

Pastor Russell Lackey  
Reformation L.C.  
John 18:1-9

### A reason to take heart

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. **2**Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. **3**So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. **4**Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" **5**"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) **6**When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. **7**Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." **8**"I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." **9**This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."

**"In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart. I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).** It is easy to lose heart. A tax bill can cause you to lose heart. Pressure at work can cause you to lose heart. A fight with a loved one can cause you to lose heart. It is easy to lose heart.

A problem for us as Christians is that we are a people of faith. We falsely think that we should never lose heart and should always be able to sing the hymn "It is well with my soul." But how can we sing such a hymn when our world is falling apart? We need to find heart before we can sing such a hymn. But where do we look to find it?

Did you hear about the farmer whose mule was getting older? The farmer could not afford a new mule and so he asked a local veterinarian if there was something that could be done. The veterinarian said, "Sure, I have two pills: a white and a red one. Give the mule the white pill. In almost every case your mule should respond. If not, then you should give the mule the red pill and he will respond."

Some time past and the veterinarian ran into the farmer and asked how the pill worked. The farmer replied, "It was amazing. I gave the mule the white pill and he immediately got strength. The mule burst out of his stall. He broke down the barn door. He leaped over three fences and was running for freedom." Well, what did you do asked the veterinarian?" He was shocked when the farmer replied, "I remembered the red pill in my hand and took it. I was able to catch him."

This evening, I have a little red pill for you to take when you lose heart. It comes from John 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart. I have overcome the world." This is one of the most important statements in the Bible because Jesus is not promising his disciples a life of ease. He is promising his disciples tribulation. "If the world has hated me, surely the world will hate you." Jesus goes on to say, "Take heart, I have overcome the world."

Where did Jesus overcome the world? Obviously, he overcame the world with the resurrection. But we see another place where he overcame the world, namely, his arrest. Listen again to John 18:1-3:

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. **2**Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. **3**So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

When you think of Jesus being arrested, how many people do you think came after him? Most of us think it was a handful of people. In verse 3, "it says a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priest." The detachment of soldiers was a Roman "spira," which is approximately 600 soldiers. Their captain was a "heliarchos," which is a leader of thousands (18:12). The Romans "spira," combined with the Jewish police, would have been a formidable group. You could say the world came out to arrest Jesus.

It is important to note that Jesus takes the initiative in this scene. In the other gospels, Jesus is betrayed by a kiss. In John's gospel, Jesus takes the initiative by asking "Who do you seek?" This is important because Jesus is the one who has the power in this situation. You would think the soldiers with weapons and authority to arrest Jesus would be the ones with the power. But they have none. Listen to verses 4-6:

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" **5**"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) **6**When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

Jesus then goes on to secure the release of his disciples. Listen to verses 7-9:

**7**Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." **8**"I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. "If you are looking for me, then let these men go." **9**This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."

Who has the power? Who has the authority? Jesus does. First, Jewish and Roman forces meet Jesus in the garden, yet Jesus subdues them by uttering the "I AM." His opponents appear to have tremendous power, but in reality prove powerless. They also seem to wield high authority, yet Jesus is the only one who gives an order, securing the release of his disciples. Jesus has all the power. Even more, Jesus uses his power not to save himself, but to save others.

**Where do we find heart when we lose it?** Jesus is calling us to find heart in him. We will be persecuted just as he was persecuted. We will suffer just as he suffered. But take heart. We are united to Christ. He overcame the world and so too will you.

**In Jesus' Name,  
Amen**