

The Way of the Cross

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[0 : 00] Leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. Through the course of our message this morning, I want us to come to grips with the fact that Jesus was not a victim of his circumstances.

! Jesus was the master of every circumstance that we'll look at this morning. He is in complete control. He is in command of all that we will see.

And we'll look at the details of that as we jump into our passage for today. And as we look at this new segment of time from chapter 18 to chapter 19, the events that lead up to his crucifixion, then his actual crucifixion, I want us to understand that the journey that Jesus takes is not just a journey that he is on, but a journey that he intends for followers of him to emulate.

That there is a way of the cross that Jesus moves through in these next two chapters. And the model that he sets will be the model for us as those who are followers of Christ as we emulate the way of the cross.

Are you a follower of Christ this morning? You will emulate the Savior's example, as we'll look at specifically this morning, the example of submission.

[1 : 27] We'll see coming to the surface the supremacy of Christ in all that takes place, and yet his active submission to the Father's will. In a book written by David Platt, maybe you've read the book Radical, he recounts this story of going to Indonesia.

And surprisingly, Indonesia has the most Muslims of any other country in the world, heavily populated with Muslims. And he's teaching in a seminary there, and those who are intending to graduate from this seminary have as a requirement the need for them to plant a church in a new location there in Indonesia, and to lead 30 individuals to faith, and to baptize them, and to essentially plant a church in a new location.

Well, sitting there in his classroom was a man by the name of Radin, who gives his testimony. And this young man, in looking at David Platt, with fire in his eyes, recounts this story of how God worked this out in his own life.

There he is going into this community and beginning to share the gospel with these Muslims who are in this community. And wouldn't you know who shows up at the door is a witch doctor, who are apparently very prevalent in Indonesia, and challenging this young man named Radin to say, listen, why don't you meet me outside, we're going to take care of business.

Now, before Radin had become a believer, he had done some work in terms of becoming very adept in ninja jiu-jitsu.

[3 : 14] So he's thinking about this situation, and he knows that he could quite handily take care of this witch doctor without any problem.

But as he begins to exit this house, he is prompted by the spirit who speaks to his heart, says, Radin, instead of taking matters into your own hands, trust me in this situation.

So Radin takes a chair, and he sits outside this house, and he faces this witch doctor, and he says to him, the Lord will handle this situation.

I do not need to fight you with my fists. The Lord will deal with you as he chooses. And in the next few moments, this witch doctor begins to choke and to gasp for air.

It gets the attention of the people with whom Radin had just been sharing the gospel with, and now the villagers begin to come and to observe this situation that's unfolding in front of them.

[4 : 22] And within moments, this witch doctor is lying on the ground, dead. His decision to yield and to surrender, to submit this situation to the power of God, leads to a dramatic display of God's supremacy in this situation.

And as a result, many of the villagers not only hear the gospel, but come to faith in Jesus Christ. The same is true for us this morning. The same is true for you.

Whatever situation in which you find yourself today, however small or large, there is a demand for your life as a follower of Christ to determine what you will do.

Will you take matters into your own hands, or will you surrender and submit to the guidance and instruction of the Scripture and let God's supremacy work itself out in your life?

There is a privilege of those of us who are followers of Christ to see the supremacy of God show up in this world.

[5 : 28] It's not our supremacy. It is His. And as we submit to the Father's will, in the various circumstances in which you find yourself, you will see the supremacy of Christ come through for you.

You ever find yourself taking matters into your own hands? Well, the way of the cross is the way of submission. Look with me at John chapter 18 as I read these first couple of verses.

We're going to take this a couple of verses at a time. Kind of break this down. And what I want you to see is I want you to see through this passage the complete supremacy of Christ and yet His full surrender to the Father's will.

It begins this way. When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples across the Kindred Valley where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.

Now Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place. For Jesus had often met there with His disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and some officers, excuse me, and the Pharisees went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

[6 : 47] The public ministry of Jesus had come to a conclusion. Hear the finality of the first few words of this chapter.

When Jesus had spoken these words, the message of the Father had been delivered. The secret, private information that Jesus sought to deliver to His disciples had been conveyed.

And now the culmination of all that Jesus had come to do was about to take place in His arrest, in His crucifixion, and then in His resurrection.

Jesus had shown up. He had come near. The Messiah was at hand. His message was accessible to the people. The Jews saw Jesus and His display of miracles, casting out demons, healing those who were sick, exercising authority over the elements.

