

# The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus - Sermon Only

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 June 2014

Preacher: Mr Innes MacSween

[ 0 : 00 ] If we can turn back to the passage that we read here in John chapter 18.

John chapter 18, we can read verses 4 to 6. 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.

And when Jesus said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground. Well, may the Holy Spirit go before us as we look into this word more and more.

About four years ago, I had just come back from quite a bad injury. And I was playing football in the north. And it was my first game back.

[ 1 : 27 ] And I was put straight back into centre defence. And I was there playing centre half that day. But I was really rusty. And for the first 20 minutes, I couldn't do a thing right.

I'd been out for so long that I'd forgotten how to position myself. I could hardly sprint. I could hardly do a thing. I was put there by reputation alone. Even though there was actually a younger, far better player and far fitter player than me on the bench.

And I was awful that day. Absolutely terrible on the pitch. And I remember after about 25 minutes, my hamstring seemed to go.

And I thought to myself, it's quite sore. I could keep going. But I am playing so badly. And we've already conceded because of what I've done, because of how I'm playing.

I am playing that terribly. That my hamstring, even though it wasn't that bad, I knew I should just come off. I am playing that badly. I should just let myself be substituted.

[ 2 : 32 ] So I called over to the bench. And I asked to get substituted. And on came this younger player. And he played an absolute blinder.

He went out onto that pitch and the game changed. He was hungry. He was chasing every ball. The whole game changed. We ended up winning 6-2. And I thought to myself that day.

A friend came over afterwards. And he said to me, you were so bad that you made that kid look absolutely world class.

You were so bad that you made that kid look absolutely world class. Now, there are many ways.

And there are many things. There are so many golden nuggets in this passage. In this chapter. That we could spend a whole year on this chapter alone, I imagine.

[ 3 : 30 ] If you were going right into details. But what I want to take out of this today. Is the contrast between Peter and Jesus.

Because the failure of Peter in this passage. In this chapter. Only goes on to highlight the absolute success.

And the control. And the power. Of what Jesus has just done. It's the contrast. That highlights just how brilliant.

Jesus is here. Let's look at it. There is a contrast. Between Peter and Jesus. Now, here in this passage.

We see Jesus being arrested. Then we have just had four chapters worth. Of sermons. Of discourse. Of conversation. Of potentially.

[ 4 : 30 ] The greatest four chapters in all of scripture. Where Jesus is unpacking. Why he came. He's unpacking. The whole mission. Of why he's here on earth.

And he gives us in chapter 17. Quite possibly. The greatest prayer. That has ever been witnessed in mankind. And straight away.

We have this. Arrest. Now, there are a few things. To see. And we will look at two. Contrasts in particular.

We will see the contrast. In power. And we will see the contrast. In proof. And we will wrap it up today. By looking at other themes. That are coming through. Between both Peter. And Jesus. In this chapter. But first of all. The power. We first of all see. [ 5 : 26 ] Jesus' power. Here in verses 4. To 6. Read again with me there. Verse 6. When Jesus said to them. I am he.

They drew back. And fell. To the ground. The people who had come. This band. Or as other translations say. This detachment. It's reckoned that. In your heads. I imagine. I always visualize. There's a small band of soldiers. Coming into this garden. How big can this garden be? But it's likely. That that detachment. That band. That has come into the garden. Is around 600 people. 600 armed and trained soldiers.

Now there are many reports. It's either between 500 or 1,000. But the closest I've come. And the best description I've heard. Is 600. Doesn't really matter. It's a lot of people. 600 men. [ 6 : 27 ] 600 soldiers. Are coming into this garden. This is far more. Than Obama sent. To capture. And assassinate. Osama bin Laden. This is a. This is how highly.

They treat. This scenario. And not only is it. 600 men at least. 600 soldiers. But you have. The high priests. You have their servants. You have Pharisees.

Coming into the garden. And what we see here. Verse 6. They drew back. And fell.

