

Whosoever Will 8-23-26

Good morning. This morning we're going to be in John chapter 18. We are looking at from the garden to the praetorium. Jesus is leaving his place of prayer, and he is going to face his enemies. We are about to see man at his very worst and God at his very best. In Romans 5:20, Paul tells us that where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more. So in this chapter, John uses five symbols to convey five different spiritual truths as they go from the garden to the praetorium. First of all, the garden is a picture of obedience, of his great high priestly prayer with his Father. Next there is the kiss of treachery from Judas. There is the sword, a picture of rebellion. Peter trying to defend his Lord cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant.

We have the cup, the submission of "not I will, not my will but Thy will be done." And lastly we have Peter warming by the fire, denial three times. Each gospel writer takes a slightly different view of Jesus. We've talked about that many times. And, of course, John's view has always been proving that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. By the time John wrote his gospel Matthew, Mark, and Luke had already completed theirs. So, it is very likely that John may have been familiar with some of the content in those writings. But he adjusted his writings accordingly. There were a lot of things that they told the stories about that he did not include. He omitted the story of the transfiguration. He was there; he had seen the glory of God, but he felt like the others had explained it sufficiently; there was no need.

He was one of the three disciples that went deeper into the Garden of Gethsemane on that last night with Jesus, but he omitted the agony that was suffered between the Father and Son. Thinking maybe it was just too deep, it was too personal to share, That it was something that was between the Father and the Son, and he did not write about that. The cup of judgment, the wrath of God is not mentioned in John. Possibly thinking that it simply did not advance his story about Jesus as. The Son of God. In Second Samuel chapter 15, the writer records David leaving Jerusalem during the rebellion of his son Absalom. Absalom had overtaken the throne and David was forced to leave. Second Samuel 15 records David weeping as he crosses the Brook Kidron. He was weeping over the betrayal of his son and his friends, the treachery that had forced him off of the throne.

And, what a beautiful reminder here in John 18, as Jesus is crossing over the Brook Kidron on his way to the cross. Another picture of just the ultimate betrayal of Judas and the kiss in the garden. From here, he crosses the brook, he enters the garden, he has his high priestly prayer. And as you read John chapter 18, all of these events that we've just talked about Actually, take place between verses one and two of John, and they simply are not recorded there. You have to go to the other writers to find them. That brings us down to the element of the fire. This is in verse nineteen; it's where our story begins. And it says Jesus has been brought before the high priest. Now he says, "The

high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.” Jesus has already been before Annas and Caiaphas.

They were considered informal hearings. The Jews could not hear a capital case at night. The Jews could not hand down a judgment at night, and legally, a full night had to pass between a trial and the verdict. And, it was to give the judge ample time to reflect on the case and to make a decision. So, all of these are actually stalling tactics that these scribes and Pharisees are using. The Bible says here, he asked them about his disciples. Again, it was just a stalling tactic. What, they’re trying to do is they’re trying to round up the members of the Sanhedrin to hear this case. The religious leadership has already made up their minds about Jesus. They don’t want any more information. They don’t need any more information in their own mind. But the problem that they have is that when Rome took over Israel,

They took away the power of the death sentence, that they could no longer execute a person. And, that’s been a problem for the Jews because they are intent on killing Jesus, but they legally cannot do it. They have to have the permission of Rome to do it. So, what they’re hoping to do is to stall long enough to convene the Sanhedrin and let the Sanhedrin convince them that Jesus has said things worthy of the death sentence. The story continues in verse 20. And Jesus answered him and said, I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogues and the temple area, where all the Jews congregate, and I said nothing in secret. Why are you asking me? Ask those who heard what I spoke to them. Look, these people know what I said. So apparently there’s a crowd gathered around, and Jesus says just look at these people. They know what I have done. I have absolutely nothing to hide.