They saw Jesus. They saw the divine. They saw God face to face. And yet, as we'll see in these next few chapters, instead of acceptance, there was rejection.

[8 : 03] It's almost too hard to believe that those who saw Jesus up close and personal would be those who would reject the very one who came to rescue them.

And yet, for those of us who have grown up in a church, for many of you who have been here at Maranatha for years and years and years, for those of us who have heard about the significance of making Jesus the Lord of our life, who have heard the faithful teaching of the Scriptures, unfortunately, we find ourselves in a similar situation like the disciples and like the Jews, who instead of accept the message and the knowledge about Jesus, we choose to take matters into our own hands, we choose to do things our way instead of submitting to the will of the Father.

And in doing this, we might say, God, you are strong, but I'm stronger. God, you are good, but I'm better.

God, you are wise, but I really don't trust you in this situation. Now, we wouldn't say that in public, but in our hearts, that is the posture of what's taking place when we refuse to submit to the knowledge we have about God.

You are sovereign, you are all wise, you are all powerful, but in this situation, God, I just want things to go my way. And as we look at Jesus' example this morning, as we see the way of the cross, we will see the way of the cross is the way of surrender.

[9 : 56] The way of the cross is the way of submission to the Father. First, in these first three verses, we see that Jesus determined the details of his arrest.

Jesus determined the details of his arrest. I want you to see the supremacy of Christ in all things, and yet, in the midst of supremacy, there is surrender.

There is submission. We see it in so many different ways. I just want to highlight a few. First, we see the surrender of Christ and the supremacy of Christ in terms of the timing of his arrest.

The timing of his arrest. Here in verse 1, when Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with the disciples across the book Brook Kidron. His ministry, public ministry, was over.

And now was the time for Jesus to be killed, to be handed over to the Gentiles, to be delivered up for crucifixion. Chapters 15 and 16 and 17, we see Jesus with his disciples delivering some final parting words to them.

[11 : 08] They've included faithful reminders of things that they have heard in the past of Jesus' ministry, but even new things. He's concentrated on his departure. He's tried to comfort them with the promise of the Holy Spirit.

He's warned them about the conflict that they would face. He's consistently pointed their attention to the unchangeable reality of the Father's care.

These final words were vital for the ongoing endurance of this group of men. But now that the time has come, Jesus now makes his way with his disciples outside of the city of Jerusalem, and now they begin their trek to the Mount of Olives into the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus was concerned about this band of men. He talks about the great celebration that they will enjoy in a future day, looking forward to when the Father would come and to take them home.

but he has predicted on at least three occasions that this moment would come, the moment of his arrest, the moment of his crucifixion and his resurrection.

[12 : 27] And now the long awaited day was here. Jesus knew the timing of his arrest. Jesus also knew the betrayal in his arrest. He knew the circumstances of the betrayal and the betrayer.

Here we see in verse 2, it says, Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place. Jesus was not surprised by the man who stood before him at this point of time.

From the beginning of Judas' time with the group, Jesus was well aware of the way that he would be instrumental in betraying him to the cross. Early on in his ministry, in the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus points to this very issue in John chapter 6.

Turn with me there for a moment as we look at this together. John chapter 6, verse 64. Jesus has shared some difficult words with the people who were participating in the feeding of the 5,000.

And as a result of the difficult words, it says that many of his disciples who heard it then left him. But in verse 66, it says, After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

[13:55] So Jesus said to the 12, Do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter asked him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

And we believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the 12? And yet, one of you is a devil.

He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the 12, was going to betray him. It's unbelievable to think that even in the selection process of his disciples, as Jesus submits himself to the will of the Father.

He knew exactly what Judas would be. Judas would be the betrayer. And all the while, Judas is participating with the disciples, with the 12, in the ministry of Jesus, seeing what he does, observing the works, hearing the words, and even, at one point, receiving the power that Jesus gave to the 12 to cast out demons and to do and perform miracles.

Judas was a full participant in the public ministry of Jesus. But Jesus was not surprised. Jesus was not convinced of Judas' loyalty.

[15:15] He knew his heart, the heart of a betrayer. And on this night, as the disciples were gathered for the Passover, Jesus again exposes Judas for what he was.

Turn with me to John chapter 13 now, verses 10 and 11. John 13, 10 and 11. Jesus has just washed the disciples' feet.

Peter protests and says, wash not just my feet, but just wash all of me. Jesus' response in verse 10, the one who is washed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean.

