Rock Valley Bible Church (www.rvbc.cc)

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July 24, 2005 by Steve Brandon

**Our Willing Sacrifice**

**Matthew 26:47-56**

When Jesus was arrested, ...
1. He didn't run (verse 47).
2. He didn't resist (verses 48-50).
3. He didn't retaliate (verses 51-54).
4. He didn't rant or rave (verses 55-56).

In our exposition of the gospel of Matthew, we have come to verses 47-56, which tell us of the arrest of Jesus. In this passage, Judas will come into the Garden of Gethsemane with a crowd of people, seeking to arrest Jesus and to bring Him before the Sanhedrin with the goal of seeing Him die. If there is anything that this encounter teaches us, it teaches us that Jesus Christ was a willing sacrifice.

The opportunities for Jesus to escape or to defend Himself were many. Rather than fleeing or fighting, Jesus permitted Himself to be arrested, and thus, brought to trial. Ultimately, it was Jesus who allowed Himself to be crucified. At any moment, Jesus could have stopped this monstrosity.

The title of my message this morning is this: "Our Willing Sacrifice." When Jesus was placed upon the cross, taking the wrath of God upon Himself and dying for our sins, it was because He was willing to allow it to take place. In the gospel of John, Jesus told His disciples, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken my life away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again" (John 10:17-18). In other words, the death of Jesus was no accident. He didn't somehow find Himself as a heroic martyr, who was killed by accident. No. The death of Jesus was accomplished by His choice and not by the choice of others. Jesus is the one who laid down His life as a willing sacrifice.

In all reality, Jesus made the choice to die upon the cross in eternity past, long before this world came into being. Listen to 2 Timothy 1:9, "[God] has saved us,

and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus before time began." God determined from all eternity that we would be saved through the blood of Jesus. When God determined to save, He also determined the means: the death of Jesus. God determined that Jesus would have to come and die for our sins. Please don't picture Jesus in heaven saying, "Father, I don't want to go! I don't want to do it!" Jesus was eager to go! He said in Mark 10:45, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus Christ left His heavenly glory with the Father to come and die upon the cross.

From time to time in the Brandon home, we have an opportunity to go someplace or do something. There are times in which one of my children say, "Dad, I don't want to go." Or, "Dad, I don't want to do that." Upon reflection, I often tell them, "You HAVE to go!" When I say this, they have come to know that I won't budge. I tell them this to force them to do the things that are good for them, though they don't have a willingness at the moment. Inevitably, when all is said and done, they are often very glad that they did the activity.

Now, when you think about eternity past with God the Father and God the Son enjoying perfect fellowship, don't think of God the Father insisting that God the Son come to earth as a sacrifice saying, "You HAVE to go!" Jesus came to earth to die willingly. When you grasp this fact, it will make the cross more glorious in your sight! In fact, this is the aim of my message this morning. I want to continue to give you reasons to glory in the cross of Christ. Though our text today is merely preparing the way for the cross, it does help to give us the full meaning of His sacrifice. Jesus died willingly.

When Jesus was arrested, ...
1. He didn't run (verse 47).

Last week we looked at Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. The soul of Jesus was "deeply grieved, to the point of death" (Matt. 26:38). He wanted to be alone with His Father. So, He told His disciples to keep watch so that He could be by Himself and pray for a way out of the cross. He prayed in anguish, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26: 39). It was a tremendously difficult time for Jesus. With the weight of our sin upon His shoulders, He was standing firm, while His disciples were faithlessly sleeping.

At this point, I want to ask you a question, "Why did Jesus go to the garden of Gethsemane to pray?" Certainly, He could have found another place to find His

solitude. He could have remained in Jerusalem and found another "upper room," which He could have rented out. He could have left the city and gone only a few miles to Bethany, where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived. Their home was within walking distance of Jerusalem. In fact, during the Passion week, Jesus spent His nights in Bethany. Or, He could have continued east beyond Bethany for a few more miles into the wilderness, where there was nobody. In the cool of the evening, it would have been a nice, cool, desolate place for Him to pray. There were many opportunities for Him to get away all alone. But, He chose Gethsemane. Why?

