

**Good Friday  
Stauffer Chapel  
March 25, 2005  
12:00 noon**

Meditation on John 18-19

As believers we come to the hour of Jesus' glorification realizing that his death is his enthronement as the glorified Son of God, lifted up that we might have life. The prince of this world has come, but we see Jesus as the one in control of these events. He acts in accordance to his father's will and to fulfill what was written in Scripture.

The account of Jesus' arrest, trial, and death reads as a seamless narrative. These chapters are rich with characters, and John places as much emphasis upon those responsible for the crucifixion as on the crucified Christ, thereby revealing the nature of humankind, as well as the nature of God.

The narrative begins in a garden, which promises retreat, rest, and sweet fellowship between Jesus and his beloved disciples. But an ominous note is struck: Judas knew the place, for he had gone there often with Jesus. Thus, one of his own betrays him and upon his arrest he is taken before the religious leaders, while outside, Peter, one of the inner circle, denies him. When he stands before Pilate he is interrogated, mocked, and accused. Pilate is fearful of the Jews and turns Jesus over to their wishes. And in that dark night they confess Caesar as King and reject Jesus with cries of "Crucify! Crucify!" And so he is nailed to the cross and a soldier pierces his side. Thus, in a hostile world the will of God challenges the forces of evil. It is a dark night of betrayal, denial, fear, rejection and death. But from his side flows water and blood. The Bread of Life, whose flesh is broken, gives his body and blood that those who eat and drink may live. Water and blood, life and cleansing for the world, flow from his riven side. This is the sign come down from heaven. We recall John the Baptist's confession, "I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God" (1:34). Glory belongs to this dark night.

And in the night of fear and death John writes tenderly about the burial of Jesus. Nicodemus, who for fear of the Jews sought Jesus by night, assists with the burial of Jesus. There was a garden near by in which there was a new tomb. Nicodemus provided about 75 pounds of spices and they wrapped his body in strips of linen. There, in the tomb, they laid the body of Jesus. Death belongs to this dark night.

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