To the ground. That little glimpse. Right there. Highlights the power of Jesus. In this scenario. He has.

All the cards. And it's always. Been the case. That he has. All the cards. And in this situation. Where he is being.

[ 7 : 26 ] Confronted. By a massive. Armed detachment. Of Roman soldiers. He is in absolute control. He could have sent.

These people. With a word. To their deaths. He could have sent. These people. In a thought. To a lost eternity. There and then. He could have.

Swallowed up the ground. And swallowed them all up. He doesn't. All he does. Is force them. To the ground. Now there's something in that. Where Christ. Gives that. Space. Gives. And shows. Enough of his power. To give the space. To repent. For these people. To be so overawed. By Christ's power. That they. Would. Repent. But immediately.

[ 8 : 23 ] They get up. And ask the same. Question. Again. How hard. Are their hearts. Where they've just been faced by. Three words.

That knocked them to the ground. I might have a loud voice. But I have never knocked a single person down to the ground with three words. The power and the authority.

And the creative. Authority in that voice. The authority of the creator. Knocked. All. Of this detachment.

To the ground. And they get back up. And their hearts. Are immediately. Hardened. It goes to show the extent of the human heart.

That time and time and time again. We can be faced with the reality of who God is. We can either see it in other people. Or we see it in the word.

[ 9 : 21 ] Or we hear it in the preaching. Or the Lord. Speaks to us directly. I don't know about your heart. I can't speak for you.

But I guarantee there will be many of us. And I include myself in this. That I've heard the Lord's voice. In even a glimpse of the authority. And I surprise myself.

By immediately hardening up my heart. Regardless. What we're looking at here. Is Christ. And his power.

They don't even have the power. To put handcuffs on him at this stage. Yes. They bind him later. They bind him in verse 12. But that comes.

After verse 11. Shall I not drink. The cup. That the father. Has given me. He is. The volunteer. And he's still in control.

[ 10 : 25 ] They couldn't bind him. They couldn't put anything on him. They couldn't lay a glove on him. Until he gave the word. He gives it.

And they bound him. And right the way through this chapter. We see that same power. We see that same authority playing out. We see it time and time again.

The high priest questions Jesus. And Jesus answers him. With such authority. We see it with Pilate. Pilate is asking him questions.

And Jesus answers. With such authority. He is the one in control. He keeps turning the tables on their questions. He keeps absolutely. Frustrating.

In fact. The people who are. Questioning him. He frustrates the high priest. He frustrates Pilate. He time and time again. Frustrates.

[11:23] All the Pharisees. And all of it. As well as meaning many other things. Highlights. He has the power. In this situation. There's nothing in this chapter.

That denies. The deity. Of this man. There's nothing in this chapter. That even hints. That this God. Is weak. He's in control. The whole time. He becomes weak.

Because he makes himself. Weak. Nothing. Is forced. On him. Not even death. But secondly. The other thing that we see here.

In this passage. Is the way that Jesus. Is committed. To truth. Notice that here. Jesus' word. Is true. John tells us.

[12:23] All the time. Right the way through. Right the way through. His whole book. John is telling us. Time and time again. The ways. That Jesus' words. Are fulfilled. Verse 9. This was to fulfill.

The word. That he had spoken. Of those whom you gave me. I have lost. Not one. Verse 23. Jesus answered.

The high priest. And said. If what I said is wrong. Bear witness. About the wrong. But of what I said. Is right. Why do you strike me? He is committed.

To truth. We even see in verse 37. When he's answering Pilate. I have come. Into the world. To bear witness. To the truth.

Everyone who is off the truth. Listens. To my voice. These are two things. That are wrapped up. In the very identity.

[13:18] Of Christ. As he walked. This earth. He is power. He's not just powerful. He is the very definition. Of power. He's not just truthful.

And committed to truth. He defines. Truth. But to show. That he is the one. That defines truth. He is committed to it. At every.

Possible. Stage. But before I come back. To highlight those things. Let's look at those two things. In Peter.

