

Livin' the Life
Men's Evil Plans, God's Sovereign Plan
John 11:45-57
November 4, 2018
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We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series in the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. We finish chapter eleven today, 11:45-57. Matt preached two weeks on Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead while I was gone. Then I finished chapter ten and am now finishing eleven. The point of Jesus raising Lazarus is that Jesus promises eternal life now and for all eternity. Today we see that the response to Lazarus being raised leads to the plot to murder Jesus. If you have your bibles, turn to 11:45-57 as we read God's word together.

The Many

Many of the Jews who came to mourn for Lazarus believed in Jesus as a result of Jesus raising him from the dead (45). Most often the term Jews in John's gospel refers to the religious leaders, but here it refers to common Jewish people. In contrast, some of the Jews went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus did (46).

The Murderers

Then the Pharisees and chief priests gathered the Sanhedrin council, the Supreme Court of the Jewish nation, to decide what to do about Jesus (47). Jesus has become quite popular because of the many miracles he performed. If they don't stop him, everyone would believe in him. There are masses of faithful Jews in Jerusalem preparing for the Passover and it was very common to find Messianic types looking to gather people to revolt against Rome. If Rome got wind of this, they would come down with a heavy hand to extinguish any hopes of a rebellion (48). Rome squashed revolts with such force to intimidate others from trying the same. The Jews enjoyed a certain amount of freedom under Roman rule as long as they were loyal to Rome and the council feared that these freedoms may be taken away. But notice the issue is not the truth, whether Jesus is the Messiah or not, but their loss power and control and influence over the people.

Then one council member devised a plan to murder Jesus. Caiaphas, the high priest, scolds the council, it is better for you that one man die for the people, than the whole nation perish (49-50). John gives his commentary on Caiaphas' murderous plan, Caiaphas did not say this on his own, but he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation and not only for the nation but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered among then nations. So, from that day on they made plans to kill him (51-53). Caiaphas devised a murderous plan to substitute Jesus' life for Israel and God was prophesying his good and sovereign plan to accomplish the greatest good for humanity. God did not take a national crisis in Israel and turn it for their good and our good but God was in it from the start, having planned it from all eternity (see 1 Pet 1:19-21; Eph 3:9-11; 2 Tim 1:9). In rebellion against God, seeking to hold onto their own power and control and comfort (better for you), they unwittingly fulfilled God's eternal plan. These are Caiaphas' own thoughts put into his own words. They are packed with the meaning he gave them, it is better for you that Jesus die for the nation. But they originated with God's thoughts and words packed with the meaning he gave them that sealed Jesus' death. A politically pragmatic and evil plan to get Jesus out of the way is God's gracious and glorious plan to send his Son to the cross as a substitute to gather together his children from among Israel and all the nations of the world. The murderous plan to kill the Son of God was God's sovereign plan to kill his Son and to raise him up and reign forever and bring salvation. It is better that Jesus die, better than any other plan (Acts 2:22-24; 4:25-28). John makes this absolutely clear in his gospel, God is sovereign and humanity is responsible.

Substitution is at the heart of the Christian faith (Isa 53:1-10). Jesus is the better sacrificial lamb who lays down his life as the perfect sacrifice for human sin. His life was not taken from him but he freely laid it down for us (10:17-18). Jesus is going to his death at the hands of evil men according to God's predetermined plan. He is intent on going to the cross, his death as a substitute for yours. For

the Christian, Jesus slays all your predators, your sin, your death, your judgment, and Satan so that you have eternal life, now and for eternity.

The Multitude

Then Jesus goes into hiding, no longer walked openly among the Jews, his life will not be taken from him. There was a multitude in Jerusalem for the Passover who are looking for him and wondering if he will show up (55-56). There is no hostility with the pilgrims but curiosity, even enthusiasm but no commitment to him, no real faith to follow him in discipleship. So, there you have it, the many who believed in Jesus, the murderers who want to do away with him, and the multitude of enthusiastic fans.

