

A Traitorous Kiss for the Triumphant Savior

Luke 22:47-53

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We find ourselves, this morning, in Luke chapter 22, and I invite you to open your Bible now and turn to that chapter...Luke chapter 22. And we're going to be looking at verses 47 through 53...verses 47 through 53. Let me read the text to you.

“And while He was still speaking, behold a multitude came. And the one called Judas, one of the Twelve, was preceding them and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’ And when those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’ And a certain one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear, his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, ‘Stop, no more of this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him. And Jesus said to the chief priest and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs as against a robber? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me. But this hour and the power of darkness are yours.’”

If there is a more ugly and repulsive word than “traitor,” it is the proper name Judas. We now come to the text in which the Lord Jesus, the Man of sorrows, faces another deep experience of pain as He is betrayed with a kiss by one of His disciples, arrested to be executed on a cross. The narrative of this event is so fascinating, so dramatic, so compelling, so tragic and yet so triumphant that it appears in all four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give us details about the betrayal.

The best way to experience the scene is to look at the characters involved, the crowd, the traitor, the disciples and the Savior. The arrival of the crowd, the kiss of the traitor, the rebuke of the disciples and in the end, the triumph of the Savior. Like any drama, it is built around the participants. It is built around the personalities. They really are the story. And we begin with the arrival of the crowd, verse 47. “While He was still speaking, behold a multitude came and the one called Judas, one of the Twelve, was preceding them.”

While He was still speaking? To whom? To the disciples. About what? About sleeping when they should have been praying. Verse 46, “He said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.’” And this He said, you’ll remember, having gone deeper into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, to pour out His soul to God in the midst of temptation by the enemy, Satan, who wanted to keep Him from the cross. Jesus in that prayer says, “Nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done,” and resolves to go to the cross to fulfill the will of God and to provide the sacrifice for salvation.

Three times He goes in by Himself to pray and comes back out. And each time He comes back out He finds the disciples who ought to be praying because temptation is coming upon them, but instead of praying they’re sleeping because sorrow has anesthetized them. But now there’s no more time for

prayer and there's no more time for sleeping. While He is still speaking to them, and remember, the words of Jesus in verse 46 were only a portion of what He was saying as they continued the conversation and it's in the midst of that conversation at the front edge of the Garden of Gethsemane when He is regathered with all eleven of His Apostles that the multitude appears, led by Judas.

All three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, say that Jesus was still speaking when the crowd arrived. They all record the transition, the very abrupt transition from solitary prayer to the confrontation by a very large assembly of people.

Now just to give you a little bit of background for those of you who may not know the full chronology of what we're experiencing in this section of Scripture, remember that it was six days before this, on Saturday, when Jesus arrived in Bethany, the little village just east of Jerusalem, to stay with Mary and Martha and Lazarus, having come through Jericho and ascended the hill to Jerusalem. He stayed in Bethany Saturday night, on Sunday many people came to meet Him. He taught them. On Monday He made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and was hailed as the Messiah that turned out to be a fickle commitment on the part of the crowd who later on Friday will scream for His blood.

On Tuesday He came back into the city from the Mount of Olives where He spent each night with the Apostles in the darkness, in the density of the olive groves, to find some rest and some safety. So it's Monday, His triumphal entry...to the Mount of Olives Monday night. Tuesday morning He comes back, comes right into the temple ground and cleanses the temple for the second time in His life, once at the beginning and once at the end. He brackets His entire ministry with temple cleansing which begins and ends His ministry by a commentary on the apostate nature of the Judaism of His day. He infuriates the religious leaders who are personally...personally offended by His cleansing of their temple. Spends the rest of the day teaching the people.

Goes back to the Mount of Olives on Tuesday night. Comes back into the city on Wednesday for the last day, teaches the people again, confronts the religious leaders and condemns them. At the end of the day He leaves the temple ground, goes back out toward the Mount of Olives, down the eastern slope through the eastern gate up across the Kidron brook, up the western slope of the Mount of Olives. Sits there with His disciples and tells them about His Second Coming. They want to know when the Kingdom is going to come. He tells them it's a long time. And here's what to expect between My first and My second coming. Gives them the great Olivet Discourse, the full text of which is in Matthew 24 and 25 . And in to the Mount of Olives to spend Wednesday night.