Let's see the contrast. Let's see the injured football player. Before we come back. To the wonder kid. Peter has no.

Influence. Whatsoever. On the situation. That's unfolding. Behind him. Peter. Peter was the chief. Of the disciples. The one. Who was the forefront. Of all things. The one. Who had all the confidence.

[14:17] And time and time again. I look at Peter. And I think. I'm so glad he's there. He reminds me. Of myself. And often.

We all say that. But sometimes. We have to look at Peter. And think. You completely. Messed this up. You got this so.

Monumentally. Wrong. He is highlighted here. In this passage. Not as someone. To necessarily. Empathize. And. And. Sympathize with.

But he's someone. That we look at. And we are meant to think. He. Absolutely. Failed. He is a failure. In this passage. That's what we're meant.

To identify with. Of course. But let's first look at this. He has brought a sword. Into the garden. He's just had four chapters.

[15:14] Four chapters. Worth. Of. The best teaching possible. The greatest prayer. Ever prayed. By. Christ. Himself. No less. And he goes.

Right into the next chapter. And completely. All of that. Goes out the window. Why he thought of bringing a sword. To the Passover.

And to the garden. That's something for. You all to maybe discuss. They had two swords. Apparently. Between them. And here is. Peter. Wielding.

The sword. And while Jesus. Is being interrogated. While Jesus. Is being interrogated. By the courts. By the highest law.

On the land. Peter. Is being interrogated. By a servant girl. And what we see. Is Christ. Utterly committed. To the truth. In the face.

[16:12] Of all the powers. In the land. At the time. Jesus is asked. Peter is asked. One question. By a servant girl. Around a fire. And he crumbles.

Into lies. Now. Why. Jesus. Why Peter. Peter. Brought. A sword.  
 Into the garden. I don't really know. But he absolutely. Fails. In his activity. For Jesus. And in his denial. For Jesus. Peter is now.  
 Waving the sword. Waving it around. In front of. Six hundred. Plus. Armed. Roman soldiers. And he thinks. That this one sword.  
 Can win the day for him. Now. Obviously. He's not been through. Rigorous army training. Because either. He goes for the head. Of this. Chief priest servant.  
 [17:09] And misses. And gets the ear. Or for some reason. He decides to go straight. For the ear. Regardless. The situation. Does not go well for him. But he has to be thankful.  
 He didn't cut this man's head off. Because you have to imagine. That if he had. Dealt a killing blow. To that. Servant. That it wouldn't have crossed.  
 The minds. It wouldn't have. Been far away from the minds. Of these Roman soldiers. To just go ahead. And completely dismember. All the disciples. In that garden. What.  
 Was Peter. Thinking. In one moment. He could have completely. Destroyed. The whole ministry. Of Christ. Christ.  
 And that's why Christ. Gently. Rebukes Peter. So gently. And says to him.  
 [18:09] Put your sword. Into its sheath. This is not about violence. This is not about aggression. This is not about.  
 Forcing. My kingdom. Onto these people. This is not about. Forcing. My king. Hood. My kingness. Onto this kingdom.  
 On earth. Do you not see. What I have been teaching you. In the upper room. Put your sword. Into. Its. Sheath.  
 That is not. My. Way. We see in another. Gospel. That he even goes. And diffuses the tension. So much. By healing.  
 That servant's ear. Christ. Is committed. To truth. And power. In exactly the way. Peter. Is not. Here is a man.  
 [19:10] Who brandishes a sword. And yet. Gets things. Horribly. Wrong. He completely. Misunderstands. The situation. He absolutely.  
 Misunderstands. The gospel. And what Christ. Is coming to do. And he absolutely. Misunderstands. His role. In the story. What makes it worse.  
 Time and time again. For Peter. Is just the pure. Self confidence. Of the matter. In chapter 13. We have there. The washing.  
 Of the feet. Of the disciples. By Jesus. And the message. That goes on. Behind the washing. Of the feet. Is that Jesus. Is the one. Who serves.  
 Them. Now this was. Alien to the disciples. And they fought back. No Lord. You must not. Wash our feet. But Jesus.  
 [20:10] Insisted. Why does he. Insist. Why does he. Wash their feet. Because that. Is the whole. Purpose. Of his coming. That's the whole.  
 Reason. Why he's here. Peter. Misunderstood it. Then. And he absolutely. Misunderstands it. Again. Here. The point.  
 John. Is trying to make. Time and time. Again. Is that. We. Need. Jesus. To serve. Us. Peter. Couldn't. Handle that. He had such. Self-confidence.  
 Such arrogance. Such. A view. Of himself. And a view. Of. How things. Were meant. To be done. That he just. Couldn't. He couldn't. Fathom. Letting Jesus.  
 Serve him. He couldn't. Take it. And in the garden. What do we see here. Jesus. Again. Showing his power. Over the cloud. I am he. But what do we see.  
 [21:06] Festering in Peter's mind. Bring out my sword. Wave it around. I'll strike the ear. Off this man. He completely. Reads.  
 Everything. Wrong. And as the cock. Begins to crow. In verse 27. After all his lies.  
 After lying. Time and time. Again. He breaks down. And we see in another. Gospel. That he begins to cry. Weeping. Is it at this point. That he sees all that Jesus has done. He couldn't follow Jesus.  
 On his own. He couldn't do it. On his own. Peter. Peter seems to realize. Just how true. That was. That he.