And you are clean, but not every one of you, for he knew who was to betray him. That was why he said, not all of you are clean. Jesus knew the heart of Judas.

Jesus knew his role in being the betrayer, in turning Jesus over to the authorities. So Jesus knew the time, Jesus knew the betrayer, but Jesus also knew the place of his arrest.

[16:35] We find that here at the end of verse 2. John chapter 18, verse 2, continues this way. Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples.

from the other gospel records, we find that Judas' heart was just moving in the direction of this betrayal.

So that likely on the very day that Judas is about to betray Jesus, he goes to the authorities, to the religious authorities, and he sells Jesus out.

Now Judas, looking for opportunities, to betray Jesus, finds the perfect moment. Now remember that during the Passover meal, Jesus concealed the actual location of where that meal would take place by sending the apostles into the city of Jerusalem to look for the man carrying for the pitcher of water.

Jesus masterfully understood that in order to have this meal with his disciples, needed to conceal the actual location, otherwise it might be jeopardized by Judas interfering.

[17:52] So the next opportunity that Judas would have is to go to the place that Jesus often met with his disciples and where was that place? We find that as a pattern, Jesus and his disciples through this Passion Week after teaching the temple would go into the Mount of Olives and that's where he and his disciples would stay for the night until the next day.

Listen as I just read Luke chapter 21 verse 37. It says this, And every day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he went out and lodged on the mount called Olivet.

And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him. Jesus set Judas up. Jesus in spending time at the Mount of Olives knew that this was the place where Judas would bring this band of men.

This was the place where Judas would know that the twelve disciples, the eleven disciples now with Jesus would be. A place where Jesus often found refreshment.

A place where Jesus often was encouraged, was strengthened by the comfort of his relationship with the Father. Do you have any of those kinds of places?

[19:13] Places of refreshment, places of comfort? One of the things that I like to do when I visit different cities that I once lived is I like to go to the places where I met with God.

The places which were common locations of fellowshipping with him. Being reminded of God's goodness in that specific place. That's what the Garden of Gethsemane was for Jesus.

Whenever he was in Jerusalem, the Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives was the place of refreshment, the place of communion with the Father. And Judas knew that's precisely the place where he could find Jesus at this point.

Jesus moved to the exact location where he had been the previous nights this entire week. And so Judas knew where to find him.

Jesus was masterfully in control of the circumstances. We also find the participants in his arrest. Jesus understood who would be involved in this process.

[20:26] We find in verse 3 more details related to that. 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.

Jesus had predicted in Matthew chapter 20, he says, Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes and they will condemn him to death and deliver him to the Gentiles to mock him and to scourge him and to crucify him and on the third day he will rise.

Jesus knew who the players were going to be. Jesus is not surprised to see this band and multitude of individuals show up to arrest him.

He knew who was coming and Judas leads them into this garden. Well, who were they? Well, a cohort is a group of 600 soldiers.

soldiers. That's a significant group of individuals coming to arrest an individual who for up to this point had been all but peace. He brings some officers.

[21:47] These would have been the temple officials, those given authority in the Jewish realm to exact some level of judgment on individuals within the Jewish community.

And then the Pharisees who represented the authority of the moral law and the scripture. You may ask yourself, why so many? Why torches and why lanterns and why swords and clubs?

Why the weaponry? What is taking place here? Well, Jesus had avoided life-threatening situations on numerous occasions leading up to this point.

We find in several occasions through the gospel of John alone. that the officials came to arrest Jesus but because his hour had not yet come, somehow he vanished from their midst or somehow he moved through the crowd.

Somehow he was able to hide himself and escape their captivity. In one particular example in John chapter 10, it says, the Jews took up stones to stone him, therefore they sought again to seize him, but he escaped out of their hand.

[22:59] Well, this wasn't going to happen again, at least not in their minds. So they bring this multitude of individuals to ensure that Jesus could not escape.

But as we'll see, Jesus is not only supreme over the details of his arrest, we'll also see that Jesus demonstrates decisiveness of his authority.

We see that in the next several verses from 4 to 6. Jesus demonstrates the decisiveness of his authority. Let me read this for us. Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, Whom do you seek?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said to them, I am he. Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground.

I want you to notice two things from this circumstance that demonstrate that Jesus is in command. Jesus is showing decisive authority in this situation.

[24:10] First of all, notice that he steps forward. He takes initiative. He is moving to the front. How would he do that?