Thursday is a very private day. He spends it with the disciples. While preparations are being made for the Passover meal after sundown on Thursday, they go to the Upper Room, an unnamed place. None of them know where it is so Judas won't know, so he won't lead the leaders there to arrest Him prematurely. They go to the Upper Room, they celebrate the last official Passover. He institutes the Lord's table. He gives them all kinds of warnings, all kinds of prophecies, all kinds of promises recorded in John 13 to 16. Prays His high priestly prayer, John 17. Exposes Judas as the betrayer. Satan enters into Judas. He dismisses Judas. And Judas goes out late Thursday night to tie up the loose ends with the religious leaders to arrest Jesus and collect his money.

It's near midnight, Thursday night, when Jesus leaves the Upper Room. Judas already at work, working on the betrayal. Jesus walks out with the eleven disciples, walks through the city in the darkness of night, a full moon at that time of year, by the way. He walks out the eastern gate, down the slope, across the Kidron, up into the Mount of Olives and comes to a place called the Garden of

Gethsemane which is the place where they always went. He leaves eight of the disciples at the entrance, takes three, Peter, James and John, a little further in. Goes further in Himself. He prays all alone. He tells the disciples to be praying because they're going to enter into temptation and they need to be praying against the impact of that temptation about to come. Satan tempts Him to avoid the cross. He triumphs. He comes out. He finds them not praying but sleeping. No more prayer. It's at that moment Judas arrives with the crowd and Jesus is ready to meet them.

They are a multitude, to be sure. They are a massive multitude, as we will see. But the notable leader of the multitude, the one preceding them is the one called Judas who is identified as one of the Twelve...one of the Twelve. The writers of Scripture are very restrained in how they write about Judas. Of all the things that could be said about him, that seems about the most benign. But they are very restrained. As ugly as he is, as repulsive as he is, they restrain from virulent epithets to describe him. There are just not a lot of ugly adjectives piled in front of his name, or descriptive phrases that would somehow vent the animosity that should justifiably be rendered against him. He always is referred to as "one of the Twelve...as one of the Twelve." It was only Jesus who said of him that he is a devil. He is one of the Twelve. But saying he's one of the Twelve says all you need to say. Everything else is self-evident. One of the Twelve, which means he was with Jesus for the three years that all the rest were there. He was with Him day and night for that period of time, heard everything He said, saw everything He did. He had the same privilege, the same honor, the same inestimable opportunity to walk with the living incarnate Son of God. To say he's one of the Twelve is all you need to say. He was not an outsider, he was an insider.

But there's a certain sadness in that definition of Judas as one of the Twelve. There's a restraint there because he's to the godly a tragedy. He is not one upon whom it is necessary to heap all kinds of scorn. There's no vengeance in the heart of believers. There's no vengeance in the heart of those who were familiar with Judas, there's only sadness and remorse and sorrow.

And by the way, the writers of Scripture are an awful lot kinder to Judas than other writers after Scripture who wrote about Judas. Just a brief run through historical writings that refer to Judas will tell you how he was viewed by people who came after the New Testament writers. For example, there's an ancient writer who wrote a document called, "The Story of Joseph of Arimathea." And in this document it says that Judas was the son of the brother of Caiaphas the high priest...not true. And was persuaded to infiltrate Jesus' group of followers as a spy with the deliberate intent to devise a scheme for Jesus' destruction. So he wants to make Judas even worse than he was. Not only a betrayer, but the architect of the whole entire demise of Jesus and that he was an infiltrator from the high priest's family.