I am an open book. I have no agenda. Everything that I said, everything that I did was in open, it was in public places where anybody could have been. Perhaps he’s even implying here that unlike you, you have been plotting my death and having secret meetings behind closed doors. But he says, I am not that way. Ask any of my followers that I have done or said nothing worthy of death. And he said the sad part about it is is you know it And I know it, but you are not willing to admit it. Verse twenty two But when he said this, one of the officers who was standing nearby struck Jesus. Is that any way you answer the high priest? And Jesus answered him, If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong. But if rightly, why do you strike me? Jesus is perfectly calm, perfectly rational. He knows that he is completely within the Father’s will.

The timetable is exactly right. He has said for many months it was not yet his time, and now his time has come, And he is perfectly satisfied with the way things are moving forward according to God’s will and God’s plan for this. He knows that he’s never going to get a fair trial. He has accepted that scripture has predicted it. Verse 24 says, “And so Annas sent him around to Caiaphas the high priest.” So he’s been to Caiaphas, he’s been to Annas, And now he’s going back to Caiaphas, where this evening began earlier in this chapter. Annas and Caiaphas were an interesting pair. ;. They were related both by family and by politics. Caiaphas was Annas’ son-in-law. Annas was the former high priest who had great power, great influence, And still did even though he

was no longer the high priest ;, he was still highly respected, and his opinion was.

Very much anticipated. Caiaphas had served as the official high priest. He had been installed by Rome, And Caiaphas and Annas were not only religious partners, but they were also political partners during Jesus' public ministry. But they were also, I guess you could say, partners in crime. These two men were just a perfect example of how corrupt the Jewish priesthood had become. They were particularly partners in the temple trade. And if you remember, Jesus has already cleansed the temple on two occasions, running off the merchants, the money exchangers, all of those that were making a profit off of basically religion. And, they are furious that Jesus has shut down their very lucrative business of selling animals and anything that they could find that they could make a little money off of. They were basically profiting off of religion.

And unfortunately, it's a thing that still goes on today. How many preachers do we see, particularly in the media, that are in it only for the money, only for what they can get out of it for themselves? And that's the way Annas and Caiaphas were. Even though they were highly respected, they were highly corrupted. Verse 25: We go back to Peter. "Now Simon Peter was still standing and warming himself. So they said to him, 'You are not one of his disciples as well are you?' And he denied it and said, "I am not. " Peter has already denied Jesus once earlier in this story when he arrived at the home of Caiaphas. He spoke with the doorkeeper there, and the doorkeeper recognized him. And. So now this is a second denial that he does not know Jesus ; he is not a follower of Jesus. Verse twenty six: The plot thickens. One of the slaves of the high priest, who was related to the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said,

Did I not see you in the garden with him? And Peter then denied it again. And immediately a rooster crowed. A third time, Peter is questioned about his relationship with Jesus. This time it is a relative of Malchus, whom he had lopped off his ear and Jesus restored it. Peter denies again being a follower of Jesus, and exactly as Jesus had told him earlier that evening. Before the morning, you will deny me three times. And when you do a rooster will crow. And according to verse 26 that is exactly what happened. And, if you remember, John is interested here in the significance of an event, but Luke was a stickler for the details, so you have to compare scripture to scripture to get this entire story. Jesus's prediction of the crowing of the rooster has been.

Highlighted by John. That was the thing he found interesting. That was the significance of the event, that Jesus' prediction came true. But Luke goes even into further detail about this event. It tells a much more chilling version of what happened that night in Luke chapter 21. He says this : " Peter has been questioned about his relationship with Jesus and Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about.' And immediately while he was speaking, " A rooster crowed, and then the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him before, "A rooster crows today; you will deny Me three times." And he peter went out and wept

bitterly. So John has told us the significance of the event. ; Luke has told us the details that went along with it that.

Jesus was coming down the steps out of uh the house of uh Caiaphas. And as Peter makes that third denial Jesus looks at him. I cannot imagine what was going through Peter's mind at that moment when he realized that Jesus was standing there, witnessing this third denial. The rooster is crowing, just as Jesus had predicted it that it would uh Psalm 11 said this. Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. But a perfect example of the progression that Peter has made this night. In the beginning he walked towards a warming fire. He then stood beside it, and finally, he sat down with the enemy beside the fire.