Especially given what we find in verse 4. knowing all that would happen to him, he moves forward. Jesus, understanding the circumstances, the events that would follow in the next 12 hours, his crucifixion, the scourging that he would experience, he steps forward.

Jesus has been stepping forward since leaving the ministry in Galilee. For the last six months, Jesus has been determined to move towards the direction of the cross.

We find in Luke chapter 9 that he set his face to go to Jerusalem. He knew exactly what was waiting for him there and he knew the Father's will. He determined to himself that he was going to follow through with God's plan for his life.

He did not run, he did not cower, he did not hide, he did not evade their advances, he did not retreat, but he takes command of the situation.

[25:34] He steps forward and he is the one to initiate this conversation. The mob who had come to manhandle the Messiah is actually put in their place.

As Jesus, not a victim of his circumstances, takes control of this process. Who are you looking for? Jesus says. And then they respond, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus says, I am he. And with that, this mob of maybe as many as 650 people fall backwards at the word of God. Not only does Jesus demonstrate his decisiveness and authority through stepping forward, but he, with the word, he knocks them to the ground.

He demonstrates his power over them in just a word. I want you to notice the undeniable authority of the Messiah.

Undeniable authority. Jesus will not escape. He will not be taken by force. They were thinking, he's not going to be able to hide.

[26:46] He won't be able to resist to rest. But then when he says, I am he, he totally immobilizes them. They didn't anticipate this turn of events.

They didn't anticipate that they would be repelled with just a word. Now they're flat on their backs. Now they're vulnerable.

Jesus at this point could have easily have escaped, but instead he remains committed to the task. In this display of divine authority, Jesus continues to remain stationary, committed to the plan of God.

He's not a victim of his circumstances. He is in complete control. But if that wasn't enough, Jesus continues to demonstrate his authority through the situation.

Even through, even though his authority, he is humbly submitting himself to the Father. But now we see his power as he keeps his promises.

[27 : 54] Jesus proves the dependability of his promises in verses 7 to 9. Notice what it says, So he asked them again, Whom do you seek?

And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he. So if you seek me, let these men go. This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken.

Of those whom you gave me, I have lost no one. We see that Jesus now takes command of the situation in another way. He has asked this question a second time.

He has asked them to help refine their focus. Who do you seek? Well, Jesus of Nazareth. So if you seek Jesus of Nazareth, then here I am, leave the disciples alone.

I kind of get this picture of the Jedi waving their hand and saying, leave the disciples alone. That's not the picture we're supposed to get.

[29 : 02] The picture we're supposed to get is of Jesus in command, the king of kings, the master of the universe, is making a statement, a command to his subjects.

It's authoritative, it's decisive, and it's dependable. The word that Jesus had given to his disciples, the word that he had preached in his ministry, the word that he had prayed to the Father, is a word that he intends to keep in fulfillment of the scriptures.

To demonstrate that his word is true, and dependable, and trustworthy. Jesus demonstrates the mastery over the situation.

Let these men go. Jesus had just prayed for his disciples in John chapter 17 verse 12. He says, Jesus will make good on his promises.

They are dependable. They are trustworthy. You can trust them. in the moment. And even in this moment, where Jesus seems to be at the moment of weakness, he demonstrates his supremacy of the situation, and yet his surrender and submission to the Father.

[30 : 40] Challenges will come in our lives. Hardships will be faced. But if we walk the way of the cross, we will walk in the way of submission to Christ.

And when we submit to Christ, we will experience the strengthening of his spirit in those hard times as Jesus does here.

And finally, Jesus shows his supremacy and submission to the Father in verses 10 and 11 by confirming the determination of his obedience.

confirming the determination of his obedience. Then Simon Peter, verse 10, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.

The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, put your sword in its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given to me?

[31 : 44] Peter, in an impulsive fit of courage, decides that he's going to hack his way through this cohort of 600 trained military men.

Peter was presumptuous. Peter thought he knew what God's plan was in the situation. But rather than follow the lead of his Messiah, rather than walk in the steps of the Savior, Peter decides to take matters into his own hands.

Well, that proves to be foolishness as all he's able to do is cut off an ear, which again gives Jesus the opportunity to show up in divine display, healing this man's ear and showing again that he is the one who is in control of all that's taking place.