In another ancient document called, "The Acts of Pilate," it says that Judas went home after betraying Jesus. Found his wife roasting a chicken on the fire. He told his wife that he was planning to kill himself because he feared Jesus would rise and kill him in some torturous way for what he had done. His wife replied that Jesus would no more rise from the dead than the chicken that she was cooking would sit up and crow...which it did at that very moment which scared Judas so greatly he went out and hanged himself. That's what that ancient document says.

There's an ancient Coptic narrative of the ministry and passion of Jesus that teaches that Judas did the whole thing for the reason that he was a victim of his wife's greed and his wife had total dominant control over him. She wanted the money and that's why he did it.

There's a twelfth century legendary aura that says that Judas was cast away into the sea by his parents when he was very small. Because he was such a horrible child, they threw him in the ocean. He survived and years later served Pontius Pilate, met and married a beautiful older woman only to discover after their marriage that she was his mother. And the basis of all his problems was he had an edifice complex.

And there's another ancient document called, "Kramer's(?) Catina,(?)" that says that Judas contracted some disease and became so swollen with inflammation that a wagon could pass through areas where he could not. His head became so swollen that a physician couldn't find his eyes, says this document. Worms and corruption proceeded from his body and he one day burst asunder and the place where he died had to be avoided because of the terrible stench. Now there is revisionist history on Judas, trying to make him look worse than the Bible made him look. Another said he was killed by a wagon. Crushed in such a way that his body blew apart.

The point is that post-New Testament, there was virulent hatred toward Judas. But the biblical writers are so reserved, they see him as a tragedy. They see it as a heartbreak. But they also understand that this Judas who is fully culpable for everything he did, fully guilty for everything he did, did what God had determined would be done because Jesus was to go to the cross and die by the determinant counsel and foreknowledge of God.

So Judas arrives, back to our text. Judas, remember, had already been exposed by Jesus in the Upper Room, John 13. Jesus told the disciples when He said one of you is going to betray Me. They said, Who? Who? Who is it? Is it I? Is it I? And He said, "The one to whom I give the sot...the bread dipped in the paste." He gave it to Judas. Satan entered into the heart of Judas, took over totally. And Jesus dismissed Judas, "Go, do your deed." John 13:30 says, "Judas went out and it was night."

Upon leaving, Judas went directly to find the Jewish leaders. The account of that is in Matthew 26 starting in verse 3 running through verse 16, you can read it on your own. He went directly to the leaders. He had already made the deal. He had already told them he would deliver Jesus. They already negotiated the price. Now was the hour. He knew that Jesus when He left the Upper Room would go right back to the Garden of Gethsemane. He would be there with his entourage to point out Jesus.

Judas wanted this to happen fast, really fast. He wanted to take advantage of night. He wanted to take advantage of the fact that Jesus was alone with the disciples, away from the crowds. And he knew exactly where He would be, He had been there every night since Monday night. He is possessed by Satan. He is pressed by greed. And yet he is the servant of a holy and divine purpose. He gathers the leaders, he gathers the soldiers to go capture Jesus so he can get his money and get out of this failed enterprise. Little does he understand that he is operating on God's clock, not his.

Into the Garden, then, comes this multitude led by Judas. He wants his money. He wants his pound of flesh. He wants his compensation for three wasted years following Jesus around in poverty, hoping that Jesus was going to be the Messiah and set up a throne and he would be somewhere in the high ranks of those who were under this king. It has been frankly a frantic few hours since he walked out of that Upper Room all by himself and went to find some of the chief priests in the temple area who would then gather all the chief priests. Some hours have gone by now and this is has not been a simple thing to pull off. He had to find a leader and then have that leader find the rest of the leaders in the middle of the night, get the leaders out of wherever they were in their homes and bring

them to some place. Then they had to get the Roman soldiers to arrest Him. They knew Jesus had miracle power. They knew that. They had seen evidence of it. Stories were everywhere. What they hadn't seen, they had heard.