I believe that it was precisely because Judas knew that He would be in Gethsemane. I believe that Jesus went to Gethsemane to facilitate His arrest. Judas was quite familiar with the place, as "Jesus had often met there with His disciples" (according to John 18:2). Jesus knew that the garden would be one place in which Judas would go looking for Him. Jesus wasn't playing, "Hide and go seek." He was playing, "Hide and be found!"

Look back to verse 45. In this verse, we read of Jesus returning to His disciples for a third time, observing them sleeping. He said, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!" (verses 45-46). Notice how Jesus was anticipating Judas coming. Verses 45-46 weren't said *after* Judas came on the scene. They were said *before* Judas showed up in the garden. Before Jesus was captured, He told His disciples that His time was up. Before Jesus was taken into custody, He said that they had to get up and go and meet the betrayer. Verse 47 makes this clear, "And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a great multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people." Jesus knew that they were coming. Jesus anticipated that they were coming. Jesus told His disciples to go with Him to meet them.

Jesus had every chance in the world to run away from His arrest. He could have chosen a different place in which to pray. When He knew that they were coming, Jesus could have slipped out the back door and run away. When it was revealed to the disciples that Judas was coming to arrest Jesus, they could have made a run for it. There were many possibilities for Jesus. At our dinner table last night, I was running through the main points of my sermon with my children. When we came to this point, I asked them what Jesus could have done. They gave me a response

that I hadn't thought of. They said that Jesus could have disappeared. All of these things Jesus could have done, but, He chose to stay and to face His betrayer, head on. He didn't run!

How different this is than many. I remember reading the story of William Tyndale, who lived in England during the early 1500's. For printing the Bible and distributing it into the hands of all who could read, he was in big trouble with the authorities. He was on the run for eight years (1527-1535), until he was finally captured. He spent most of his time away from England as a fugitive. He would stay wherever he found many who were sympathetic to his mission.

Tyndale was betrayed by a man named Henry Phillips, who came to Antwerp, where Tyndale was staying, with the purpose of capturing him. Phillips came to know Tyndale and frequently dined with him, pretending to be his friend. Phillips would often speak with Tyndale about the state of the church in England and it's need for reform.

One day in 1535, Henry Phillips came and invited Tyndale to lunch with him. They walked through the narrow alleys of Antwerp and arrived at their destination. At first, Tyndale, always the gentleman, stepped back to allow Phillips to enter into the room. But Phillips backed up even more and insisted that William Tyndale enter into the house, where several men were waiting to bind his hand and feet. Henry Phillips was behind Tyndale, pointing down upon his head, as if to say, "This is the man." He pushed him into the room and helped to wrestle him to the ground. He was then whisked away to the castle of Vilvorde, where he was held prisoner in a cold dungeon. Eighteen months later, he was burned at the stake for heresy. The charges against him were a great summary of everything that we as a church believe! [1]

Had William Tyndale known that Henry Phillips was going to betray him at that moment, I'm sure that Tyndale would have been on the run once again. He was on the run for eight years. But Jesus in this hour, Jesus didn't run. He had a date with a Roman cross and He wasn't going to be late. Jesus had said in verse 45 that His hour had come.

When Jesus was arrested, ...
2. He didn't resist (verses 48-50).

> Matthew 26:48-50
> Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I

> shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him." And immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him.

Notice how there was no resisting of arrest from Jesus. He knew that Judas, His betrayer, had come to betray Him. He knew Judas was doing so right now (verse 45). And yet, He didn't resist it in any way. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had told His disciples, "Do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39). At this moment in time, Jesus was applying this very teaching. Evil people came to arrest Him, and Jesus allowed Himself to be captured. There was no resisting. There was no attempting to refuse the chains. Jesus willingly put out his hands to be bound.