[ 22 : 06 ] Was. Incapable. In himself. He doesn't have the power. In himself. He doesn't have. Truth. He lies.

Time and time again. Just to. Save his own skin. Just to sort of. Save his own life. He keeps lying. And lying. And lying. He couldn't follow Jesus.

On his own. But that's. The cross. That's why it's here. That's why we have. This passage. That realization. Of Peter's. Here. After the cock crowed. Is the whole point. Of the gospel. It's the whole point. Of this passage.

The gateway. To understanding. The crucifixion narrative. The door. To understanding. What Jesus. Has just done. Is to go through.

[ 23 : 02 ] This lesson. Is for all of us. To go through. This lesson. That Peter. The chief. Of his disciples. Is incapable. How much.

More. Are. We. How much more. Incapable. Are we. If you're here today.

And you love the Lord. And you love Christ. You love him. Because exactly that. You are incapable. I am absolutely. Incapable.

That's why we love. This Jesus. Of Nazareth. That's why we love. This Jesus. The son of God. Because he humbled himself. And took my place.

Because. I was incapable. And if you're here tonight. If you're here today. It's the morning. And you don't yet understand.

[ 23 : 58 ] That that's why Jesus came. Exactly. Because you're incapable. If you have any. Tears. In your life. So many people.

Struggle with depression. In this world. So many. It's a horrible thing. To go through. It numbs you. To the world.

And even in that. Glimpse. Of just being. Even incapable. Of living. You feel like. You're incapable. Of living. Like a normal person. That is a glimpse.

Of the human heart. It's a glimpse. Of the truth. Of the situation. The truth. Of the world. Is that we. Are incapable. But that's the point.

Of the cross. We're incapable. But it just. Goes to show. How capable. He. Is. The more.

[ 25 : 01 ] I learn. This lesson. My. Incapability. My. Failure. The more. I learn it. It's actually. An essential. Truth.

To following. Jesus. It's actually. At the very heart. Of following. You. Because. I have to understand. Day after day. That Jesus.

Is there. To wash. My feet. I have to. Put aside. My pride. I have to. Put aside. My pride. And let. God.

Wash. My. Feet. The one. Who created. Feet. Is now. Washing them. I don't.

Want. To let him. Do that. Not naturally. I don't. Think any. Of us. Do. We don't. Like. Feeling. Helpless. We want. To feel. Powerful. But like.

[ 25 : 56 ] Peter. We have. No power. In this. Situation. It's like.