They had to have the Roman soldiers. The Jews didn't have an army. The Jews had no army in an occupied Israel. And therefore Judas and the leaders had to convince the Romans that Jesus was a threat to Rome, that He was a robber and an insurrectionist, which is essentially what the word "robber" at the end of verse 52 means, an insurrectionist, a rebel. So there's some work to do. Find one of the chief priests, find the rest of the priests, convene them, get the Roman soldiers who are in Fort Antonia which is just across the street from the northern edge of the temple ground, get them, assemble them because we don't want to go after Jesus without some fire power. In order to get the Roman soldiers, their commander is going to have to agree and it just so happens that Pilate, the regional governor assigned by Caesar to that area of the Roman Empire has a main residence in Caesarea, he also has a palace in Jerusalem and he happens to be there this week because he knows it's the Passover and there can be trouble when the city swells by masses of humanity. So Pilate is there.

The Roman soldiers have to have authority from their commanders. And their commanders have to have authority from Pilate. There has to be some reason to do this, to go arrest this man. The Romans are very aware of Jesus. He came in on Monday, they saw everything. They saw as many as two hundred and fifty thousand people surrounding Him, a massive response of the people. They knew the potential was there because what He said in the temple area could be inflammatory, at least it certainly was in regard to the leaders of Israel. The leaders of Israel then had to convince the Roman soldiers who had to convince their commander who had to convince Pilate that Jesus was a threat to Rome, to peace, to tranquility, to stability.

This is no simple operation. This is what Judas is doing in the darkness of night when Jesus is wrapping up His time with His Apostles. Judas knows exactly where they'll be and he comes there. It's the Garden of Gethsemane, by now Jesus has come out, picked up Peter, James and John, met the other eight there, all at the entrance. Jesus is still talking to them about prayer in the face of temptation when Judas appears.

The multitude, what constitutes the multitude? Look at verse 52, "When Jesus speaks to them, this is who He speaks to, the chief priests, they would be the Sadducees that ran the temple enterprises, the officers of the temple, that would be the temple police. That was the security force inside the temple. It was a necessity to keep security there because tens of thousands of people rushed into that place constantly, virtually daily at the morning and evening sacrifice. These were their trained police, temple police.

Then there were the elders. Who were the elders? The Sanhedrin...the Sanhedrin, the seventy elders of Israel responsible for leadership. Mark 14:43, Mark tells us there were scribes there. John 18 tells us the Pharisees were there. John 18 also tells us a cohort was there and rightly the translators of the New Testament add the word "Roman" because that's what a cohort was, a *speiron*(?), a Roman cohort, that's one-tenth of a legion. A Roman legion had six thousand men. A cohort is one tenth of a legion, that's six hundred men. Maybe the number was diminished a little bit, we don't know that but at Passover time in Jerusalem with potential of all kinds of trouble, you would think that the Romans would be at full force. And so there would be up to 600 men surely under a *chiliarchos*, which was the term used for the commander of a cohort.

Everything is in place. Pilate has agreed. The commanders have agreed. The soldiers must obey. The chief priests are there. The scribes are there. The elders are there. The Pharisees are there. Everybody's there. The temple police, they all come. This could be close to a thousand people...thousand people. And they're all there. They don't want any trouble from Jesus. They don't want any trouble. Extra troops, we know, were in the city this time of the year, as I said, because of the Passover feast and the swelling of the population. So these soldiers in this volume milling around the city during the day wouldn't surprise anybody or bring on warrant attention. And here in the middle of the night they move through the city and again the people who were awake and did see them, they wouldn't think anything of it because they were there anyway. Leaving Fort Antonia, which was just across the little cobblestone road from the temple ground, they would come out that same eastern gate, go down that same eastern slope following the footsteps of Jesus, across the Kidron, up into the Mount of Olives.

And by the way, they were certainly hyper-conscious about insurrection. And it was sold to them that Jesus was a threat to Rome, that Jesus would start a riot. And it would be easy to try to sell that because you'd say, "Look, He came into the city, you saw what went on, palm branches, hailing Him as the Messiah and the King, by the way, the king. Competitor for Caesar. You saw how He memorized the crowds, you saw the power and influence He had. You better protect yourselves."

