness and glory, always.

I mean, here you see, the greatest intention and soon-to-be act of evil would be meant for the greatest good of humanity, the very death of Jesus. He would die on behalf of his people, which consists of both Jews and Gentiles, the church.

The greatest evil would be for the greatest good. So, what humans mean for evil, God always means for good.

A salivate benefit to us and a magnification of his glory. He's going to magnify his glory. Let's pray and ask him to do the work in us. So we do pray and ask you, Father, this is hard.

[32:23] This is not easy. It will not be easy for us. There's some here, even now, who've experienced great evil that's been done to them, major offense, and there's pain, there's heartache, there's anger, there's huge emotional sadness, even maybe depression and despair.

So we pray that you would help us of spirit direct us back to the truth that God, what humans mean for evil, you will always mean for good.

And somehow, some way, you will bring good. And the hard part is we may not even see it.

So we're asking, give us grace to trust you. We're amazed that you would bring salvific benefit to us by the cross, this greatest evil.

What looked like failure was actually victory. So help us to view the events of our lives in that way as your people, as the children of God for whom Jesus died.

[34:02] Amen. Help us, we pray, because our unbelief, it's knocking at the door and bitterness has the potential of growing in us.

Oh Jesus, direct us back to yourself. And pray for that, I ask you. Take this time, we take this time to a moment of silence, about a minute or so, where you can focus your mind on truth, fill your mind with scriptural truth and God's word, what we've seen in God's word this morning.

Fill it, fill your mind that you might see and pray even that God would give you grace to trust Him. Amen.