

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

**JOHN 18:12-13a
BOUND!**

Then the detachment of troops, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him, and they led Him away

Do you like to be under someone else's control? Do you like to be independent and free? Our nation is built on independence and freedom (which of course doesn't mean that you can do anything you want). We are not subjects of a king, or of the state. No one can order you to move to a different part of the country or take a different job or quit school.

In our text for Ash Wednesday, we see that Jesus gave up His independence and willingly was subject to others, even to His own great harm, in order to save us from sin. The scene is the night before His crucifixion. He and the disciples celebrated Passover Feast earlier in the evening. At that Passover meal, He instituted the Lord's Supper—Take eat, this bread is My body given for you—Take drink, this cup is the new testament/covenant/agreement in My blood shed for you—for the remission/forgiveness of sins. We call that day Maundy Thursday, “command” Thursday. After the supper they went out of Jerusalem to the nearby Mount of Olives and then to the olive grove called Gethsemane. Jesus was being very earnest with His disciples. He pointed out that all would desert Him, that Peter would deny him three times although Peter denied that was possible. Jesus went off alone to pray earnestly to the Father understanding what was lying ahead. He knew when Judas Iscariot, the group's former “treasurer” and His betrayer (paid to do so) was on his way with Roman soldiers and their captain, and with Jewish authorities to arrest Him. When the band arrived, Jesus identified Himself as Jesus of Nazareth, and they all drew back and fell to the ground. They were powerless to do anything against Him. Peter wanted to fight for Jesus. Jesus told him to put his sword away, because He, Jesus, would carry through with His Father's will and go willingly.

The soldiers, the captain, and the officials of the Jews then *arrested Jesus*. Matthew says in his Gospel, *They laid hold of Jesus* (Matthew 26:57). What does it mean to be arrested? It means to be apprehended, to be seized, to have one's progress stopped. We use that word in various ways. Think of a doctor telling a patient that the spread of cancer cells has been arrested. Think of an exhaust system with a spark arrester, or a plumbing system with a water-hammer arrester, or an electrical line with a surge arrester. When we think of someone being arrested by the authorities in the common meaning—as was the case here with Jesus—we know they have been apprehended and stopped from doing what they have been doing. It's embarrassing, to be singled out as a violator of the law and arrested. I know a pastor who was pulled over on his way to church for not yielding to a flashing yellow cross walk sign, wondering if anyone from church would see him! It's true, isn't it? It's embarrassing. It's embarrassing when a family member gets arrested and news makes even a small headline in the newspaper, or even gets on the TV. But if the arrest were not valid, what's the reaction? “They can't do that! I'm going to fight this.” Now you understand why Peter pulled out his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. But Jesus told him to put it away.

Jesus willingly submitted to the false arrest. He did not struggle to get away. (Remember He could have gotten away. They all fell down a bit earlier). Think of how an animal that has been bound struggles to get away. Jesus was not a bad man. He was not doing anything wrong before God or the nation. True, He was stepping on the toes of the Jewish leaders, because they were out of line. And what's your reaction when someone steps on your toes? “Sue them!” Now you understand the attitude of the Jewish leaders. So the Jewish leaders wanted to control Jesus. The disciples wanted to fight back. What did Jesus do? Nothing. He submitted. Why? Because He wanted to step-in for you. To keep you from going to prison—the Big House of fire and torment—forever. He was willing to be arrested and shamed that you might be released and exalted. He is your middle man and Savior.

They bound Him and they led Him away. To be bound means that someone has fastened you down, tied you together with ropes or other material. If you're bound to a tree, you're tied to a tree. Years ago when stalks of wheat were bound together for standing up in a shock for drying, that was called a bundle (bounlde). Your property has a visible or invisible boundary, which bands together what is yours and separates it from someone else's. Books are bound with a binding. In the winter, a person can be snowbound at home for days on end. To be bound is not very pleasant. It puts the individual in someone else's control—whether it's a kidnapped person held by kidnappers, or the kidnappers themselves later apprehended and bound by the FBI. A family member had her young dog in dog training class. The instructors told her that when the dog misbehaves, to pick him up and hold him t-i-g-h-t-l-y until he quits squirming. He needs to learn who's boss. OR, think of a three-year-old whose hand is firmly grasped by father or mother when crossing a busy intersection in a large community. Not all three-year-olds tolerate that very well. It crimps their independence. Now imagine doing that to a thirteen-year-old! How embarrassing! What an infringement on personal independence and freedom! What scorn and humiliation. Here Jesus, the perfect Son of God was bound and led away to trial—a fake trial at that. Yet Jesus went willingly. Isaiah 53:7 prophesied, “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.” --- He did it for you. That you might be set free in Him.

There was another kind of “binding” that night. Jesus, who was at one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, had come to do His Father's will. His will was bound to His Father's will—the forgiveness and salvation of sinners. *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).* Jesus would not veer off that course. He would not be deterred. Luke says, *Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly[resolutely] set His face to go to Jerusalem, (Luke 9:51).* OR consider the Old Testament prophecy of the Savior, *For the Lord God will help Me; therefore I will not be disgraced. Therefore I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed. (Isaiah 50:7).* Flint is hard enough and sharp enough to shape other rocks.

We can even say that Jesus was bound in yet another way. Jesus the perfect, powerful, and loving Son of God, WAS BOUND-AND-DETERMINED TO SET US FREE—TO BE OUR SAVIOR!—even at the cost of His own life. Are you ashamed that He was arrested and bound for you? So am I. But be thankful that He was bound-and-determined to set you free!

Now you are not under the control of Satan, but are bound to Jesus in safety and rescue. You are not bound by ropes, or chains, or force. You are bound to Him and the Father and the Spirit with cords of love. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sin (I John 4:10).* *We love Him, because He first loved us (I John 4:19).* In Him you are saved and are part of the Father's family and Kingdom. Ask Him and the Father and the Spirit for help each day that you may be bound to your God in your lives and actions and words, and that you run to Him for forgiveness each and every day. It's a little different use of the word, but in Him you are homeward and heavenward bound!

So be it! Amen.

Pastor Kanzenbach---