

# John 18:1-37

by St. John Chrysostom

---

*Jesus goes to His Passion willingly, demonstrating His power and authority, and fulfilling God's plan for the salvation of the world.*

**Scripture:** John 18:2-5, John 18:7-9, John 18:11-12, John 18:14-15

**Topics:** "Christ's Passion", "Spiritual Humility"

---

## Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the events leading to Jesus' arrest, highlighting His willingness to go to His Passion, the disciples' response, Judas' betrayal, and Peter's denial. Chrysostom emphasizes Jesus' calm demeanor, miraculous actions, and teachings on surrendering to God's will and enduring insults with grace and humility. He encourages the audience to emulate Christ's example of patience, forgiveness, and non-resistance to insults, reminding them of the eternal rewards of heavenly approval and blessings for enduring trials and correcting faults with virtue.

---

## Transcript

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples.

1. An awful thing is death, and very full of terror, but not to those who have learned the true wisdom which is above. For he that knows nothing certain concerning things to come, but deems it to be a certain dissolution and end of life, with reason shudders and is afraid, as though he were passing into non-existence. But we who, by the grace of God, have learned the hidden and secret things of His wisdom, and deem the action to be a departure to another place, should have no reason to tremble, but rather to rejoice and be glad, that leaving this perishable life we go to one far better and brighter, and which has no end. Which Christ teaching by His actions, goes to His Passion, not by constraint and necessity, but willingly. These things, it says, Jesus spoke, and departed 'beyond the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples.'

John 18:2

Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes resorted there with His disciples.

He journeys at midnight, and crosses a river, and hastes to come to a place known to the traitor, lessening the labor to those who plotted against Him, and freeing them from all trouble; and shows to the disciples

that He came willingly to the action, (a thing which was most of all sufficient to comfort them,) and places Himself in the garden as in a prison.

These things spoke Jesus unto them. What do you say? Surely He was speaking with the Father, surely He was praying. Why then do you not say that, 'having ceased from the prayer,' He came there? Because it was not prayer, but a speech made on account of the disciples. And the disciples entered into the garden. He had so freed them from fear that they no longer resisted, but entered with Him into the garden. But how came Judas there, or whence had he gained his information when he came? It is evident from this circumstance, that Jesus generally passed the night out of doors. For had He been in the habit of spending it at home, Judas would not have come to the desert, but to the house, expecting there to find Him asleep. And lest, hearing of a garden, you should think that Jesus hid Himself, it adds, that Judas knew the place; and not simply so, but that He often resorted there with His disciples. For oftentimes He was with them apart, conversing on necessary matters, and such as it was not permitted to others to hear. And He did this especially in mountains and gardens, seeking a place free from disturbance, that their attention might not be distracted from listening.

John 18:3

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the Chief Priests and Pharisees, comes there with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

And these men had often at other times sent to seize Him, but had not been able; whence it is plain, that at this time He voluntarily surrendered Himself. And how did they persuade the band? They were soldiers, who had made it their practice to do anything for money.

John 18:4

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said, Whom do you seek?

That is, He did not wait to learn this from their coming, but spoke and acted without confusion, as knowing all these things. But why come they with weapons, when about to seize Him? They feared His followers, and for this reason they came upon Him late at night. And He went forth, and said to them, Whom do you seek?

John 18:5

They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth.

Do you see His invincible power, how being in the midst of them He disabled their eyes? For that the darkness was not the cause of their not knowing Him, the Evangelist has shown, by saying, that they had torches also. And even had there been no torches, they ought at least to have known Him by His voice; or if they did not know it, how could Judas be ignorant, who had been so continually with Him? For he too stood with them, and knew Him no more than they, but with them fell backward. And Jesus did this to show, that not only they could not seize Him, but could not even see Him when in the midst, unless He gave permission.

John 18:7

He says again, Whom do you seek? What madness! His word threw them backward, yet not even so did they turn, when they had learned that His power was so great, but again set themselves to the same attempt. When therefore He had fulfilled all that was His, then He gave Himself up.

John 18:8

He answered, I told you that I Am. ( John 18:5 And Judas also which betrayed Him stood with them.)

See the forbearance of the Evangelist, how he does not insult over the traitor, but relates what took place, only desiring to prove one thing, that the whole took place with His own consent. Then, lest any one should say that He Himself brought them to this, by having placed Himself into their hands, and revealed Himself to them; after having shown to them all things which should have been sufficient to repulse them, when they persevered in their wickedness, and had no excuse, He put Himself in their hands, saying,

If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way.