Luke records that as Jesus prayed, that he sweated, he poured out his heart to the Father. But we find Peter here physically and spiritually cold, warming himself beside the fire of the enemy. While Christ was suffering, Peter was warming himself with the enemy. Verse 28: And then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium. And it was early. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. The praetorium here is the official residence of the Roman governor. It originally had actually been a military barracks. The word actually means a general's tent, But now the Romans have taken it over, and it is the home of Pontius Pilate. And, it will always be remembered as the place where Jesus was mocked and condemned by Pilate.

The Bible says that the Jewish leadership, the scribes, the Pharisees, those that were gathered here possibly even the Sanhedrin did not enter. It has now become strictly Jewish territory. The Jews would not enter the home of a Gentile because there could be nothing worse than to be defiled and be unable to celebrate their beloved Passover the next day. And all because of this impostor. Pilate is in charge here. He is the Roman governor over the Jerusalem district. He was weak, he was indecisive, like the Herods, He hated the Jews, but he knew in order to have a successful career he had to get along with them. So here he is in his own home, and this contingent of angry Jewish leadership comes to his home, brings this man that seems to be perfectly innocent of anything demanding that they come up with a death sentence. Verse 29:

And therefore Pilate came out to them and said, "What accusation are you bringing against this man?" And they answered him and said, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." It's as though he's saying, "Well are you stupid? He's here because he's done bad things." So Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." And the Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death. We could judge him but we want him dead. And you're the only one that can do that. You have taken that privilege away from us, and we want you to kill him. They won't come into Pilate, so Pilate is forced to go out to them. And he's already had his fill of these pompous religious leaders, so he's trying to do anything he can to get rid of them. It's the middle of the night ;. He wants

to get back to bed ;. He's looking for any loophole that he can to spare Jesus, but appease these angry Jews. Verse 32: again John interjecting:

This happened so that the word of Jesus, which he said indicating what kind of death he was going to die, would be fulfilled. So God is actually using these angry Jews to fulfill Scripture. Jesus had to die exactly as Scripture said. He had to die by crucifixion. It was a Roman form of execution, so the Jews would have stoned him to death. But the Scripture has indicated that He was crucified, and so that is how it must be. And the Romans are the only one that can cause that to happen. Ever since Genesis 3:15, God has promised that one day His Son would defeat death, hell, the grave and Satan. But, as you read on in Scripture, you find that the writers are much more specific about how He would complete this defeat of death, hell, the grave and Satan.

The psalmist says, "For dogs have surrounded me. A band of evildoers have encompassed me. They have pierced my hands and feet." This is in Psalm twenty two sixteen Five hundred years later, Isaiah would write, "But he was pierced for our offenses. He was crushed for our wrongdoings." And that's Isaiah fifty three five So both of these scriptures Indicate that Jesus died by crucifixion. The interesting thing about it is, is that both when the psalmist and when Isaiah wrote, crucifixion was not a known form of execution. It was developed probably by the Persians, perfected by the Romans, And until the Romans came into control of Jerusalem, about possibly 40 years before Jesus was born. That was when.

Crucifixion was introduced, And so the psalmist and Isaiah are writing about things that did not even exist. This is how specific, how very powerful God's inspiration of the word is. They probably did not have any clue what they were writing about, and yet all these years later it makes so much more sense. Verse thirty three, Therefore Pilate entered the praetorium again and summoned Jesus and said to him, You are the King of the Jews? And Jesus answered, Are you saying this On your own, or did others tell me tell you about me? Jesus and Pilate are face to face. He has said he is the king of the Jews. The Jews have said, oh no, he's not. Somebody's wrong, and I need to get to the bottom of this. Secular history says many things about Jesus and his claims to be Messiah.