Whiskey. I'm not. Tied. Whiskey. But I'm. Told. That the first time. You drink. Whiskey. If you drink. Too much. Of it. Straight away. You'll be. Knocked. For six.

You have. A little bit. Of it. And over time. You can have. A little bit more. Thankfully. That's what Christ. That's what God. Does to us. With our sin. We can only handle.

A little bit of it. At a time. And over time. He'll. He'll peel back. The veil. Of our own heart. And we will see. Over time. The darkness.

In it. But for now. He just shows us. A little bit. At a time. All that we can handle. It's like coffee.

[ 26 : 56 ] That's the other parallel. The truth of who we are. Can be disgusting. At first. But not only. Do we get used to it. We actually grow to love.

The fact that we are incapable. Because it means that Christ. Is the one. That we depend on. And Christ. Is the anchor. In our lives.

This is the truth. That I need. And as Peter. Peter began. To hear the cock crow. That was the herald.

Of redemption. He was now in a place. To understand. What Jesus. Was doing. For him. This truth. That the Lord. Has carefully dealt out.

Bit by bit. This measure of truth. For you and for me. This truth. That we are incapable. That's who you are. It's why you need. The cross.

[ 27 : 58 ] It's the very gateway. To the cross. But to finish with this. The other theme. That Peter is weaving. That John.

Is weaving into this story. Weaving into this passage. We see it again there. In the narrative. In verse 8. I told you. That I am he.

So if you seek me. Let these men. Go. It's the idea of substitution.

I actually think it's implicit. It's actually there. In the very. Form. It's in the construction. Of the story itself. You have that chunk there.

Between. 15. And. 18. Denial number one. You have the next chunk. Verses 19 to 24.

[ 28 : 54 ] You have. Christ. Upholding. The truth. And then you have another. Part. The two more denials. Christ's.

Act. Of truth. And Christ's. Time before the courts. Is bookended. By Peter's denials. Why? Either side.

It's because. If you're looking for me. Christ says. Let these men. Go. Nobody was asking.

To arrest these men. Nobody said. We are looking for Jesus of Nazareth. And everyone else.

That's with you. Jesus asked them.

Whom do you seek? They had one name. They didn't say. Jesus of Nazareth. And your whole band. One name. We're looking for you. But he makes a deliberate point.

[ 29 : 54 ] Of saying to the soldiers. Let. These. Men. Go. Jesus weaves. Substitution. Into the story. But the consequences.

Of Jesus being taken. Is their freedom. The consequence of Jesus being taken. Is their freedom. And that's why he says that they are.

Even though they weren't asking. For freedom. And they weren't being asked to be arrested. The very consequence. Of Jesus. Being taken. And volunteering himself.

Is the freedom. Of his disciples. And that's why we see again. Verse 14. Just that. Reoccurrence.

Of the same theme. It was Caiaphas. Who had advised the Jews. That it would be expedient. That one man should die. For the people. Caiaphas had no idea. The depth of his words.

[ 30 : 55 ] That one man should die. For the sake of the many. For the sake of the people.

Substitution. What we see in this whole passage.

Through the contrast of Peter and Jesus. What we see in the substitution. Between Peter and Jesus. Between ourselves and Jesus. Is that we see the I am he. Dying for the I am not.

Verse 5. Whom do you seek? I am he. And Peter.

In verse 17. Are you also not one of these man disciples? Are you? I am not. That's it in a nutshell. It's the I am.

Dying for the I am not. It's Jesus. Dying for Peter. It's Jesus. Dying for you. And for me. It's the I am. Dying for the I am not.

[ 31 : 57 ] I am not able. I am not capable. You are not able. You are not capable. But you don't need to be. Because the I am has died.

For the I am not. That's the whole point. The one of truth. Dying for the one who speaks falsehood. The one who succeeds. Standing in the place of the one who fails. The one of truth. The one of power. Standing in the place of the one of lies.