When you read the gospel of John, you get a few more details which help to see how it was Jesus who hastened on His capture. Consider the following verses:

> John 18:3-8
> Judas then, having received the cohort, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth, and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am [He.]" And Judas also who was betraying Him, was standing with them. When therefore He said to them, "I am [He]," they drew back, and fell to the ground. Again therefore He asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am [He]; if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way."

You get the sense that these soldiers didn't really want to arrest Jesus. Jesus had to be the one to initiate their arrest. He spoke first, by asking them, "Whom do you seek?" (verse 4). When He confessed that He was the one that they were looking for, they retreated, rather than advancing (verses 5-6). Again, a second time, Jesus had to ask them, "Whom do you seek?" (verse 7). It's almost as if Jesus said, "Well, then, take Me! Here I am! I'm not resisting you at all. Here are my hands. Bind me with your chains. I will come willingly with you. What are you waiting for?"

Perhaps the absurdity of it all will become apparent if we think about His arrest using a modern-day scenario. It has long been known that Frank Johnson (a

fictitious character) has long been the ring-leader of a big drug operation. Through some battles in court, the police finally obtain a warrant for his arrest. One night, they receive a tip, that Mr. Johnson is at a house on fourth street. So, acting quickly, they assemble a dozen squad cars to arrest this notorious criminal. At 11pm, all of the police cars descend upon this house with their lights flashing. With sharp shooters standing by outside, some officers break down the front door and enter the house with their pistols ready to fire. Rather than facing a force wanting to fight back, they find several men seated around the room, completely unarmed.

After a moment of awkward silence, it was Frank Johnson, who was seated in a lazy-boy recliner, who initiated the conversation. He said, "Whom do you seek?" The police officers say, "Frank Johnson." Frank says, "I'm Frank Johnson. You are looking for me." And the police officers simply stand there, confused. Rather than seizing him, they take a few steps backwards, almost leaving the home.

Then, it is Frank Johnson who speaks up again, "Whom do you seek? You guys broke into my house, knocking down my door. You must be looking for somebody. Who is it?" When the police officers say, "Frank Johnson," Frank replies, "I'm Frank Johnson. Take me and leave the others alone." Almost reluctantly, the police officers handcuff Mr. Johnson and take him down to the police station.

I trust that such a scenario sounds absurd to you. Police officers are trained at identifying and capturing people. Just as absurd was the arrest of Jesus. Jesus didn't resist His arrest in any way. Rather, He seemed to be the one who initiated His arrest.

I find it so amazing that He didn't resist when I think of how He was betrayed. He was betrayed by a friend.
David spoke of how difficult such a thing was. He said in Psalm 55. "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend. We who had sweet fellowship together, walked in the house of God in the throng." (Ps. 55:12-14). David said a similar thing of the anguish of being betrayed by a friend in Psalm 41: 9, "Even my close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." David said, "It's hard to bear when it is your friend. It's hard to bear when it is your companion. An enemy, ... no problem. But a friend. That hurts! That hurts really bad!"

This is exactly what Jesus called Judas. Look at verse 50. Jesus said, "Friend, do what you have come for" (verse 50). What an amazing thing! Jesus called Judas, "Friend" even as Judas was in the act of betrayal! In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had told His disciples to "love their enemies" (Matt. 5:44). At this very moment, Jesus was applying His own teaching.

His betrayer was standing before Him, giving him a kiss. The Greek word here is katafilew (kataphileo), which has the sense of an affectionate kiss. This kiss wasn't a small peck on the cheek, as if there was any shame in what Judas was doing. No. When you think of this word, picture two long time Russian friends who haven't seen each other in years, finally reunited. They willingly embrace one another and kiss one another, affectionately calling each other by name, "Victor! Hugo!"

This is the word used in Acts 20:37, when the Ephesian elders repeatedly kissed Paul and embraced him and wept aloud, as they knew that they would never see him again. This is the word used in Luke 15, when the prodigal son returns and his father runs up to him and embraces him and kisses him (Luke 15:20). This is the word used to describe the outpouring of love and affection that the forgiven women expressed to Jesus. She was weeping, and wetting his feed with her tears and kissing his feet (Luke 7:38).

