

One For All

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: 22 October 2023

Preacher: Jonathan Chancey

[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and open them up to the Gospel of John. Our text this morning is John 11, verses 45 through 54. And so when you found it in your Bibles, and I do, again, always encourage you, open up your Bibles.

I want you to see it in the pages of Scripture, what we're going to be reading. And I'm not going to stay here today, so we're going to be flipping around. So please open up your Bibles to John 11, 45 through 54.

When you found it in your Bibles, if you are physically able, would you please stand in honor as we read the Word of God. Listen along as I read John 11, 45 through 54.

It says, Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him.

[1 : 02] And the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing at all, nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.

He did not say this of his own accord. But being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation. And not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

So from that day on, they made plans to put him to death. Jesus, therefore, no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness to a town called Ephraim.

And there he stayed with the disciples. This is the word of God. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God endures forever. You can be seated.

Let's pray once more. Lord, we thank you for this word and we pray once more, Father, for the miracle of your voice to go out through this word into our ears, into our hearts, and that it would bear the fruit of love and faith for you.

[2 : 22] We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, we've come to a pivotal point in the Gospel of John, and I'm afraid I may have misled some of you.

Last week, someone mentioned, someone who will remain nameless, mentioned that we were coming near to the end of our time in John. And they must have seen the confused look on my face because they said, Well, the image behind you says the Gospel of John, the light of the world, chapters 1 through 12.

Aren't we stopping at chapter 12? And I said, Well, honestly, I forgot all about that image. We're not going to stop at chapter 12 just so that we're all on the same page.

We will continue on and finish the Gospel of John. Pretty soon, in a couple of weeks, a new image will appear behind me for chapters 13 through 21. But the point of these two images was to illustrate for us that although it's one book, the Gospel of John, it's neatly divided into two halves. We have sort of what they call the book of signs in the first half, where Jesus is demonstrating his identity through various miracles, various signs, various demonstrations of his divinity, various I am statements saying, I am the I am, and in the second half, things are going to accelerate very quickly now.

[3 : 44] The second half, John zooms in on just one week of Jesus' life, taking us to the cross and ultimately to the resurrection. Our passage this morning, it sort of serves as the hinge between these two halves of the book.

The signs, the statements have piled up to the point where pressure is mounting on the Jewish officials to make a decision. What are we going to do about this man, Jesus?

And we see here this morning that a decision is made. An infinitely, eternally foolish decision is made to put Jesus to death.

Our passage this morning, this is written record of the most foolish decision that's ever been made in the history of mankind. These are some of the most foolish words that have ever been spoken. Yet what I want us to see this morning is that even so, in it and through it, incredibly what we see is the wisdom of God on display.

[4 : 52] What we're going to see is the wisdom of God triumphs over the foolishness of man. We're going to see this in two parts this morning.

If you're taking notes, this will be our outline. The wisdom of God triumphs over the foolishness of man. We'll see it in two parts. First, we see the foolishness of man.

The foolishness of man. Look there with me to verses 45 through 50. Jesus has just performed his greatest sign up to this point.

Do you remember what it was last week? The resurrection of Lazarus. The seventh sign of this first half of the book of John. And it's interesting to me, I wonder if you noticed this, it's interesting to me what John doesn't tell us.

He doesn't answer a lot of the questions that you and I might have. If somebody raises from the dead, we might wonder, well, what was that like for Lazarus? Now, what did he say when he came out of the tomb?

[5 : 53] What did he report about his time between death and life? How did he wind up dying again? None of these questions are answered for us. And we're left wondering, what in the world is going on with Lazarus?

But I think this illustrates for us that John's aim is to tell a much more important story. John's aim is to focus in on a much bigger picture.

The reason is, John is not writing to answer all of our many questions that we might have about Lazarus. He's writing with a very clear focus in mind. Do you remember what it is?

I write these things that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

That's the focus of the Gospel of John. This is Jesus' story. And so we're meant to place our attention on the question, well, who is this man who does these signs?

[6 : 50] Who is this man who raises the dead? This man just called a dead man out of the grave. And you would think that that sign would settle the matter for the Jews, wouldn't you?

