

John 18:10-12; Luke 22:49-54  
Jesus Bound, Satan Unleashed  
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For the last few years now, I have been preaching sermons on the suffering of Jesus on those Sundays when we have partaken of the Lord's Supper. I am continuing that series today. Today I want to focus upon the atoning suffering of Jesus by meditating upon the simple fact that those who arrested Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane bound Him. Our text from the gospel of John says,

"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him."

In our last sermon in this series, we looked at the last miracle Christ performed during His earthly ministry. When the armed band came to arrest him, Peter in his misguided zeal had tried to defend Jesus with a sword. The only harm Peter had done was to cut off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Jesus, in a display of mercy and power, replaced and healed that severed ear. That was Jesus' last miracle before His death upon the cross. He performed the last wonder of His earthly ministry; His miracle working hands had completed their service. And so Jesus allowed His hands to be bound.

You would think that Malchus the slave would have cried out in

protest against this binding, this enslaving as it were, of this Jesus who had been so merciful to him. If no one was moved by the display of mercy, surely someone would have been moved by the display of divine power. You would think that Judas and all the others in that armed band would have responded to this awesome wonder with the words such as those once spoken by Nicodemus, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." But no, they proceeded without hesitation with their wicked plans. They bound the Savior. They treated as a slave the one who had just miraculously healed the slave in their armed band. This action demonstrated their inner spiritual darkness. The men of this armed band truly were the devil's loyal servants. They were citizens of the kingdom of darkness. Their senseless and heartless behavior demonstrated that they were indeed in the snare of the devil, having been taken captive to do the devil's will. As they tied the bonds, they displayed their own bondage to sin and Satan and the rebellious world system.

These spiritually bound men physically bound the Savior, but this was not because Jesus was helpless before them. This binding differed from the binding of Sampson we read about in Judges chapter 16. Because of Sampson's sinful foolishness, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Sampson. Sampson's strength left him, and he became weak like any other man. Thus Sampson's Philistine enemies who had been helpless before him, were able to overcome him. They bound Sampson with bronze fetters and put him in prison.

The binding of Jesus was different from that. Unlike Sampson, Jesus had done nothing foolish or sinful to enable His enemies to overcome Him. He had lost none of His supernatural abilities or power. His enemies were able to bind Him only because He voluntarily allowed them to do so. When Jesus rebuked Peter for attacking Malchus, Jesus reminded Peter that He was not now helpless. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword in its place ... Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

When Jesus allowed the agents of Satan to bind Him, Jesus still had His power over Satan, power that Jesus had manifested many times by casting out Satan's demons. In Matthew 12, Jesus said,

... if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man?

Jesus was there saying that when He cast out demons and freed people from demonic possession, He was plundering Satan's property. And Jesus had been able to do this only because He had the power to bind Satan, the power to limit and to restrain Satan.

In our passage for today, Jesus still had that power, that ability to restrain Satan. Yet Jesus instead unleashed Satan, removed

restraints from Satan, so that Satan had the power to bind Him. This is Satan's hour, that short time when Satan was allowed to prevail over God's Holy One.

We see a similar unbinding of Satan and a similar hour of darkness in the book of Job. Job was an unusually godly man. The book of Job says that Job was "blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil." Satan confronted God and said that if God would allow him to afflict Job, Job would curse God. Satan said that the only reason Job was loyal to God was because God prospered Job and put a hedge of protection around him. God replied to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." Satan did grievously afflict Job and a black tide of demonic darkness did surge over Job, but Job proved faithful. He did not curse God. Job's wife said to him, "Curse God and die." Job responded, "Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" And in all of this, Job did not sin with his lips.

In our passage for today, when Satan was allowed to bind Jesus, God was saying to Satan, "Behold, Jesus is in your hands." And unlike the unleashing of Satan in the book of Job, there is no restriction about having to spare Jesus' life.

Satan proceeded to use his agents to bring Jesus to the cross, to the place of death, to the place of the curse. Satan used Judas and Annas and Caiaphas and Pilate and Barabbas and the unruly mob. This was Satan's hour. This was the short time of opportunity given to the power of darkness.

Satan, of course, took full and immediate advantage of his new freedom. Satan's purpose was to prevent Jesus from suffering as an atoning sacrifice for human sin. Previously Satan had tried to dissuade Jesus from submitting to the cross. In the wilderness temptation, Satan had argued that such suffering was unnecessary. All Jesus had to do was to bow down before Satan and worship him, and Satan would give Jesus all the kingdoms of this world and their glory. Jesus could have his earthly kingdom without undergoing the agony of Golgotha. Jesus, of course, rejected all such ethical nonsense, all such immoral shortcuts to glory. Satan had tried the carrot, the carrot of avoiding the cross, the carrot of receiving the kingdoms of this world without any suffering and agony and humiliation. Jesus had not taken the bait. Instead Jesus had cried out, "Away with you, Satan!"