It was a clear act of hypocrisy on the part of Judas. He came up to Him, saying, "Hail, Rabbi!" And yet, Jesus was so reserved. He didn't speak out against Judas in any way. Rather, He called him his "friend." When Jesus was arrested, he didn't resist.

When Jesus was arrested, ...
3. He didn't retaliate (verses 51-54).

> Matthew 26:51-54
> And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?"

Although Matthew is silent regarding the identity of this disciple who drew His sword and who exactly was the man who lost his ear, John tells us who these

people are. It was Peter, who took out his sword. The slave's name was Malchus (John 18:10).

When Peter pulled out his sword, he was probably thinking, "This is it! These guys have come to arrest Jesus with swords and clubs (verse 47). There is going to be a tremendous fight. I promised my Lord that I wouldn't deny Him, even if it meant dying (verse 35). Now's my chance to prove myself. I'm going to go down fighting!" Peter took out His sword and went for the head of Malchus. Fortunately, Malchus was able to duck and only lose an ear (which Jesus healed).

At this moment, Jesus changed the entire situation. He told Peter to put his sword "back into its place." Now wasn't the time to fight. If now were the time to fight, Jesus said that He could win easily. Look at verse 53, "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" A legion was 6,000. So twelve legions of angels puts this at 72,000 angels. The power of such an army is unbelievable. In 2 Kings 19, the story is told of how one angel destroyed 185,000 Assyrians who were attacking Judah. The power of 72,000 angels could easily conquer this mob of people that had come to arrest Jesus, which may have numbered up to 1,000 people. The power of 72,000 angels could easily conquer Rome and the world.

Perhaps these 72,000 angels were watching this scene, each one of them ready to come and help Jesus. "O Holy One! Our man is in trouble! Let us go and rescue Him!" But God the Father restrains the angels with His arms saying, "No! Be patient! Jesus and I had a little conversation a few moments ago in the garden. He is content in where He is. He doesn't need your help right now."

What took place in the days of the death fo Jesus may very well be taking place now. The angelic realm that beholds the suffering of the righteous, are ready and willing to come upon this earth, to gather the elect (Matt. 24:31), and protect them from the wrath of God. They are also ready to bundle the others and cast them into the furnace of fire (Matt. 13:42). But, it is the Father who now restrains them. But there will be a day when the Father lifts His arms and allows the end to take place. Only He knows when. The current world will be no match for Jesus and His angels when they return in victory (Rev. 19).

This is the power that Jesus had at His disposal. But, He chose not to use it. In so doing, He set a precedent for all who would follow Jesus in the future. Christianity is a religion of peace. It conquers not through the sword, but through the power of love and perseverance.

The early church conquered through love. For three hundred years, the early Christians faced a tremendous amount of persecution. Many of the early Christians died for their faith. Philip Schaff once described how it was that Christianity eventually triumphed over the Romans, who had attempted to destroy it. He said, "No merely human religion could have stood such an ordeal of fire for three hundred years. The final victory of Christianity over Judaism and heathenism, and the mightiest empire of the ancient world, a victory gained without physical force, but by the moral power of patience and perseverance, of faith and love, is one of the sublimist spectacles in history, and one of the strongest evidences of the divinity and indestructible life of our religion." [2]

Though there have been times throughout the centuries where the church has taken up the sword for her own cause, I believe that it has been wrong to do so. The sword is for the state. In Romans 13, Paul clearly speaks about how the governmental authorities bear the sword to punish evil doers (Rom. 13:1-7). Here in verse 52, I believe that this is what Jesus is referring to. Jesus said, "If you use the sword [to kill another, the government will rightly accuse you of murder, and you] shall perish by the sword" (verse 52). But, Christianity is not a religion that conquers through the use of force. It could conquer through the sword (especially with angelic help), but it's not the way that God has ordained it to be.

