

Trouble in the Garden

by
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Our chapel speaker was unable to keep her speaking engagement due to an illness. One of my responsibilities at the school where I work is to find speakers for Elementary Chapel, every Wednesday. A spring cold had been making the rounds through our area, and our speaker was still under the weather. I assured her that we would think of another plan and told her to go home and rest.

I didn't fret about the last minute change, however. Some of our best chapels have been when God has completely changed our plans. He did not disappoint us that day. Our music teacher said she would lead a worship time if I would lead the students in small group prayer. I considered my busy classroom schedule, threw a quick prayer up to heaven and hoped I would find a few minutes to research the Blue Letter Bible for information on prayer. The few minutes never materialized.

Two math and one history class later, we were on our way to chapel. I checked in with God and reminded Him that I needed Him to speak through me after worship time and then joined the kids, who were singing with great energy. As our worship leader finished the final song, I still did not know what I would teach on, but I knew God had a plan. While I was talking to my students about how to pray, God brought to my mind the study I had just written on the Garden of Gethsemane and God unfolded His plan for that chapel.



With the plan in mind I asked the students to name examples of prayer from the Bible knowing that someone would eventually say, "Jesus in the Garden." As expected, one of the boys from my class raised his hand and said, "How about that time when Jesus prayed in that garden?" I asked him if he knew the name of the garden. He thought for a split second and then answered, "I think he prayed at Olive Garden." We all had a good laugh together! After we finished our discussion on prayer we broke into small groups, and the prayers of the students rose to heaven like incense. I think God had a good laugh with us that day!

How he must delight in His children. Come to think of it, I think I'd like to have a prayer ministry based at the local Olive Garden!

On a more serious note we must leave the Olive Garden behind, and join Jesus and His disciples at the Mount of Olives because trouble is afoot.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of your heart and then read Matthew 26:47-54.

Who came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? Please list the different groups.

Luke 22:52 and John 18:3 record that captains of the temple and troops (probably Roman) were present as well.

How many people accompanied Judas?

The original word for *multitude* is *ochlos* which means, "a throng (as borne along); by implication, the rabble, a riot, a throng as borne along, the common people, an ignorant multitude, people gathered together without order" (*BLB*). This word also refers to a "vehicle."

While some members of the posse, sent to arrest Jesus, were certainly part of an organized group, it is also reasonable to assume from the original wording, that a crowd of people were simply "borne along" in the heat of the moment to join the excitement.

What kinds of weapons did they carry (verse 47)?

Most likely the swords were carried by the captains of the temple and the Roman soldiers. The clubs carried by the multitude could have been anything from staves to tree branches picked up along the riotous march to Gethsemane.

Why do you think a multitude went to arrest Jesus?

I personally think they were afraid of Jesus and thought they could find safety in numbers. Please read the following comment by Matthew Henry:

“They came *with swords and staves*. The Roman soldiers, no doubt, had swords; the servants of the priests, those of them that had not swords, brought staves or clubs. *Furor arma ministrat—Their rage supplied their arms*. They were not regular troops, but a tumultuous rabble. But wherefore is this ado? If they had been ten times as many, they could not have taken him had he not yielded; and, his hour being come for him to give up himself, all this force was needless. When a butcher goes into the field to take out a lamb for the slaughter, does he raise the militia, and come armed? No, he needs not; yet is there all this force used to seize the Lamb of God.”

Notice how Judas addressed Jesus in verse 49.

What word did Judas use to recognize Jesus?

“Greetings” can also be translated as “hail.” Judas replaced the traditional Hebrew greeting, “shalom” for the Greek greeting, “chairō.” My commentary suggests that perhaps this little change of greeting was indicative of a great change of heart; by forsaking the Hebrew blessing, Judas now identified himself with the enemies of Jesus.

Please read 51-53 again.

What happened to the servant of the high priest?

What did Jesus tell His disciple to do in verse 52?

According to verse 53, why did Jesus tell him to put away his sword?

Jesus did not need his disciples to defend Him with earthly weapons (At a mere breath from Jesus, every knee would bow and every tongue proclaim that He is Lord). If Jesus were threatened in any way that was apart from God's will, thousands of angels were ready to defend Him at His slightest call. Swords were completely unnecessary.

In verse 53 Jesus says, "Or do you think that I cannot now *pray* to my Father, and He will provide Me with twelve legions of angels" (emphasis mine). The word for *pray* in this verse is very different from any other word we've studied thus far. The original word is *parakaleo* means "to call to one's side, to summon, to invite, to beseech, comfort, intreat." Part of *parakaleo* is akin to the base word *keleuo* which means "to urge on, to command, to order, to bid." This type of prayer is not a request from a weaker person who needs help to a greater person who is more powerful, nor is it a petition asking God to act in a certain way on one's behalf. This type of prayer is an order for an action. It is the issuing of a command from one who has power and authority. If Jesus *parakaleo*-ed the Father for angels, He knew they would be sent immediately. With this type of prayer there would be no delay. But, Jesus put aside His right to call for divine intervention and was ready to sacrifice His life.

In closing, please notice that Jesus did not use His power of prayer (*parakaleo*) to bring about His own will. He used His prayer (*proseuchomai*) time to completely surrender to the will of His Father. As Matthew Henry stated, "Though he had undertaken the work of our redemption, yet, if he had desired to be released, it should seem by this that the Father would not have held him to it. He might yet have gone out free from the service, but he loved it, and would not; so that

it was only with the cords of his own love that he was bound to the altar." We need to do the same. Our obedience to the Father is not a matter of being forced by Him to do something; but that we obey because we love Him.

Please write John 14:6 in the space provided.

Like Jesus, we have a choice to make. Let's move from the child-like attitude of insisting on having our own way concerning our prayers, to insisting that God have His way, because He is the Way.

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