

John 11:53 to End. Christ Retires to Ephraim.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon highlights the wicked suggestion of Caiaphas to put Jesus to death and the Lord's hiding in Ephraim, emphasizing the importance of true faith and love.

Scripture: Psalm 26:6, Proverbs 1:10, Matthew 26:3, John 2:23, John 10:39, John 11:49, John 12:12, John 13:1, Ephesians 2:8, 1 John 2:19

Topics: "Jesus Retreats", "False Worship"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the wicked suggestion of Caiaphas leading to the plot to put Jesus to death, emphasizing the guilt of those who propose evil schemes and the consequences of acting on such suggestions. Despite the enemies' plans, Jesus, who knew all things, retreated to Ephraim for a time of intimate fellowship with His disciples. Meanwhile, the Jews gathered for the Passover in Jerusalem, appearing religious outwardly but lacking true spiritual worship. The people's fickle enthusiasm for Jesus reveals the danger of a faith that crumbles under trial and a love easily extinguished by criticism.

Transcript

The wicked suggestion of Caiaphas was immediately acted upon. The Pharisees took council together to put Jesus to death. Acceptable advice is soon followed. How great is the guilt of the man who suggests a wicked scheme! All the dark deeds that have ever been committed, were suggested by some man. A word may be the beginning of a train of horrors, from the view of which the soul recoils. What woes to the Jewish people flowed from the crime that Caiaphas proposed!

The Lord (who knew all things) knew of the consultation which his enemies had held, and of the scheme which they had formed; and as his hour was not yet quite come, he retired for a short time to a small town called Ephraim. It was so small a place that its name is scarcely mentioned by any writer; but it is supposed that it was situated in a valley full of corn, about eight miles from Jerusalem. Here the disciples enjoyed another season of confidential communion with their Lord, such as they had once tasted on the banks of Jordan. How doubly precious would this opportunity have seemed to them, had they believed they must so soon part with their Divine Teacher! It is seldom that we know when we are enjoying, for the last time, the society of a beloved friend. With what feelings a child remembers the last prayer a parent offered up in the presence of his family, while, perhaps, neither the parent nor the child knew it was the last!

While the Lord was hidden in his retreat, the Jews were assembling to keep the Passover at Jerusalem. To judge from the numbers that flocked there, one would have supposed that they were a very religious people. They came from distant parts of the country, and they arrived at an early period, in order to go through various purification and washings commanded in the law; but they did not, like David, wash their hands in innocency, before they approached the altar of their God. (Ps. 26:6.) There may be a full attendance at the house of God, and even at the Lord's supper, while there are but few spiritual worshippers. Such religious acts obtain for those who perform them a name to live among men; but they may be performed while the heart is dead before God. Never were the Jews in a more dangerous state than when, having ceased to worship engraved images, they observed with strictness the ceremonies of the law.

The people who stood in the temple, inquiring whether Jesus was come, and wondering whether he would come at all, little knew what deed they would perpetrate before they left the holy city. Now they were full of enthusiasm for the Prophet of Nazareth; now they extolled him as the greatest that had ever appeared; now they were ready to receive him with hosannas, and to proclaim him king; but they had no true faith and love rooted in their hearts. The Lord would not trust himself in their hands, and therefore hid himself until his appointed time was come.

There is a kind of faith which will not stand the day of trial! there is a kind of love which is put out by the breath of slander. Some imagine that they are godly, because they delight in listening to an eloquent preacher. Let us remember how anxious the Jewish people were that Jesus should come to the feast, and how they treated him during that feast. Do we know Him as our Savior from sin? Do we feel that He loved us, and gave himself for us? Then we shall never cease to love him. Though the disciples sinfully forsook him in the hour of danger; yet nothing quenched their love; for it was founded not on admiration of his power, but on gratitude for his mercy.

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