

Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. (John 18:2)

All-knowing God, you know our frailties and failings. You know how disloyal we can be and how short our attention is when it comes to doing what's right, reaching out to others, and holding fast to your Word. Grant us the gift of loyalty that comes from your Holy Spirit, that we would stand beside those in need, the innocent, and the vulnerable. We thank you for your gift of mercy in our lives. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Introduction

After the Last Supper, Jesus brought his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. While he was there, Judas showed up with guards from the temple who wanted to arrest Jesus. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, and handed him over to be put on trial.

Read: John 18:1-14

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

To be betrayed by one you love is one of the hardest things there is to suffer. We expect our enemies to be against us, but to have our friends turn on us and attack us is difficult to bear.

This is what Judas did to Jesus. He went from being one of Jesus' closest friends to the one who set in motion his Lord's death.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was betrayed by Judas, arrested, and taken into custody. He was brought before religious and political authorities.

As Jesus said, "The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

Discussion Questions

1. In the hours before his arrest and trial, why do you think Jesus went to the Garden? What did he intend to do there? (For a hint, read Matthew 26:36-46.)
2. Who was with Judas when he entered the Garden? For what kind of reception were they ready?
3. What happened to the soldiers when Jesus said: "I am he" (v. 6)? How is this similar to what happened to Moses when he encountered the burning bush in Exodus 3:6? In Exodus 3:14, what did God tell Moses his name was?
4. Back in the Garden, what did Peter do when Judas and the others arrived? Was Jesus happy with Peter for his actions? What did he say?
5. It must have felt terrible for Jesus to be betrayed by a friend. Yet Jesus stayed calm, and trusted that God was in control of even this situation. Have you ever felt betrayed before? Did your faith help you deal with that experience?
6. Where did the soldiers take Jesus after they arrested him? Who were the captain and officers working for?
7. Read Jeremiah 23:1-5. Who do you think are the bad "shepherds" that Jeremiah was referring to? What did they do (or neglect to do)?
8. According to Jeremiah, what was God going to do about this? How was this prophecy fulfilled many years later in Jesus and his disciples?