Peter represents presumptuous action. Those who say they're moving forward in faith, but are not following the lead of their Savior. But Jesus, determining to do what the Father has commanded him, rebukes Peter and we get a glimpse of the motivation for Jesus that comes again to the surface.

He says, put your sword into its sheath. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given to me? Missing from this narrative is the discussion or the discourse of Jesus in committing himself to the Father in terms of prayer.

[33 : 20] Three times Jesus goes to the Father in prayer and says, not my will but yours be done. And although that is missing from this gospel record, we see that that was the heart of Jesus in this moment.

shall I not drink the cup the Father has given to me, Peter? Shall I not do what the Father has determined for me to do since the beginning of time?

Fighting was not for this night as evident from the other gospel record where Jesus says, don't you know, Peter, that I could call a legion of angels to deliver me?

But scripture must be fulfilled. in this way. I need to follow the plan of the Father. Jesus was interested in doing what the Father had said.

He would drink the cup of the Father's wrath for the sake of those who would come to him in faith. He would drink the judgment of God for sin by dying on the cross.

[34 : 32] He would absorb the wrath of God for you. And he would offer salvation to any who would come to him in repentance and faith.

Jesus would drink the cup, the bitter cup of the Father. He would move forward following after the will of the Father to do what the Father had commanded. As we've moved through this passage, I hope that it's been clear that we've seen the supremacy of Jesus show up through this narrative.

And yet, though he was supreme in all of these circumstances, he committed himself to obedience. This morning, as we think about the elements, it's a picture really of what Jesus has done for us.

A picture of his body and a picture of his blood. The broken body of Christ, broken for us, to make way for salvation.

The life's blood that was spilt for us. A picture of this Passover time, where the blood was painted on the doorposts, and back in Egypt, Israel was delivered, the Jews were delivered because of this portrait which pointed to Christ, future deliverance through salvation.

[35 : 56] Salvation through the blood of Christ, being cleansed because of the washing of his blood. Let's pray as we commit our time to him.

Lord, we're grateful this morning for the supreme example of your son, Jesus, who in these moments commanded the situation.

He was in control, and yet he willingly gave himself up to death, to betrayal, to be crucified, and then to rise again.

And Lord, because of his obedience to the Father, we can participate in salvation and in fellowship. Lord, this morning we understand the way of the cross is the way of surrender.

surrender. It's the way of submission. It's not the way of working out our situation for ourselves, of taking matters into our own hands, but of seeing the power of God working through our lives as we submit to your sovereignty.

[37:14] We trust that your way is best, and we prove to the world that you are good. Lord, as we come to the elements this morning, we pray that you would unite our hearts, call our attention to the wonder of our great God.

May we submit once again to your name and follow you this week in obedience. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. As we move to the communion time, I just want to call your attention to Philippians chapter 2.

Philippians chapter 2. We see what the obedience of Christ did for us in Philippians chapter 2. beginning with verse 5.

It says, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We find from Isaiah chapter 53 that it was God's will to crush him. It was God's will to bring his wrath down on the Son.

[38:56] And Jesus, willingly surrendering to that will, obediently followed God's plan, and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This morning, as we consider the obedience and submission of Christ, it stands for us as an example of people who need to follow the pattern of Jesus' life.

The way of the cross is the way of submission. And maybe this morning you say, but Pastor Scheer, you don't know my husband, or you don't know my wife.

The Bible says for us as husbands to love your wife as Christ loved the church. That's what I call surrender. That's what I call sacrifice.

That's what I call love. Or maybe you say, Pastor Scheer, you don't know my boss. And all we need to do is look at Ephesians chapter 6, and we find that servants are to obey their masters with fear and trembling as to the Lord and not to men.

[40:18] We find that we're to work heartily as to the Lord and not to men. Or maybe those of you who are students would say, well, Pastor Scheer, you don't know my teacher. You don't know how difficult things are in my classroom.

And to that, Jesus would say, respect your authorities. Follow after them as those who are representatives and stewards of God.

God's in control of those things. He desires for us to submit to the governing authorities as to Christ. Christ. Rather than take matters into our hands, we submit to the will of the Father as Christ did.

And then we can see the power of God show up in our lives. So this morning, as we consider the elements today, we consider the obedience of Christ and what he accomplished for us.

And as we take those elements, and I'm going to ask the men to come as I pray, as we take those elements, consider this morning how God wants us, how he wants you, to obey and submit to him in the circumstances in which you find yourself this week.

[41:36] Let me pray for us again. Amen.