Manifesting until the last hour His lovingkindness towards them. If, He says, ye want Me, have nothing to do with these, for, behold, I give Myself up.

John 18:9

That the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, Of those which You gave Me have I lost none.

By loss He does not here mean that which is of death, but that which is eternal; though the Evangelist in the present case includes the former also. And one might wonder why they did not seize them with Him, and cut them to pieces, especially when Peter had exasperated them by what he did to the servant. Who then restrained them? No other than that Power which cast them backward. And so the Evangelist, to show that it did not come to pass through their intention, but by the power and decree of Him whom they had seized, has added, That the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, that not one, etc. John 17:12

2. Peter, therefore, taking courage from His voice, and from what had already happened, arms himself against the assailants, And how, says some one, does he who was bidden not to have a scrip, not to have two coats, possess a sword? Methinks he had prepared it long before, as fearing this very thing which came to pass. But if you say, How does he, who was forbidden even to strike a blow with the hand, become a manslayer? He certainly had been commanded not to defend himself, but here he did not defend himself, but his Master. And besides, they were not as yet perfect or complete. But if you desire to see Peter endued with heavenly wisdom, you shall after this behold him wounded, and bearing it meekly, suffering ten thousand dreadful things, and not moved to anger. But Jesus here also works a miracle, both showing that we ought to do good to those who do evil to us, and revealing His own power. He therefore restored the servant's ear, and said to Peter, that All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword Matthew 26:52; and as He did in the case of the basin, when He relaxed his vehemence by a threat, so also here. The Evangelist adds the name of the servant, because the thing done was very great, not only because He healed him, but because He healed one who had come against Him, and who shortly after would buffet Him, and because He stayed the war which was like to have been kindled from this circumstance against the disciples. For this cause the Evangelist has put the name, so that the men of that time might search and enquire diligently whether these things had really come to pass. And not without a cause does he mention the right ear, but as I think desiring to show the impetuosity of the Apostle, that he almost aimed at the head itself. Yet Jesus not only restrains him by a threat, but also calms him by other

words, saying,

John 18:11

The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

Showing, that what was done proceeded not from their power, but from His consent, and declaring that He was not one opposed to God but obedient to the Father even unto death.

John 18:12-13

Then Jesus was taken; and they bound Him, and led Him away to Annas.

Why to Annas? In their pleasure they made a show of what had been done, as though forsooth they had set up a trophy.

And he was father-in-law to Caiaphas.

John 18:14

Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Why does the Evangelist again remind us of his prophecy? To show that these things were done for our salvation. And such is the exceeding force of truth, that even enemies proclaimed these things beforehand. For lest the listener, hearing of bonds, should be confounded, he reminds him of that prophecy, that the death of Jesus was the salvation of the world.

John 18:15

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple.

Who is that other disciple? It is the writer himself. And wherefore does he not name himself? When he lay on the bosom of Jesus, he with reason concealed his name; but now why does he this? For the same reason, for here too he mentions a great good deed, that when all had started away, he followed. Therefore he conceals himself, and puts Peter before him. He was obliged to mention himself, that you might understand that he narrates more exactly than the rest what took place in the hall, as having been himself within. But observe how he detracts from his own praise; for, lest any one should ask, How, when all had retreated, did this man enter in farther than Simon? he says, that he was known to the high priest. So that no one should wonder that he followed, or cry him up for his manliness. But the wonder was that matter of Peter, that being in such fear, he came even as far as the hall, when the others had retreated. His coming there was caused by love, his not entering within by distress and fear. For the Evangelist has recorded these things, to clear a way for excusing his denial; with regard to himself, he does not set it down as any great matter that he was known to the high priest, but since he had said that he alone with Jesus went in, lest you should suppose that the action proceeded from any exalted feelings, he puts also the cause. And that Peter would have also entered had he been permitted, he shows by the sequel; for when he went out, and bade the damsel who kept the door bring in Peter, he straightway came in. But why did he not bring him in himself? He clung to Christ, and followed Him; on this account he bade the woman bring him in. What then says the woman?

John 18:17

Are you not also one of this man's disciples? And he says, I am not.