And the Romans had to be harshly dealt with, but there's something about this man that intrigues Pilate. They want him dead, but he sees no problem. The Romans don't really want to execute him, but the Jews want him dead. What is the truth here? Verse 20: "And so he asks, 'Who are you?' This is Pilate to Jesus. I don't understand it. You say you're one thing; they say you're not. I am confused." And so Jesus gives an absolutely brilliant answer. Jesus says, "Are you asking this because you really want to know the truth, Or is this just a rumor you've heard? And out of curiosity, you want to know who I really am?" He said, "If you really want to know who I am, let's sit down and talk. Let me tell you about myself." Jesus makes no attempt to clear himself of the charges. He makes no attempt to refute the charges.

The Bible says he was as innocent as a lamb standing before the slaughterers. Verse 35, and Pilate answered and said, I am not a Jew, am I?

Your own nation and chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done? And Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. But as it is My kingdom is not of this realm. Pilate was already confused and frustrated. Now he is even more confused and frustrated. Jesus is just adding to it. He says, I am the king of a place that you know nothing about. If I were a political king, my people would be out fighting in the streets right now, but my kingdom is not of this world. It is of something you cannot understand. So how can I explain it to you?

He says, "But as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm." He says, "Oh Pilate, I'm not of this world right now. But he said I promise you one day my kingdom will fill this world. I will return. I will rule and reign for a thousand years. You and yours will have no dominion over me. You will be powerless and your fate will be sealed for all of eternity." But right now, I am not of this world. Verse thirty seven, and therefore, Pilate said to him, so you really are a king and Jesus answered, you say, correctly that I am a king for this purpose. I have been born, and for this, I have come into the world to testify to the truth, everyone who is of the truth, listens to my voice, and Pilate said to him, what is truth at this lowly Carpenter standing face to face?

Face to face with the representative of the greatest power on earth, and Jesus is totally calm. He is totally unfazed. He is totally unimpressed by Pilate and the power that he yields over him and Pilate himself is just dumbfounded that this lowly Carpenter speaks so boldly. He speaks so truthfully, and Jesus says those who are of the truth he is talking about his followers, those who have trusted him. He's told them He's the truth. He's told them He is the way, He is the life, He is the only way to the Heavenly Father. He says all of these, all of my followers are of the truth. They hear My voice, they obey My commandments. One day they will spend eternity with Me. He says, I cannot make it any more clear to you that I am the truth, and you certainly are not.

Pilate is just at his wits end, so he changes the truth, the subject and comes up with this question: "What is the truth?" The way he phrases it is he's really more saying "No one knows what truth is. Not even you, Jesus." If he had really wanted to know the truth, Jesus was the source of it. Jesus was standing right there before him. But he is in such a hurry to be rid of Jesus to get this ordeal over with. He has no interest in learning about the truth, the way, and the life. He can find no harm in him as far as Pilate is concerned, ; he is absolutely innocent. To get the full story of what happened on this night, you really have to compare scripture to scripture. Luke, in particular, was a stickler for details, and so if you go to Luke, you get some gaps filled in in this particular story.

After Pilate questions Jesus, He reports back to the Jews that he sees simply nothing wrong with this man, that he is not worthy of the death sentence. This is a conversation that John does not record. It's recorded in Luke chapter 22 in verse four. It says, "But Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no grounds for charges in the case of this man.' But they kept on insisting saying, 'He is stirring up the people.'" Teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee as far as this place. The angry Jewish leadership simply are not

satisfied with Pilate's decision that Jesus is innocent. He's like, open your eyes, see what he's done. He's turned the world upside down all the way to Galilee from north to south all across Palestine. The world is in turmoil because of this man. You've got to kill him and end this madness."