And the one of no power. That's us. That's Peter. It's the I am. Dying. For the I am not. And Jesus volunteers himself.

He stands in the place of Peter. So that Peter can have life. That's the basis of the Christian life. That's it.

[ 33 : 00 ] In a very nutshell. It's the cross. It's the thing. That makes us whole. It's the I am. Dying. For the I am not. Remember that.

Take it away. And I finish with this very thought. Why do we have chapter 21?

We have the resurrection. We have the cross. We have the resurrection. Why do we have chapter 21? Why do we have it? Where Jesus seems to have a breakfast.

And questions Peter these three different ways. Now there is so much in that again. The three different questions highlighting. Or taking back the three denials.

There are so many different things to look at. But if we want to look at something simply in regards to chapter 18. It's that Jesus restores Peter.

[ 34 : 01 ] In parallel to the denials. Three times he asks. Do you love me? And three times. Peter replies. And he says. When you are old. You will stretch out your hands.

And you might think. Oh poor old Peter. Here he is with Jesus. And the last thing Jesus says to him. Is you are going to stretch out your hands. And die. Probably signifying.

The fact that Peter died on a cross. But where before. We have to remember John 18. And where. What Jesus is telling Peter. Is not just. You are going to die. That's not just it. But it's actually to tell him. You will now be able to stand.

Where before. You failed. Where before. You couldn't even. Observe me. In my crucifixion. You will stand there too. Where before. You couldn't actually speak the truth.

[ 35 : 02 ] You kept lying. You will be so committed. To the truth yourself. That you will stand. There too. He's been given. Certainty. Of growth. And change.

Change. By Jesus telling him. The way he's going to die. He's telling him. You will succeed. In the place of your failure. Whereas before.

You denied God. In the way that you spoke. Now. You succeed. And stand. You experience. The power. Of the spirit.

Because. He has died. For you. Now hopefully. You'll reflect. Reflect. On the week gone by. Reflect. On the days gone by. Reflect. On the months gone by. And we all dwell. On the things. That we. Have failed in. We all dwell. On the things. On our sins.

[ 35 : 58 ] But hopefully. We will reflect. On our time. Gone by. And yes. It'll expose. Guilt. And failure. Of course it will. But there is always.

Opportunity. To succeed. And stand. Faithful. Where this. Past year. Maybe you didn't. Maybe next year. You can succeed.

The cross. Gives us. A basis. Of inadequacy. It shows up. And it tells us. And we find out. All about. Our inadequacy. At the cross.

The cross. But that's not all. The cross does. It gives. It provides. The power. It provides. The spirit. It provides. The act. Of what Jesus. Did.

So that we can. Change. So that there is. Opportunity. To be changed. And transformed. And succeed. We are never. Slaves. To our past.

[ 36 : 55 ] Selves. You can. Change. And off the back. Of Peter's. Failure. In chapter 18. That's exactly.

What Jesus. Is saying to him. Here in chapter 21. You will. Change. You will. Succeed. In all the ways. That you dwell on. The ways.

That you failed. I'm telling you. Peter. You will. Succeed. May the Lord. Bless to us. These thoughts. Let us pray. Heavenly Father.

We. We ask. That you. Reel to us. Once again. The depth. Of our sin. In our hearts. As much. As we can handle.

But Lord. We pray. That you would. As you. Show us. Just how low. We are. That you would. Remind us.

[ 37 : 53 ] Once again. Just how. Glorious. Jesus is. And that the cross. Has bridged the gap.

Between our inadequacy. Our incapability. And just how. Capable he is. Of doing it all. We ask Lord.

That you'll go before us. For the rest of this day. Help us. As we all go our separate ways. And we ask this all. In Christ's name. Amen. We can conclude.

Singing Psalm 116. In the sing Psalms. Psalm 116. Psalm 116. Page 154.

Psalm 116. Psalm 138. Psalm 136. Psalm 119. Psalm 139.

[ 39 : 03 ] Psalm 139. Psalm 138.