

The Journey that Leads to the True and Lasting Victory

Based on John 18:1-14

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When planning a trip, we often take every measure to ensure that the journey will be smooth and comfortable—whether it's a relaxing getaway to wonderful place or a business trip to any part in the world. We consider factors like cost, comfort, and convenience. However, there are times when the journey ahead may not be as ideal, where we face uncertainty, discomfort, or even fear. In such moments, we must ask ourselves: If the only option for our journey isn't favorable, will we still continue forward?

As we reflect on the approaching Good Friday and the solemn remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, we are invited to consider a journey that was anything but comfortable. The path that Jesus walked to the cross was filled with adversity, yet it led to the ultimate victory for all of humanity especially the elect.

John 18:1-14 serves as a powerful reminder of The Journey that Leads to the True and Lasting Victory. In our Christian walk, we often face unexpected and tricky attacks from the enemy. But through these challenges, God has a purpose: to lead us to true and lasting victory. Even when the odds seem overwhelming, God's plan is always for our ultimate good and His glory.

There are three key strategies God uses to accomplish His victory in our lives, even in the face of the enemy's scheming.

I. PRAYER: The Foundation of the Journey (v.1)

Jesus has just completed a powerful time of prayer in John 17, which is often referred to as His "high priestly prayer." It was a prayer not only for Himself but for His disciples and all future believers. As He enters the Garden of Gethsemane in our passage, the weight of His mission is already being borne in the spiritual realm.

Jesus' commitment to prayer demonstrates that no journey toward victory is ever without preparation. Prayer aligns us with God's will and strengthens us for the challenges ahead. As we face our own difficulties, we too must ground ourselves in prayer, trusting that God hears and equips us.

II. PREVIEW of the Enemy's Character and Plan (v.2-3)

In verse 4, we see that Jesus knew everything that was about to unfold. He was not caught off guard by the actions of Judas, the religious leaders, or the soldiers. In fact, He had already foretold His betrayal and arrest in previous chapters. This highlights the first key element: God is never surprised by the enemy's attacks.

THE ENEMY'S TACTICS:

1. Taking Advantage of Confidential Information (v.2): Judas, having intimate knowledge of Jesus' movements, betrays Him with the purpose of advancing his own interests.
2. Misunderstanding of Jesus' Identity (v.5): The enemy saw Jesus merely as the "Nazarene" but failed to understand He was the Savior of the world.
3. Maximizing Weapons for Conviction (v.3): The enemy arrives armed with torches, lanterns, and weapons, seeking to overpower Jesus. Their physical weapons were insufficient against the power of God.
4. The Enemy's Limited Power (v.6): Despite their aggression, when Jesus declares "I am He," the soldiers fall backward in defeat. This moment demonstrates that the enemy's power is ultimately limited in the presence of God's authority.

Just like Jesus, we must recognize the enemy's tactics and not be swayed by his schemes. The enemy might attack us with deception, misunderstand our true identity, or try to overpower us with fear, but we can stand firm knowing that God is in control and the enemy's power is limited.

III. PERFECT Submission to God's Will (v.4-11)

When asked, "Who is it you want?" (v.4), Jesus confidently responds, "I am He" (v.5). He doesn't resist or flee from the arrest; instead, He submits to God's will, fully aware of what lies ahead.

"Let These Men Go":

Jesus, in His perfect submission, tells the soldiers, "Let these men go" (v.8). He protects His disciples, ensuring that their journey is not disrupted by the enemy's plans.

Putting Away the Sword (v.11):

When Peter attempts to defend Jesus with a sword, Jesus rebukes him, saying, “Put your sword away.” This moment underscores the reality that victory is not found in physical resistance but in the obedience and submission to God’s greater plan.

Victory does not come through our strength or efforts but through our willingness to surrender to God’s will. When we submit to God, even in the face of attack, we align ourselves with His ultimate plan for victory. Just as Jesus’ submission led to the cross, so too must we be willing to follow Him, trusting that God’s way is the path to true and lasting victory.

CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION

As we prepare our hearts for Good Friday and reflect on the journey that Jesus took to the cross, let us choose the journey that leads to true and lasting victory. Jesus did not avoid the cross for a moment of temporary freedom; instead, He endured it, knowing it would result in eternal triumph over sin and death.

In our own lives, we are often presented with journeys filled with hardship, temptation, and attacks from the enemy. But like Jesus, we can face these challenges with confidence, knowing that our victory is not based on avoiding difficulty, but in submitting to God’s will. As we follow His example, we can trust that the journey, though difficult, leads to the true and lasting victory that only He can provide. Let us embrace this journey, knowing that in Christ, we are more than conquerors.

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