What do you say, Peter? Did you not declare but now, If need be that I lay down my life for You, I will lay it down? What has happened then, that you can not even endure the questioning of a doorkeeper? Is it a soldier who questions you? Is it one of those who seized Him? No, it is a mean and abject doorkeeper, nor is the questioning of a rough kind. She says not, Are you a disciple of that cheat and corrupter, but, of that man, which was the expression rather of one pitying and relenting. But Peter could not bear any of these words. The, Are you not also, is said on this account, that John was within. So mildly did the woman speak. But he perceived none of this, nor took it into his mind, neither the first time, nor the second, nor the third, but when the cock crew; nor did this even bring him to his senses, till Jesus gave him the bitter look. And he stood warming himself with the servants of the high priest, but Christ was kept bound within. This we say not as accusing Peter, but showing the truth of what had been said by Christ.

John 18:19

The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine.

3. O the wickedness! Though he had continually heard Him speaking in the temple and teaching openly, he now desires to be informed. For since they had no charge to bring, they enquired concerning His disciples, perhaps where they were, and why He had collected them, and with what intention, and on what terms. And this he said, as desiring to prove Him to be a seditious person and an innovator, since no one gave heed to Him, except them alone, as though His were some factory of wickedness. What then says Christ? To overthrow this, He says,

John 18:20

I spoke openly to the world, (not to the disciples privately,) I taught openly in the temple.

What then, said He nothing in secret? He did, but not, as they thought, from fear, and to make conspiracies, but if at any time His sayings were too high for the hearing of the many.

John 18:21

Why do you ask Me? Ask them which heard Me.

These are not the words of one speaking arrogantly, but of one confiding in the truth of what He had said. What therefore He said at the beginning, If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true John 5:31, this He now implies, desiring to render His testimony abundantly credible. For when Annas mentioned the disciples, what says He? Do you ask Me concerning Mine? Ask Mine enemies, ask those who have plotted against Me, who have bound Me; let them speak. This is an unquestionable proof of truth, when one calls his enemies to be witnesses to what he says. What then does the high priest? When it would have been right thus to have made the enquiry, that person did not so.

John 18:22

And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by smote Him with the palm of his hand. Answerest thou the high priest so? " N.T. }-->

What could be more audacious than this? Shudder, O heaven, be astounded, O earth, at the long-suffering of the Lord, and the senselessness of the servants! Yet what was it that He said? He said not, Why do you ask Me, as if refusing to speak, but wishing to remove every pretext for senseless behavior; and being upon this buffeted, though He was able to shake, to annihilate, or to remove all things, He does not any one of these, but speaks words able to relax any brutality.

John 18:23

And He says, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil. smitest thou Me? "N.T.)-->

That is, If you can lay hold on My words, declare it; but if you can not, why do you strike Me? Do you see that the judgment-hall is full of tumult, and trouble, and passion, and confusion? The high priest asked deceitfully and treacherously, Christ answered in a straightforward manner, and as was meet. What then was next to be done? Either to refute, or to accept what He said. This however is not done, but a servant buffets Him. So far was this from being a court of justice, and the proceedings those of a conspiracy, and a deed of tyranny. Then not having even so made any farther discovery, they send Him bound to Caiaphas.

John 18:25

And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.

Wonderful, by what a lethargy that hot and furious one was possessed, when Jesus was being led away! After such things as had taken place, he does not move, but still warms himself, that you may learn how great is the weakness of our nature if God abandons. And, being questioned, he denies again.

John 18:26

Then says the kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, (grieving at what had taken place,) Did I not see you in the garden?

But neither did the garden bring him to remember what had taken place, nor the great affection which Jesus there had shown by those words, but all these from pressure of anxiety he banished from his mind. But why have the Evangelists with one accord written concerning him? Not as accusing the disciple, but as desiring to teach us, how great an evil it is not to commit all to God, but to trust to one's self. But do thou admire the tender care of his Master, who, though a prisoner and bound, took great forethought for His disciple, raising Peter up, when he was down, by His look, and launching him into a sea of tears.

john 18:28

They lead Him therefore from Caiaphas to Pilate.