Luke in verse six says, "Now when Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, since he also was in Jerusalem at this time." Pilate has a thank you Jesus moment here. He has been looking for a loophole all night and all of a sudden he gets it when it is mentioned that He was from Galilee, which he was not really from Galilee, but that's where most of his ministry did take place. And Galilee was outside of Pilate's jurisdiction. So immediately he's like, Oh thank you. This is the solution to my problem. I will send him to Herod Antipas because that is in his territory. And so joyfully gleefully Pilate hands Jesus back over to the Jews to send him to Herod and Herod just happened to be in Jerusalem for the Passover, of course.

He was a Roman, not a Jew, but he was intrigued with the Jewish way of life and all these festivals. It was a good political move, with thousands of people from all over the Roman Empire there for the Passover. So he has come down to Jerusalem, and so Pilate sends him off to Herod Antipas. And interestingly, We mentioned when we were studying the book of Matthew, and were talking about the early years of Jesus, we made the comment That we were going to meet Herod Antipas in about 30 years after that story. And this is that meeting. If you remember, When the angel came to Joseph and Mary and told them they needed to flee into Egypt because Herod was killing all the Jewish boy babies that were born around the time of Jesus, that they needed to flee for their safety. And so they did. They went down into Egypt until Herod the Great had died. They returned, they first considered returning back to Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

But one of the sons of Herod the Great was on the throne, and he was equally as cruel as his father had been. So they decided to move to Nazareth, back to the town they had originally come from, Because Herod Antipas was over that part of the region, and they considered him a much more reasonable man than his brother, And that they would be safer in the realm of Herod Antipas rather than Herod the Great. And of course both of these are sons of Herod the Great. So they decide that they're much better off to go back there. So thirty years after the birth of Jesus, We find Mary and Joseph again in this area and Herod Antipas having rule over them. And actually it was only Mary; Joseph is probably dead at this point, but their paths do cross again. Verse eight: "And now Herod was overjoyed when he saw Jesus, for he had wanted to see him for a long time."

Because, he had been hearing about him, and he was hoping to see some sign performed by him. Herod is so excited that Pilate sends Jesus to him. Pilate just wanted to be rid of him and Herod gladly accepted him, hoping he would perform one of his circus tricks for him, that he would get to see a miracle, that something great would happen. And so Jesus remains totally silent before Pilate and before Herod. Antipas and so Herod returns him back to Pilate, washing his hands of him. Also, go back to John chapter eighteen,

the latter part of verse thirty eight. John's account picks back up, And he said, after saying this, he came out again to the Jews and said to them, This is Pilate. I find no grounds for all these charges in this case. However, you have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at Passover. Wherefore.

Who do you wish that I release for you, the King of the Jews? And there was one more piece of the puzzle. Matthew records that while Pilate sat on the judge's seat while he was pondering all of this, Mrs. Pilate comes to him with a message pleading. And this is in Matthew's Gospel. She says, have nothing to do With this just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. His wife tells him, have nothing to do with this man. It's bad news if you do. And of course, unfortunately her warning goes ignored. But it had to prophecy had to be fulfilled. So now in addition to desperate, frustrated and confused Herod Pilate is terrified.

Because of this message that has come from his wife, he has one last weapon in his arsenal. It was an old Jewish custom that at the Passover, one prisoner be released. So, Who, in their right mind wouldn't choose this poor helpless carpenter as the one to be released over these two hardened criminals that are also here? And so they shouted again saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." And now Barabbas was a rebel. Well, it's another Meloché's moment for Pilate. The crowd wants Barabbas, not Jesus. His last defense, his last means of sparing Jesus is gone. So who is Barabbas? The Bible doesn't really say a lot about him. You have to also kind of go to secular history to get the whole story of him. He was a well known criminal. He had been in prison. He had caused an insurrection in the city of Jerusalem. He had murdered someone.

