

CLEARING THE FOG

BELIEFS MATTER

"CLEARING THE FOG" WEEK 5 NOTES JUNE 18

KEY THOUGHTS

- If God were not completely who He is, our world would be unfathomably different. And not in any good ways. ALL of His traits are immensely important: His power, His immutability, and His wisdom far above ours. But if today's trait would be missing, life would be terrifying!
- This week's nagging question: Is God for us or against us?
- Scripture (and life) is saturated with demonstrations of God's love, compassion, forgiveness.
 - Genesis 3 – after the Fall of mankind, God showed compassion by clothing them with skins. He didn't TELL them to do this; He did it for them.
 - John 8 – Jesus' interaction with the woman caught in adultery
 - Luke 15 – Jesus' story of the prodigal son and the Father who was forgiving
 - Jesus Himself was often criticized for spending so much time with "the tax gatherers and the sinners"
- And this event, recorded in all 4 gospels: the high priest's servant (Malchus), coming with the temple guard to arrest Jesus.
- We can't pretend to know exactly why Malchus was there, but he is an accurate picture of us:
 - He "had to" be there. Yet he was front and center, not wanting to miss out. Us too.
 - He perhaps was "dared into" going. The pressure of others. Us too.
 - It was just a simple arrest. He didn't think this action was a big deal. Us too.
 - Maybe he knew it was wrong, but to him it wasn't "personal". After all, he wasn't harming a "good friend." Us too.
 - Maybe he just simply didn't care. Us too.
 - But all that changed with one swing of one blade, and an ear in the dirt!
- "And He touched his ear and healed him." Hard to imagine the thoughts going through Malchus' mind when his head hit the pillow that early morning.
- But God was demonstrating something. Deep in His heart, His instinctive reaction, His "can't help but act this way, instead of a clenched fist, or glee in the blood of His aggressors, Jesus offered compassion and forgiveness. It's who God is!
- Here's another demonstration of who God is – Romans 5:8 – But God demonstrates His own love for us in this, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- **CLARITY:** God is instinctively compassionate and forgiving. Dane Ortlund, Gentle and Lowly– "If you catch me off guard, what will leap out of me before I have time to regain my composure will likely be grouchiness. If you catch God off guard, what leaps out most freely is blessing. The impulse to do good. The desire to swallow us up in joy."
- **IDENTITY:** I am Malchus.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** Put my sword down.

SCRIPTURES

- Mark 14:43-47
- Matthew 26:51-52
- John 18:10-11
- Luke 22:49-51
- Romans 5:8

Practical & Reflection

- What are my common "reasons" why I rebel against and stand in opposition to Him or His ways?
- Am I ready to put my sword down? These are long-impacting decisions and deserve to be thought over well. Take some time this week to get away by yourself and ponder.