In 1887, Ernest Shurtleff was graduating from Andover Theological Seminary. Known for his poetic ability, his classmates asked him to write a hymn, which the graduating class could all sing on graduation day. He wrote, "Lead On, O King Eternal." When you look at the words, you see how appropriate the hymn is for seminary graduates.

Lead on, O King Eternal, the day of march has come!
Henceforth in fields of conquest, Thy tents shall be our home;
Thru days of preparation, Thy grace has made us strong,
And now, O King Eternal, We lift our battle song.

Lead on, O King Eternal, 'till sin's fierce war shall cease
And holiness shall whisper the sweet Amen of peace;
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums,
With deeds of love and mercy, the heav'nly kingdom comes.

This is the way of Christianity: "with deeds of love and mercy, the heav'nly kingdom comes." We don't fight with the sword, because our battle is a spiritual battle. Paul said that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the

rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness" (Eph. 6:12). When Jesus was standing before Pilate, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm" (John 18:36).

I'm not talking pacifism. I'm not talking that there is never any need for a war. Worldly struggles are for the kingdoms of this world. There are reasons for war. But, the reasons aren't to propagate the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God grows when His people are faithful to follow Jesus Christ in humility and patience and love.

This is a first reason why Jesus didn't retaliate take up the sword: His kingdom is accomplished through His means. There is a second reason why Jesus didn't take up the sword: that "the Scriptures might be fulfilled" (verse 54). When Jesus says these things, He doesn't mention any specific verses. He simply mentions "the Scriptures." I believe that Jesus had in mind the general scope of the Scriptures that testified of the sufferings of the Messiah (1 Pet. 1:11). If Jesus were to fight back against His wrongful accusers, Jesus would certainly win and then, the Messiah wouldn't suffer.

When Jesus refers to "the Scriptures," many Scriptures may have been in His mind. He may have been thinking of Psalm 22 and the events of the crucifixion. He may have been thinking of Psalm 69 and the numerous enemies that would come upon the Messiah without a cause (especially, verse 4). Perhaps in His mind was Psalm 88, which speaks of the desertion of His friends (especially, verse 8). He could even be alluding to Genesis 3:15 in which the seed of the serpent must bruise the heal of the seed of the woman.

If Jesus isn't handed over to the authorities, then He cannot suffer as the Messiah must suffer. He wasn't specific, because there was no time to be specific. The crowd was upon them. Also, as it was a mystery, they wouldn't have understood it anyway. And so, He didn't retaliate.

When Jesus was arrested, ...
4. He didn't rant or rave (verses 55-56).

Jesus is confronted by these great crowds of people. Some have estimated that there were up to 1,000 people who came in this "great multitude" (verse 47). Jesus calmly receives them. He didn't go into any rants. He didn't start accusing

anybody. He didn't scream out in protest about what they were doing. He merely pointed out to them the absurdity of what they were doing. Jesus was no criminal and all the world knew it.

Contrast the example of Jesus with the example of Athaliah. She was queen of Judah for seven years. She became queen shortly after her son, Ahaziah, was murdered. When there was a vacancy on the throne, Athaliah saw her chance to seize some power. She pushed her way into the queenship by murdering all of her son's offspring. With all of her children and grandchildren dead, she was the only one left in the dynasty of David.

All of the kingly line of David was killed, except for the baby, Joash, who Jehosheba hid away. After seven years of her wicked reign, Jehoiada, the priest figured that now was the time to reveal that she was not the rightful queen after all. And so, hundreds of guards entered the temple and set Joash on the throne and they clapped their hands and said, "Long live the king!" (2 Kings 11:12). When Athaliah discovered what had taken place, (i.e. that she was being dethroned), she tore her clothes and cried out, "Treason! Treason!" (2 Kings 11:14). Eventually, she was carried out and put to death. I can picture her screaming bloody murder all the way down to her death.

She was a criminal and should have been removed from office. And yet, she cried foul. But, when Jesus, who wasn't a criminal, was arrested, He barely spoke a word, but entrusted Himself to His Father. Peter wrote of this great example of Jesus, "while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23). Jesus didn't threaten this mob who came against Him. Throughout the rest of this narrative, we are going to find Jesus saying very few words. Isaiah foretold it long before, "Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth" (Is. 53:7).

Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me" (verse 55). Jesus was in the temple often. Jesus spoke openly with all the people. Some of these Pharisees had even come up to Jesus to ask Him some questions. They knew who He was. They also knew of the good that He had done. The testimony of all who saw Him was that He "went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). He was helping the

poor. He was being kind to the needy. He was giving hope to the hopeless. Diseases were almost non-existent during the days of Jesus, because He healed so many.

Governmental authorities like the Romans love people like this. Our government in the United States love people like this. This is why those organizations, whose purpose is to help people, receive special privileges from the state. Those who donate to such organizations receive tax breaks. Those organizations aren't liable to many of the regular taxes that come upon businesses. Why? Because they are in the business of helping people, which in turn, helps the country. So, the Romans wouldn't have had any problem with Jesus.

The religious people should have loved Jesus also. He was helping people with real needs! If a guy came into our assembly, who was all about helping other people, however he could do it, we all would be thrilled. Jesus was like a physician with great preaching abilities. The Jews knew that true religion consists of visiting orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27).

If you have been reading along with us in our Bible reading, you would have read about how Job defended his own righteousness. It's all about helping people. He said, "I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, and I made the widow's heart sing for joy. ... I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I investigated the case which I did not know." (Job 29:12-13, 15-16).

Though the Romans should have loved Him, and though the Jews should have loved Him, they chose to come and arrest Jesus in the night, with a crowd of people around them. The words of the Psalmist came true. They hate me "without a cause" (Ps. 69:4; John 15:25).

If you think about it for a bit, it was really was absurd. There was absolutely no reason why Jesus Christ even should have been arrested. In reality, it was because His light exposed their darkness. Ultimately, the reason why Jesus was arrested is found in verse 56, "But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Again, Jesus raises this issue of the Scriptures being fulfilled. But this time, He is a bit more specific. He identifies "the prophets."

Perhaps Jesus was thinking of Isaiah 53 and the suffering servant. Perhaps He is talking about Zechariah 13:7, which describe the sheep being scattered when the

Shepherd was struck. This is the very thing that happens at the end of verse 56, "Then all the disciples left Him and fled."

When Jesus was arrested, (1) He didn't run (verse 47); (2) He didn't resist (verses 48-50); (3) He didn't retaliate (verses 51-54); and (4) He didn't rant or rave (verses 55-56). Rather, He entrusted Himself to the will of His heavenly Father.

Where did Jesus find the power to do this? In Gethsemane -- through prayer. He found the power when He said, "not My will, but Yours be done." Glory be to God that He was "our willing sacrifice." How much greater is the sacrifice of Jesus than the sacrifice of bulls and goats. None of any of the hundreds of millions of animals sacrificed in Jerusalem over the years had any clue that they would be a sacrifice for sins. They were all unwilling sacrifices. They didn't know that they were special, temple animals who were being raised to be killed for the sins of the people. But, Jesus, knowing fully all of the ramifications of His willingness chose to come among us and be our sacrifice for our sins!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on July 24, 2005 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

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[1] My source for this information about William Tyndale came from an excellent biography I read entitled, "God's Outlaw" by Brian Edwards. (See chapter 8, "the Traitor's Hand.").

> If you are interested, here are the charges that were drawn up against him
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> *First*, he had maintained that faith alone justifies.
> *Second*, he maintained that to believe in the forgiveness of sins and to embrace the mercy offered in the Gospel was enough for salvation.
> *Third*, he averred that human traditions cannot bind the conscience, except where their neglect might occasion scandal.
> *Fourth*, he denied the freedome of the will.
> *Fifth*, he denied that there is any purgatory.
> *Sixth*, he affirmed that neither the Virgin nor the Saints pray for us in their own person.
> *Seventh*, he asserted that neither the Virgin nor the Saints should be invoked by us.

[2] Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, p. 8.