This was done, in order that the number of His judges might show, even against their will, how fully tested was His truth. And it was early. Before cock crow He was brought to Caiaphas, early in the morning to Pilate; whence the Evangelist shows, that being questioned by Caiaphas during an entire half of the night, He was in nothing proved guilty; wherefore Caiaphas sent Him on to Pilate. But leaving these things for the others to relate, John speaks of what follows next. And observe the ridiculous conduct of the Jews. They who had seized the innocent, and taken up arms, do not enter into the hall of judgment, lest they should be polluted. And tell me, what kind of pollution was it to set foot in a judgment-hall, where wrong-doers suffer justice? They who paid tithes of mint and anise, did not think they were polluted when

bent on killing unjustly, but thought that they polluted themselves by even treading in a court of justice. And why did they not kill Him, instead of bringing Him to Pilate? In the first place, the greater part of their rule and authority had been cut away, when their affairs were placed under the power of the Romans; and besides, they feared lest they should afterwards be accused and punished by Him. But what is, 'That they might eat the Passover?' For He had done this on the first day of unleavened bread. Either he calls the whole feast the Passover, or means, that they were then keeping the Passover, while He delivered it to His followers one day sooner, reserving His own Sacrifice for the Preparation-day, when also of old the Passover was celebrated. But they, though they had taken up arms, which was unlawful, and were shedding blood, are scrupulous about the place, and bring forth Pilate to them.

John 18:29

And having gone out, he said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

4. Do you see that he was free from fondness for rule and from malice? For seeing Jesus bound, and led by so many persons, he did not think that they had unquestionable proof of their accusation, but questions them, thinking it a strange thing that they should take for themselves the judgment, and then commit the punishment without any judgment to him. What then say they?

John 18:30

If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto you.

O madness! For why do ye not mention His evil deeds, instead of concealing them? Why do ye not prove the evil? Do you see that they everywhere avoid a direct accusation, and that they can say nothing? That Annas questioned Him about His doctrine, and having heard Him, sent Him to Caiaphas; and he having in his turn questioned Him, and discovered, nothing, sent Him to Pilate. Pilate says, What accusation bring ye against this man? Nor here have they anything to say, but again employ certain conjectures. At which Pilate being perplexed says,

John 18:31-32

Take ye him and judge him according to your law. They therefore said, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. But this they said, that the saying of the Lord might be fulfilled, which He spoke, signifying by what death He should die.

And how did the expression, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death,' declare this? Either the Evangelist means that He was about to be slain not by the Jews only, but by the Gentiles also, or that it was not lawful for them to crucify. But if they say, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death, they say it with reference to that season. For that they did slay men, and that they slew them in a different way, Stephen shows, being stoned. But they desired to crucify Him, that they might make a display of the manner of His death. Pilate, wishing to be freed from trouble, does not dismiss Him for a long trial, but,

John 18:33-34

Having entered in, he asked Jesus, and said, Are you the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Do you say this thing of yourself, or did others tell it you of Me?

Wherefore did Christ ask this? Because He desired to expose the evil intentions of the Jews. Pilate had heard this saying from many, and, since the accusers had nothing to say, in order that the enquiry might not be a long one, he desires to bring forward that which was continually reported. But when he said to them, Judge him according to your law, wishing to show that His offense was not a Jewish one, they replied, It is not lawful for us. He has not sinned against our law, but the indictment is general. Pilate then, having perceived this, says, as being (himself) likely to be endangered, Are you the King of the Jews? Then Jesus, not from ignorance, but from a desire that the Jews should be accused even by him, asked him, saying, Did others tell it you? Sayest thou this thing of thyself or did others tell it thee of Me? "N.T.)--> On this point then declaring himself, Pilate replied,

John 18:35

Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you unto me; what have you done?

Here desiring to clear himself of the matter. Then because he had said, Are you the King? Jesus reproving him answers, This you have heard from the Jews. Why do you not make accurate enquiry? They have said that I am a malefactor; ask them what evil I have done. But this you do not, but art simply framing charges against Me. Jesus answered him, Do you say this thing of yourself, or from others? Pilate then cannot at once say that he had heard it, but simply goes along with the people, saying, They have delivered you unto me. I must needs therefore ask you what you have done. What then says Christ?

John 18:36

My Kingdom is not of this world.

He leads upwards Pilate who was not a very wicked man, nor after their fashion, and desires to show that He is not a mere man, but God and the Son of God. And what says He?

If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.

He undoes that which Pilate for a while had feared, namely, the suspicion of seizing kingly power, Is then His kingdom not of this world also? Certainly it is. How then says He it 'is not'? Not because He does not rule here, but because He has his empire from above, and because it is not human, but far greater than this and more splendid. If then it be greater, how was He made captive by the other? By consenting, and giving Himself up. But He does not at present reveal this, but what says He? If I had been of this world, 'My servants would fight, that I should not be delivered.' Here He shows the weakness of kingship among us, that its strength lies in servants; but that which is above is sufficient for itself, needing nothing. From this the heretics taking occasion say, that He is different from the Creator. What then, when it says, He came to His own? John 1:11 What, when Himself says, They are not of this world, as I am not of this world? John 17:14 So also He says that His kingdom is not from hence, not depriving the world of His providence and superintendence, but showing, as I said, that His power was not human or perishable. What then said Pilate?