And as well, Mark 15:7 says, "The Romans had just arrested an insurrectionist who led a rebellion. His name, Barabbas...Barabbas." You remember in the future Pilate is going to offer him as an option to the people. They wanted to stop another revolution before it got started. This is perfect. They saw the massive crowds around Jesus, now He's isolated up there with His eleven Apostles. This is the time to get Him.

By the way, John tells us in John 18 verse 3, they came with lanterns, torches and weapons...lanterns, torches and weapons. Verse 52, Jesus says, "Have you come out with swords and clubs." Swords belong to Romans, and clubs belong to the temple police. The temple police, the Jews, didn't have the right to take life. They could use a club, they could whack people around to bring them into order. The Romans had the right to take a life, they used swords, *machaira*, short sword, dagger, used by Roman soldiers to strike fatal blows into the neck, into the heart. *Xulon*, clubs, sticks like night sticks used by the temple police, they're ready for a fight. Their assumption is this is a rebel, this is a robber, this is an insurrectionist, He's going to put up a fight. These people are going to put up a fight. We've got to be armed and we have to massively outnumber them.

So the arrival of the crowd. Instead of welcoming the Son of God as their long-awaited and expected Messiah, they sent a group of vigilantes and soldiers to capture Him for the purpose of murdering Him. This is just an amazing look, isn't it, at how people view Jesus Christ. It transcends this scene. Just breaking it down a little bit, this is an act of injustice. They have no right to arrest Him. There's no reason to arrest Him. He's committed no crime. He committed no crime against God. He committed no crime against Judaism. He committed no crime against Caesar.

There is no crime. He broke no law. They are unjust, unfair, evil murderers who have demonstrated now that they are the children of their father, the devil, who is a liar from the beginning and a murderer. Their deeds against Jesus Christ have no relation to reality, truth or justice. They have no ability to recognize who is just and who is righteous and who is, in fact, God. This is injustice.

It is also mindless. What did the soldiers and the majority of Jewish leaders have against Jesus legitimately? Nothing. He banished illness from the land of Israel. He fed the poor. He healed people. He cast out demons. He taught the truth of God. He upheld the glory of God and the Law of God and the Word of God.

But everybody caught up in the hatred of the leaders. The Romans got caught up in it. Later that same day the crowd gets caught up in it, the same crowd that says, "Hail Him, Hail Him, Hosanna," says, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." The mood of the mob sweeps through the city of Jerusalem. Emotion catapults everybody into wanting Jesus dead. It's all following behind this wretched betrayer by the name of Judas.

It is mindless. It is unjust. It is, thirdly, cowardly...cowardly. Armed to the teeth to take a humble Galilean who was completely unarmed? You know, a guilty conscience makes a coward, doesn't it? Wickedness fears that it may get what it deserves. It shuns honest confrontation fearing exposure and comes only when the odds are highly in its favor.

It is also profane, this crowd, it is a profane crowd. They would have no reverence for what is sacred, no reverence for who is sacred. Blatant impiety to lay murderous hands on the holy Lord. In this crowd and in its ugly mob mentality, seeking to kill Christ, we see the evil world depicted. The evil world still treats Jesus like this. It is unjust, mindless, cowardly and profane. These elements of evil are reflected in all those who reject Him, even today. Still treating Christ this way.

Then we turn from the crowd to the traitor. From the arrival of the crowd, to the kiss of the traitor, verses 47 at the end, and 48. "And he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?'"

A signal is necessary...a signal is necessary. Sure there's a full moon, but they're in an olive grove. It's dark. It's dense. He's surrounded by eleven men. There has to be a signal that identifies Jesus, you can't get it wrong. Judas is concerned that there might be an effort for someone to step up and claim to be Jesus in the dark who is not Jesus while they hustle Jesus away to protect Him from the arrest. You can't get the wrong one. Judas wants his money. I don't want there to be any mistake. I don't want to point because you might not know who I am pointing to. I don't want to just touch somebody because you might not see that.