But once again, we see the crowds are divided. Verse 45. If you look there with me, it tells us that many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and seen what he did, believed in him.

But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. And they were not going to bear witness to the Pharisees about Jesus.

They were going to tattle on Jesus. They were telling on him. Look what he did. He's doing it again. Here he goes again. Have you heard what he just did?

They were telling on him. And the Pharisees, we've seen throughout John, have not been fond of Jesus. He keeps undermining their traditions. He keeps stealing away their influence.

[7 : 51] He didn't study in any of their schools. He didn't belong to their tribe. They just didn't quite know what to do with Jesus. But they knew that something had to be done.

So verse 47 says, The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council. That's the ruling council, the Sanhedrin. And they said, what are we supposed to do here?

What do we do? For this man performs many signs. Think about how foolish this is. They didn't deny his power. They didn't deny that he was doing these signs.

They just heard report that he had raised a man from the dead. And the wise choice, we know, would be, well, maybe you ought to listen to the man who raises the dead.

And maybe you ought to trust in the man who raises the dead. But instead, their response is, what are we going to do with this guy? If we let him go on like this, verse 48, everyone will believe in him.

[8 : 52] And here's the problem. The Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. See, they didn't even consider a possibility that all of these signs maybe just might indicate that he is the Messiah.

And if he is the Messiah, then he's worthy of your worship, worthy of your trust. If he is who he's claiming to be, they didn't even consider that possibility. They feared the possibility of many believing that he was the Messiah.

And they feared that if Jesus kept on doing these signs, all of these people would believe that he was the Messiah, which in their mind meant a king to come and to rule now, and to liberate them from the Romans now, to establish the kingdom of God now.

And how will the Romans feel about that? Well, they'll come down hard on all of us. They'll take away our place, mainly meaning the temple. That's gone.

And they'll take away what measure of freedom and autonomy we have as a nation under their rule. That's gone. But you know what really, what I think is at the root of their concern here?

[10:07] Look there again. It's that they'll take these things away from us. You see that? From us. They'll take away our place.

They'll take away our nation. They'll take away all of our influence. It'll be gone. All of our power will be gone. We have a pretty good deal going on here. The Romans rule over us, but they're over there, and we rule here.

We rule over the temple. We're the authorities here. We rule over the nation. Everybody looks to us. We give the teaching. We're in control. We're in power. We can't lose that.

So what do we do? And at this point, Caiaphas, the high priest, speaks up. You know nothing at all, he says, nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.

His solution to the problem? Kill them. Get rid of the problem. It is better for you. It's better for us.

[11:16] Save your influence. Save the freedom we have. Save your pride. Let him die for our sake. I have said some incredibly foolish things in my life, and I'm glad for my sake that most of them have not been recorded.

And it makes me second guess recording the sermons online and publishing them online. It makes me be very careful with the words that I speak up here. This is written record of the most foolish speech, the most foolish decision ever made.

It is infinitely, eternally, disastrously foolish. But the truth is, what I want us to see here from this first section is that from time to time, every single one of us, all of us, are just like Caiaphas.

How often do we fear man rather than we fear God? How often do we fear what we see and perceive as visible, obvious, external dangers, and not fear the invisible, greater, greater power of God Himself?

Caiaphas was high priest, one of the highest spiritual offices in the land, yet there's no indication here of prayer. There's no indication of seeking the Lord, seeking His wisdom.

[12:45] He looks out at the obvious physical dangers, social dangers, political dangers around Him, and He chooses instead, foolishly, to play it safe.

How often do you and I do the very same thing? You know, the truth is, you and I often, we're not in positions where we are physically persecuted for our faith, are we?

You know, that time may come, but right now, where we live and the situation that we're in, most of us are pretty comfortable. And the worst that we tend to face is maybe social exclusion.

And maybe somebody might not like us because of what we say. And maybe we might be excluded from the group. And maybe we might be rejected. Maybe we might get made fun of.

Maybe we might not be liked. But you know, so often we weigh these dangers, and instead of trusting and fearing the Lord, we instead choose to play it safe.