John 18:37

Are you a king then? Jesus answered, You say that I am a King. To this end was I born.

If then He was born a king, all His other attributes are by Generation, and He has nothing which He received in addition. So that when you hear that, As the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the

Son also to have life John 5:26, deem of nothing else but His generation, and so of the rest.

And for this cause came I, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

That is, that I should speak this very thing, and teach it, and persuade all men.

5. But do thou, O man, when you hear these things, and see your Lord bound and led about, deem present things to be nought. For how can it be otherwise than strange, if Christ bore such things for your sake, and you often cannot endure even words? He is spit upon, and do you deck yourself with garments and rings, and, if you gain not good report from all, think life unbearable? He is insulted, bears mockings, and scornful blows upon the cheek; and do you wish everywhere to be honored, and do you not bear the reproaching of Christ?

Do you not hear Paul saying, Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ? 1 Corinthians 11:1 When therefore any one makes a jest of you, remember your Lord, that in mockery they bowed the knee before Him, and worried Him both by words and deeds, and treated Him with much irony; but He not only did not defend Himself, but even repaid them with the contraries, with mildness and gentleness. Him now let us emulate; so shall we be enabled even to be delivered from all insult.

For it is not the insulter that gives effect to acts of insult, and makes them biting, but he who is little of soul, and is pained by them. If you are not pained, you have not been insulted; for the suffering from injuries depends not on those who inflict, but on those who undergo them. Why do you grieve at all? If a man has insulted you unjustly, in this case surely you ought not to grieve at all, but to pity him; if justly, much more ought thou to keep quiet. For should any one address you, a poor man, as though thou were rich, the praise contained in his words is nothing to you, but his encomium is rather mockery; and so if one insulting you utter things that are untrue, the reproach is nothing to you either.

But if conscience takes hold of what has been said, be not grieved at the words, but make correction in deeds. This I say with regard to what really are insults. For if one reproach you with poverty or low birth, laugh at him. These things are a reproach not to the hearer, but to the speaker, as not knowing true wisdom. But, says some one, when these things are said in the presence of many who are ignorant of the truth, the wound becomes unbearable. Nay, it is most bearable, when you have an audience present of witnesses praising and applauding you, scoffing at and making a jest of him.

For not he that defends himself, but he that says nothing, is applauded by sensible persons. And if none of those present be a sensible person, then laugh at him most of all, and delight yourself in the audience of heaven. For there all will praise and applaud and welcome you. For one Angel is as good as all the world. But why speak I of Angels, when the Lord Himself proclaims you? Let us exercise ourselves with these reasonings. For it is no loss to be silent when insulted, but it is, on the contrary, to defend one's self when insulted.

Since were it a fault silently to bear what is said, Christ would never have told us, If one smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:39 If then our enemy say what is not true, let us on this account even pity him, because he draws down upon him the punishment and vengeance of the accusers, being unworthy even to read the Scriptures. For to the sinner God says, Why do you declare My statutes, and takest My covenant in your mouth? Thou sat and spoke against your brother.

Psalm 50:16-20, Septuagint And if he speak the truth, so also he is to be pitied; since even the Pharisee spoke the truth; yet he did no harm to him who heard him, but rather good, while he deprived himself of ten thousand blessings, enduring shipwreck by this accusation. So that either way it is he that suffers injury, not thou; but thou, if you are sober, will have double gain; both the propitiating God by your silence, and the becoming yet more discreet, the gaining an opportunity from what has been said to correct what has been done, and the despising mortal glory.

For this is the source of our pain, that many gape upon the opinion of men. If we are minded to be thus truly wise, we shall know well that human things are nothing. Let us learn then, and having reckoned up our faults, let us accomplish their correction in time, and let us determine to correct one this month, another next month, and a third in that which follows. And so mounting as it were by steps, let us get to heaven by a Jacob's ladder. For the ladder seems to me to signify in a riddle by that vision the gradual ascent by means of virtue, by which it is possible for us to ascend from earth to heaven, not using material steps, but improvement and correction of manners.

Let us then lay hold on this means of departure and ascent, that having obtained heaven, we may also enjoy all the blessings there, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-chrysostom/john-181-37/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**