He had led a rebellion against the Roman occupation of Jerusalem, so he was a scoundrel in a lot of senses. Some historians describe him as a terrorist or maybe a guerrilla warrior. Interestingly, some of the oldest manuscripts his name is referred to as Jesus Barabbas, which would literally mean Jesus the son of Abba. And if you remember from some of our earlier studies, Abba is Father. A word often used for God. So, if Barabbas' name really was Jesus Barabbas, then Pilate has an interesting dilemma here. He has to choose between a man who is called the Son of the Father, or the man who says he is the Son of God. Now, there are a lot of manuscripts that do not include this description of him as Jesus Barabbas, so.

If he really his name really was the son of the father, we don't have any biblical proof of it. But a lot of people believe that that was Pilate's dilemma that night, that Barabbas claimed to be the son of the father. Jesus claims to be the Son of God. So what happened to Barabbas after he was released on this night? Not a clue. Secular history doesn't tell us anything. The Bible doesn't give us a clue. He may have gone back to his old life of crime as many released prisoners do.

Could he possibly have been grateful for this exchange, that prisoner exchange that took place? And he became a Christian. Was he affected at all by what happened? Did he go to the cross and watch the crucifixion? We simply do not know. Barabbas vanishes from the pages of history. But the

story of Barabbas and his release from condemnation is basically a picture of all of us as sinners who become believers. We stood guilty before God. We were deserving of death, but then due to no influence, no work on our own, Jesus was chosen to die in our place. He is the innocent one. He took our punishment on Him. What we rightly deserved, He took. And like Barabbas, we are allowed to go free. No condemnation. No punishment. In First Peter three eighteen many years later, Peter wrote about this and says, and Jesus suffered once for sins, the righteous.

For the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God. Well, that brings us down to America 250, our study of our history as a Christian nation. This year we're going to go back to the era of the Korean War. His name was General Douglas MacArthur. He was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Pacific in World, War II. In December of 1951, at the height of the Korean War, he wrote this: "In this day of gathering storms, as moral deterioration of political power spreads its growing infection, It is essential that every spiritual force be mobilized to defend and preserve the religious base upon which this nation is founded. For it has been that base which has been the motivating impulse.

To our moral and national growth. History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay has not passed into political and economic decline. There has been either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse or a progressive deterioration, leading to ultimate national disaster. This one is a very potent picture possibly. Of America in twenty twenty six history fails to record a single instance where a moral decline did not lead to a political and economic decline, but a spiritual awakening could save a nation, so something very much for us to consider. Jonah wrote about a nation in spiritual decline. He wrote about Assyria, and this is what he said in Jonah three ten.

When God saw their deeds, the Assyrians, that they turned from their evil way, Then God relented of the disaster, which he had declared, and he would bring on them. And so he did not do it. God did not destroy Nineveh as he had told Jonah, he would if they did not repent. They repented and secular history actually says that, that repentance lasted for around 150 years, that they were a peaceful prosperous nation and then of course Sin crept back in, moral decline crept back in, and they were ultimately destroyed. But at this moment in time, they repented. God relented and the nation was spared. Let's pray: Father, thank you for this day. Thank you that you love us, you care for us Lord. You promised, if we'll pray, You will heal our nation. And we are in a time when we need that more than ever before Lord. We just ask for your will and your way to be done Lord.

And that you would inspire us, that you would lead us in ways that we could be good witnesses, that we could be humble servants for you. For it's in your name we pray. Amen.

JOHN EIGHTEEN FROM THE GARDEN TO THE PRAETORIUM TAKE – A – WAYS

In the Garden of Gethsemane on that night you find both guilt and grace
Peter was guilty of resisting God's grace
Judas Iscariot was guilty of extreme treachery
The mob was guilty of rejecting the Son of God
But Jesus was filled with grace
He went knowing He would be betrayed
But also knowing it was His Father's will for Him
He healed Malchus' ear
He protected His disciples
And He yielded Himself for our sakes

Who was the "other disciple" in John 18:15 ?
Unlikely that it was John
He would have been a nobody to the doorkeeper at the home of Annas
Most believe it was either Nicodemus – or – Joseph of Arimathea
Both prominent Jews – and – secret believers in Jesus

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