[13:48] We weigh the options. If I say something, if I speak up about the glory of God, if I speak up about the gospel of Christ, then the bosses will come down and take away my job and my money and this income and the security that I have here.

We stay quiet because as we see it, it's better for us this way. And we know this is very small, isn't it?

Compared to the challenges that our brothers and sisters face throughout the rest of the world. I mean, can you imagine the dangers that our brothers and sisters in Christ face in Sudan?

And in Pakistan? And in Somalia? And in North Korea? Do we realize there are Christians in these places?

Our brothers and sisters in Christ who daily risk their lives, risk their safety, their family is at constant danger, their livelihood is in constant danger.

[14 : 48] If they proclaim the name of Christ, and yet they weigh the options and they say, I choose rather to fear God than to fear man. And to our physical eyes, this sounds risky, it sounds dangerous, even foolish, but the truth is it is infinitely more foolish to fear man and play it safe than it is to fear God.

Living in the fear of God is the safest place that you can be, no matter what man may do to you. This is why we're told, and Jesus tells us, do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. I'm afraid far too often we fear man more than we fear God.

But not only this, we also, like Caiaphas, we crave the praise of man more than we crave the approval of God.

We crave and desire the approval and praise of man more than the approval of God. Caiaphas believed that it was better for them that Jesus die, not just because of the physical dangers that might come against them, but because he didn't want to risk losing the praise and the attention and the adoration of man.

[16 : 14] It's not lost on me that this was, again, supposed to be the highest religious office in the nation. Caiaphas was one of the premier religious leaders, the high priest.

He was supposed to be the one who sought the favor of God on behalf of the people, but instead, what did he do? He craved the favor of man and denied and rejected God himself.

It is so easy to do that as a pastor. You should know. Because in pastoring people, you are inevitably going to come across situations where you need to speak the truth into someone's life. And sometimes you know what the word of God says. You see the situation. You love this person. You want to help them through it. You want to encourage them with the word of God. But you know what the temptation is?

Well, they might not like what I have to say. And I might risk losing some influence in their life. They might not like me anymore if I speak the truth clearly to them. So maybe I'll play it safe and remain silent.

[17 : 21] And those pressures are there. But it's not just for pastors, is it? And those pressures, I believe, are there for all of us. Our commitment to one another as a church family is to love one another with the truth.

It's to help one another live in light of the truth. We need one another's influence and voice and input and help and encouragement into our life.

But it's not always easy to do, is it? And how often do we, like Caiaphas, just choose instead to protect relationships, protect influence?

We want to cater to the approval of others. And so we weigh the dangers and choose to play it safe. Caiaphas and the chief priests and the Pharisees, the council, they failed.

You see, they valued safety and influence and power over the glory of God. This passage is a front row seat to the most foolish decision that has ever been made.

[18 : 28] And yet, in God's wise providence, it's also a front row seat to the incredible wisdom of God.

And we see this in our second point this morning. In verses 51 through 54, second, we see the wisdom of God. In this foolish statement, through the most foolish statement ever made, the decision to put Jesus to death, God had an infinitely wise and glorious purpose.

Look there to verse 51. John gives us insight here. He provides some commentary to this statement that Caiaphas has just made. And he says in verse 51, he says, Caiaphas, he did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation. And not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on, they made plans to put him to death.

Amazingly, this incredibly foolish statement of Caiaphas was a prophecy. Caiaphas was not a prophet.

[19 : 55] A prophet in the Old Testament, they were those who received the word of the Lord, functioned as a mouthpiece of God for the people. Caiaphas was not a prophet. He had no intentions of being a prophet.

He was not even aware that this was a prophetic statement that flowed out of his lips. And his plans were to put an end to Jesus and his ministry, so that no one would ever follow him or believe in him anymore.

His aim was to stop this man from gaining influence. But in the wisdom of God, this foolishness was prophetic.

Something much bigger, much grander than Caiaphas ever imagined. And in the sovereignty of God, his infinitely foolish plan played right in line with God's infinitely wise plan to send his son to live and to die in the place of the children of God.