The carrot approach had not worked there in the wilderness at the beginning of Jesus' three years of ministry. Here at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, Satan tried another approach. The carrot had not worked, so now Satan tried the stick. Satan became God's agent to bring Jesus to the cross, to the place of suffering. Satan did so eagerly with the expectation that Jesus would not persevere. Satan must have expected that Jesus would not be able to drain to the dregs the full cup of suffering. Satan had agents around the cross cry out,

"If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!  
You saved others; now save Yourself! If You are the King

of Israel, come down now from the cross, and we will believe You!"

Satan must have thought that Jesus would pay heed to these temptations. After all, Jesus had the power to cut short His ordeal at any time. But the Jesus who allowed His hands to be bound persevered in His passive submission to suffering until He could cry out, "It is finished!" He persevered as the silent Pascal Victim.

Isaiah 53:7

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

Jesus continued to submit without complaint to the suffering of the cross until He had satisfied God's full wrath against sin, until He had indeed borne the sin of the world, until He could cry out, "It is finished!" He persevered through the physical pain. He persevered as the Father laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He persevered as He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquity. He persevered as God the Father disrupted His fellowship with Jesus in His humanity, as the Father baptized Him with the baptism of divine wrath. He persevered as He cried out in agony, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He persevered as Satan the Accuser now accused Him as a moral outcast, one smitten by God and afflicted. He persevered as God "made Him who knew no sin to

be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corintihians 5:21).

Jesus persevered in all the suffering and humiliation which had been initiated and symbolized by the binding of His hands there in Gethsemane.

Jesus persevered as the Servant of the Lord. The bound hands were an apt emblem of Jesus' lowly servitude. In Isaiah 52 and 53, the Lord said,

"Behold, My Servant ... He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. ... All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

And as Paul expressed Jesus' servitude humiliation in Philippians chapter two:

[He] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and become obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus demonstrated His willingness to be this obedient bondservant when He allowed His hands to be bound. And He persevered in this intention to His dying breath.

Jesus persevered as the Servant of the Lord, and He also persevered as the True Sacrifice. Consider Psalm 118:25-28:

Save now, I pray, O LORD;  
O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!  
We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.  
God is the LORD, and He has given us light;  
Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.  
You are my God, and I will praise You;  
You are my God, I will exalt You.

The previous Sunday when the crowds from Jerusalem had greeted and welcomed Jesus into the Holy City, they had used some of these very words. They had cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Now, just a few days later, the following Thursday, Jesus is fulfilling the subsequent verse which says, "Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar." They bound Him on Thursday, and on Friday they would sacrifice Him on the altar of a Roman cross. Hosanna means to save, and for Jesus to be the Savior, He must first be the sacrifice. They acknowledge Jesus to be the Messianic King, but the true road to Messianic kingship passes by the altar of sacrifice, which is the cross. Jesus is bound, and that is a symbol that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus is bound as the obedient Bondservant of the Lord. Jesus is bound as the true Sacrifice. And lastly Jesus is bound as the

prophetic fulfillment of Isaac at Mount Moriah. He is Servant, Sacrifice and Isaac. Genesis 22:9-10 says,

Then [Abraham and Isaac] came to the place of which God had told them. And Abraham built an altar there and place wood upon the altar; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

"Abraham bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar." Isaac was the son of promise whom God had given to Abraham as the heir of God's covenant. In this capacity, Isaac was a prophetic picture of Jesus. Isaac was the immediate son of Abraham, and Jesus was the ultimate Son of Abraham. In Hebrews chapter eleven, Isaac is called Abraham's only begotten son.

Hebrews 11:17-19

- 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,  
18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"  
19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

Isaac was Abraham's only begotten son, not in the literal sense of being Abraham's only male child but in the metaphorical sense of being Abraham's beloved, ever so precious son.

When we hear that title, "only begotten son," to refer to a beloved, ever so precious son, we cannot help but think of John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life.

Just as Abraham gave Isaac as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah, God the Father gave Jesus as a sacrifice on Mt. Calvary. In our passage for today, the agents of Satan bind Jesus. Yet they do so with God's permission. God has unbound these agents of darkness that they might bind His Son, who is the Light of the world. God is using Satan and his agents. In an ultimate sense, it is God who binds Jesus and brings Him to the cross as an altar of sacrifice.

Romans 5:8

8 But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us

Romans 8:32

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Isaiah 53:10

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. ...

In our passage for today, we see Jesus bound. Jesus could have snapped those bonds like Sampson in the prime of his strength when the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. But Jesus did not. He allowed Himself to be bound. It was a symbol of His obedience to the will of the Father. It was a symbol of His willingness to submit to suffering and to the painful and shameful death of the cross. It was a symbol of His willingness to be our atoning sacrifice.

Beloved, Jesus was in bonds so that we might be free, free from the burden of guilt, free from the bondage of sinful living. Jesus was in bonds so He could deliver us from the kingdom of darkness and translate us to the kingdom of His love.

Look to Jesus in faith for deliverance from guilt and sin. And then demonstrate your gratitude by binding yourselves to the altar, not to the altar of sacrifice but to the altar of service, not as a slain sacrifice but as a living sacrifices. As you partake of the Lord's Supper today, remember Christ's sacrifice for you. And as you partake of the Lord's Supper today, rededicate yourselves to Him. Present your bodies to Him as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God. When you consider His mercies to you, that is your reasonable service.