

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 316

Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21

Verses: John 18:10-14

Topic: The Cup, Which The Father Has Given Me

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John 18:10-14 MKJV Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. And the servant's name *was* Malchus. (11) Then Jesus said to Peter, Put up your sword into the sheath. The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it? (12) Then the band, and the chiliarch, and under-officers of the Jews together seized Jesus and bound Him. (13) And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. (14) And Caiaphas was he who gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Peter was always very protective of Jesus. In Matthew 16:22 Peter objects to the idea of Jesus being crucified, here Peter draws his sword in misplaced defensive loyalty. Jesus does not need our protection. If He has wanted to He could have called own twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:53) or fire from Heaven (2 Kings 1:10, Luke 9:54).

The idea that we need to defend God is a grand folly that has caused everything from embarrassment to evil and even given rise to such atrocities such as the Inquisition. God is well able to take care of Himself – and all of us to boot!

God is not a concept that has to be explained, argued for and defended. Rather, God is a personal spiritual being of immense grandeur and power. God is like Jesus – personal, powerful and majestic.

If God is just a philosophy, a grand and wonderful notion, or an inspiring idea then of course we need to argue for 'it' and explain and defend our position. It would then be essential for people to share and understand our point of view. But God is not a mere idea or notion. He is a Person of vast power and intelligence who is fully able to reveal and explain Himself - even without our help. A drug addict can have a vision and come to a deep understanding of God and of salvation in Christ all without the help of a single theologian.

God does not need my sword. He will tell me to put it in its sheath. If God wants to be vulnerable and die on a cross – then that is His prerogative. And if God wants to come in glory with ten thousand times ten thousand angels – then that is also His complete right.

“Then Jesus said to Peter, Put up your sword into the sheath. The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?” For Jesus this was Destiny. It was God's cup – and He would drain it to the last drop. And it was a destiny written in the Scriptures that Peter was helpless to do anything about. Matthew's gospel puts it this way:

Matthew 26:52-56 MKJV Then Jesus said to him, Put up your sword again into its place; for all who take *the* sword shall perish with a sword. (53) Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? (54) But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so? (55) In that hour Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out in order to take Me with swords and clubs, as against a thief? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not lay hands on Me. (56) But all this happened that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples fled, forsaking Him.

“But all this happened that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” In other words – “God is in control, you cannot stop this, the prophets predicted it, so give up trying to save me”. And so they fled. It was the wisest thing to do; courage would achieve nothing – for “it is written” sealed it all. I think part of the reason they fled was also because it seemed that God had gone crazy. The idea of a God who would be vulnerable and die was too bizarre and shocking for the human mind to comprehend.

Jesus chose to neither fight nor flee but to commit Himself to God in suffering and death. The physical “fight or flight” response is something we need to master. Jesus never gave in to it for a second. Even facing Satan in the wilderness he did not flee and He did not fight in a fleshly fashion. He simply trusted God and the Scriptures and mastered the situation in the Spirit.

In the Garden the choices were fight, flight or mastery. Peter chose “fight” and when that was rebuked, the rest chose “flight”. Only Jesus displayed mastery. It is this third way, the way of mastery through faith, the way of drinking the cup given to us by God, that is the path of the Spirit.

Someone insults you, viciously, in public. Do you fight? Do you flee? Or do you return a blessing and display mastery of the situation? You are in a meeting and your idea, which you have worked hard to present, is being willfully misunderstood and shot down in flames. Do you fight? Do you flee? Or do you take authoritative mastery of the situation in the Spirit like Jesus in His debates with the Pharisees?

The mastery that Jesus displayed in the Garden of Gethsemane is the “via media” – the middle way, and the way of God. In the strange ways of God, sometimes the most masterful thing we can do is to choose to suffer evil on the behalf of others. Calm acceptance of God’s will can be a more powerful statement than drawing a sword and chopping off Malchus’ ear.

By nature I am a “fighter” and I spend a lot of spiritual energy trying to fight my way out of situations that God has put me in. I would far rather lead a cavalry charge than deal with bureaucracy and futility. I have to learn to “drink the cup” and trust God with the outcome. Sometimes the most masterful thing I can do is just to be still and know that He is God.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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