This is stunning, isn't it? We are face to face here with the depth of the interplay between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

[21 : 07] Divine sovereignty and human responsibility. We believe both. The Bible proclaims both.

We believe that God is sovereign, meaning he is absolutely, totally, completely, entirely in control. To be sovereign means that nothing has ever happened or ever will happen that is outside of his sovereign reign and rule. We believe God is totally sovereign.

And we believe that humans, you, me, Caiaphas, everyone, we are responsible for our words, for our thoughts, for our actions, for all of our foolishness.

This is a biblical tension, isn't it? It's difficult for us to fully, completely understand this, but we believe the Bible clearly proclaims both God's sovereignty and human responsibility.

[22 : 17] And we shouldn't try to resolve the tension by ignoring either one or the other. The Bible holds them both together, and so should we, even though we can't quite understand this completely.

So, for example, we would be wrong to say that, well, because we're responsible for our actions, God is not sovereign, even over our actions.

That somehow we live and we think and we act outside of the sovereignty of God, that God is just waiting and responding and bringing good out of our bad, foolish choices.

That's not what's happening here, is it? That's what we do when we make foolish choices. We try to make the most of it. That's not sovereignty. That's making the best of it.

We believe God is sovereign. He's working in and through these foolish decisions to work out His sovereign plan. But we would be wrong on the other side to say that, well, because God is sovereign, we can't be held responsible for what we do.

[23 : 26] He's in control. He's sovereign. He reigns. He rules. It's His fault. He's responsible for my foolishness.

No, no, no, no, no. Caiaphas and his band of crooks here are responsible for their actions. They are going to put Jesus to death. They are making an eternally, incredibly foolish decision.

They will be held accountable for it. Yet even this, think about this with me. Even the most foolish, most humanly evil decision in the history of the world is not beyond the scope of God's infinite wisdom.

It is part of His sovereign plan. This is unfathomable for us. It's beyond our comprehension.

Paul in Romans 11, he says, Who can know the mind of God? Oh, the depths of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God is unfathomable for us, isn't it?

[24 : 32] But it's not unprecedented. We see this throughout the pages of Scripture, all throughout this interplay of human responsibility and divine sovereignty.

I want you to think of the story of Joseph. Joseph was sold into slavery. His brothers betrayed him. They hated him. They sold him off.

They lied to their father. Evil. Horrible actions. Joseph winds up working for Pharaoh. You know the story. God raises him up.

He uses this position of power and influence for the good of his people. God didn't just bring good out of a bad situation. God ordered it for good. His brothers responsible, God sovereign.

His brothers foolish, God wise. And do you remember what Joseph said to his brothers? In Genesis 50 verse 20. I want you to write that verse down for later.

[25 : 30] His brothers were terrified. They knew that they had messed up. They came to Joseph seeking forgiveness. Do you remember what Joseph said? God said, As for you brothers, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.

To bring about that many people should be kept alive as they are today. Did you hear that? You meant evil in this action, but God in his sovereign wisdom in this action meant good.

In the very one and same action selling me into slavery, you meant evil. You planned evil foolishly, wrongly, but through it, in it, through it, God had much bigger, much greater, much wiser plans through your foolish actions.

God meant good. It's incredible. And of course, we see this intersection of man's foolishness and God's wisdom. Where do we see it most clearly?

It's at the cross of Christ. Acts 2 verse 23. Write that down as well. Peter stands up and says to the Jews, This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

[26 : 51] You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. You did it. You crucified them. You acted foolishly.

You killed them. You are responsible. And God planned it for good. Who planned the death of Jesus?

Caiaphas, the Pharisees, the chief priests, the council here in John 11, all of them planned it foolishly. They are guilty, but who ultimately planned the death of Jesus?

God. The sovereign ruler of all of heaven and earth planned it wisely for good. We're swimming in deep waters here this morning, church.

But do you see the confidence that this should give us who believe? No matter what happens in this world, no matter what danger we face, no matter what foolishness we're going to see and encounter in the world, God is at all times 10,000 steps ahead of every foolish thought, every foolish deed, every foolish motive, every rebellious scheme of Satan, every rebellious scheme of every kingdom of man, and He purposes good through them in wisdom that we cannot begin to comprehend.

[28 : 18] He purposes our good and His glory in perfect, sovereign wisdom. Do you trust Him?

And for those who continue to rebel against Him and wage war against Him and refuse to come to Him and refuse to trust in Him, do you see how foolish that is?

Do you see how futile that rebellion is? C.S. Lewis, he once said, you will certainly carry out God's purpose however you act, but it makes a great difference to you whether you serve like Judas or like John.

The death of Jesus was planned out here by Caiaphas, but it was planned out long before Caiaphas was ever born for the glory of God and the infinite wisdom of God.

What they meant for evil, God meant for glorious good. So the question we have to ask then is, why? Why?

[29 : 34] What is the good, wise plan of God in the death of His Son? What is the good that God purposes through this foolish action?

And we see Christ died on purpose according to the wise plan of God and now we see Christ died with purpose to save His people from their sins.

Look there again to verse 51 and 52. It says, He prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

Here's what we need to understand from this and I want to be as simple and as clear as I possibly can because this is so important for us. That Jesus died as a substitute.

I want you to get that in your minds, write it down on your paper if you need to. This concept needs to be crystal clear for us. Jesus died as a substitute for sinners.

[30 : 38] This is central to the work of Jesus. It's so central that if we miss this, if we miss this plan of God for Christ to be a substitute for sinners, we miss the heart of the gospel.

We cannot understand the heart of the gospel apart from this. We know what a substitute is, don't we? If you've watched 10 seconds of sports, you know what a substitute is.

You have the people in the game. The coach says, alright, it's time for you to come out and I'm going to put in a substitute. So the people who are in the game, on the field, on the court, they come out and somebody now takes their place and the person who takes their place is a substitute.

Are we on the same page? Okay. Jesus died in the place of His people. For us.

In our place. It says He prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation and for His children scattered abroad, for His own from the Jewish people and from the rest of the world, the Gentiles.

[31 : 48] You've heard me say this before. I'm going to keep saying it over and over and over and over again. When you think about the work of Jesus, I want you to think of three words. Please tell me you remember them.

In my place. In my place. This is substitution. Him instead of me.

And we should know that there are efforts to get rid of this doctrine and to just reduce the cross to mere moral example, to get rid of our sin and our need for atonement, to get rid of God's wrath against sin, get rid of substitution, make the point of the cross just a great example of love and

sacrifice.

Now the cross is the greatest example of love and sacrifice that there's ever been. Make no mistake. But if that is all that it is, we're doomed.

We need more than just a moral example. We need a substitute. We need atonement. We need somebody to take our place and to take the wrath of God off of us so that we might be able to be in right relationship with Him.

[33 : 10] God didn't send Jesus just to be a teacher primarily. He sent Christ to be a substitute. John the Baptist already told us this, didn't he?

Remember what he said at the beginning of John? Behold the, help me. Behold the Lamb of God who does what? Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Why does He call Him that? Why does He call Him the Lamb of God? This is substitute language. This is sacrifice language.

Under the old covenant, God made it possible for His people to have their sins forgiven through this system of sacrifice. The priest offered up the sacrifice on the altar.

Why? Because God is just and sin must be judged. So He provided out of His heart of mercy and grace a system where God can judge their sin through a sacrifice, through a substitute.

[34 : 19] Rather than pouring out His wrath on them, He pours out His wrath on the substitute in their place. That was a temporary solution, wasn't it? God's wise plan from the beginning of time was to create and perfect a people for Himself, to bring them to Himself, to purify a people for His own possession.

And how would He do it? He would send His Son to be a substitutionary sacrifice, to take away our sin, to bear the wrath of God in our place.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Substitution. We have to see this, church. It's at the very heart of the gospel.

If you lose this, we lose it all. Just so you see, I'm not crazy. Let's flip to a few other places.

We see it in the Bible. You can write these down. If you're fast, you can flip along with me. 1 Peter 3.18. I just want you to listen. Have your ears tuned in to this language of substitution.

[35 : 33] Okay? 1 Peter 3.18 says, For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.

Do you hear it? Christ also suffered once for sins. Whose sins? Not His. The righteous for the unrighteous, in the place of the unrighteous, as a substitute for the unrighteous.

Why? That He might bring the unrighteous to God. 2 Corinthians 5.21. There may not be a more beautiful verse in the entire Bible.

Memorize this verse. For our sake, He, God, made Him, Jesus, to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God.

For our sake, God made the perfect, innocent, spotless Lamb of God, Son of God, to be sin, so that in Him, by His sacrifice, we might become the very righteousness of God.

[36 : 48] He takes our place. We take His place. The most gloriously unfair deal in the history of mankind. Praise God. Hebrews 9.28.

Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many. You hear that? Why?

To bear the sins of many. He will appear a second time, not to deal with sin. He's already done that. But to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.

One more. This one from the Old Testament. We read it this morning. I hope you heard from Isaiah 53, that language of substitution. 700 years before the birth of Jesus.

Listen to this from Isaiah 53. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

[37 : 50] But He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

And with His wounds, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to His own way. And the Lord has laid on Him in our place as a substitute instead of us.

the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. The death of Jesus was no tragic accident, church.

He died on purpose according to the wisdom and the plan of the sovereign God. and He died with purpose in the place of His own to gather into one the children of God.

What unfathomable grace and wisdom. Why does this matter for us, church, as we close? For one, if you have not trusted in Christ, you should know you still bear your sin.

[39 : 10] It's you or the substitute. Sin will be judged. Sin will be addressed. It's either you or Him. But praise God, there is a substitute willing and available to take the weight of your sin off of your shoulders and bear the punishment that you have earned so that you can go free.

Would you trust in Him? And for us who have trusted in this perfect provision, this is unbelievably good news for us, church.

Amen? It means we are totally forgiven from our sin. When Jesus says the words, it is finished. It's done. That means it is done for any who trust in Him by faith. The verdict is in. Judgment has been declared and poured out on Christ in our place.

We can't work our way into the good graces of God. We no longer have to try to labor, to earn any privilege or favor with God. This is where the Catholics just miss it.

[40 : 22] The atoning work of Christ is finished. And it's ours completely by faith alone. We are made one with God through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

But not just one with God. We're also made one with one another. Look back to verse 52 one more time.

I love verse 52, don't you? It says, Jesus died for the nation, that is, for the Jews. First, He died for those Jews who would trust Him and come out of that Jewish sheep pen, hear the voice of their shepherd and come into this one new flock called the church.

But not just for the Jews, He would die to gather into one people, the children of God, scattered abroad throughout the world.

Children of God who would hear the voice of their shepherd and believe from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost ends of the world even all the way here to all and all.

[41 : 36] And by the grace of God we are brought into union with Christ and one another. So there will be one flock, one shepherd, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

What glorious wisdom. Do you love the family of God? Do you cherish the bride of Christ?

Jesus did not just die for individual scattered people. He died to make one a glorious body of Christ. Verse 53, it tells us from that day on they made plans to put him to death. So, Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews but went from there to the region near the wilderness to a town called Ephraim and there he stayed with the disciples.

Things will escalate quickly from here. He will not avoid their plans for long. The foolish plan of man and the wise plan of God ultimately will meet again at the cross of Christ and who do you think will come out on top?

[43 : 01] Christ Jesus will give himself into the hands of man. He will lay down his life. He will commit his spirit into the hands of the Father and he will rise again from the grave.

He will conquer sin and death. He will ascend into the right hand of the Father and he will come again and he will reign and the foolishness of man will be defeated and triumphed over by the wisdom of God.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your glorious wisdom that is so far beyond our comprehension.

There are depths and riches to your wisdom that will take all of eternity to explore and we thank you Lord that we get to do so.

For all those who are in Christ we have eternity to look forward to where we can search out the riches of your grace and kindness to us who believe. Father, we do pray Lord, for those that don't yet know you God, would you call them in to the one family the one flock of God from every tribe tongue and nation that you might be glorified in the salvation of sinners.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.