So what I'm going to do is kiss Him. By the way, this indicates that Jesus had no special physical features to set Him apart, no halo. There was to be no risk. Judas wanted the right one arrested and taken because only then would he get paid. And it's an unbelievable act of betrayal that Judas chooses. He is a very adept hypocrite...very adept. He is so good at undercover operation that he has been a part of a group of twelve people with Jesus for nearly three years day and night and has not been discovered as a fraud. In fact, he's been chosen to take care of the money because he was so trusted. He can play the hypocritical game to the hilt, day and night, voluntary responses and involuntary responses. Knee-jerk reactions, saying whatever comes out of your mouth, etc., etc. He has never revealed the truth of his heart. In fact, he is so convinced that everybody thinks so highly of him and thinks that he is genuine that they will not think anything of him kissing Jesus.

Plus, the kind of kiss we're talking about here is an embrace. It will make it crystal-clear who Jesus is

because he's going to hold on to Him until the Romans can get Him tied up. Inferiors kissed the back of the hand. Or if you're above a slave, you kiss the palm of a hand in the ancient world. Slaves kissed the foot. Kissing the hem of the garment expresses great reverence. But a kiss on the face, a kiss on the cheek, a full embrace is a sign of close, intimacy and warm affection between equals. It is the mark, not of gratitude, it is the mark not of homage, it is the mark of selfless love and affection. And so the kiss is the most ugly act of treachery and that's what Judas says I will do. Proverbs 27:6 says, "The kisses of an enemy are deceitful...deceitful."

So Judas comes to betray the Son of God with a kiss. He approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" How did He know that? How did Jesus know that? Because Jesus knew everything. He hadn't kissed Him yet. He knew his heart, He knew his plans, He knew every detail.

For the details Luke doesn't give us, Matthew, Mark and John fill in all the gaps. So let's go to Matthew 26...Matthew 26, verse 48. As always, when you want to get the full picture, you put all the gospels that write on a certain event and you get the full picture. Verse 48 of Matthew 26. "Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign saying, 'Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one, seize Him,'" *kratistos*(??), grab Him, don't let Him go. "And immediately he went to Jesus and said, 'Hail, Rabbi.'" And right then is when Luke's account fits in. Jesus says, "Have you come to betray Me with a kiss?" And then Judas kissed Him.

Maybe the disciples had first felt that he was back for some duty, but I doubt it. Maybe they thought that he was running ahead of the crowd to warn Jesus that the crowd is right behind Him. But I doubt it. They knew. Out of his mouth comes, "Hail, Rabbi," hello, teacher. And he kissed Him, *kataphilesen*(?). *Phileo* is the word for affection. *Phileo* is the word for kiss. *Katais* to kiss intently, to kiss fervently, to kiss affectionately, to embrace. This is a very fervent, repeated kind of expression. This is brash. This is brash. It really oversteps the protocol of a student and a teacher. Even though you would consider that your teacher was your very intimate friend, you didn't initiate this, your teacher did, he's the superior.

Herein Luke adds that Jesus said to Judas, "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Mark says, Mark 14:45, "He kept kissing Him," and it would be with an embrace, "He holds on to Him and presses his face against our Lord's cheek."

Judas knows that Jesus knows. He doesn't care. He knows Jesus exposed him in the Upper Room. Jesus sent him out, told him to go do what he was going to do. He knew. He overrides whatever was left of his tortured conscience, his fevered brain is now under the dominance of Satan. It would take that to do this. And Jesus endures it, verse 50 of Matthew 26, "Jesus said to him, 'Friend, friend...'" Well it's not really friend. Friend would be some form of *phileo*...*philos*, that's friend. This is *heitaira*(?). It's not the word for friend, it's the word for fellow. We would probably say in the English, "Hey, Guy," or "Hey, Man." There's a certain intimacy in the word but it's not friend. This man had never been a friend of Jesus.

But there is a kind of kindness in that expression. Do what you have come for. And they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. The Lord doesn't blast him into powder with His divine power, He submits to the shame, He takes the kiss, He doesn't resist it. It's unthinkable. It's just the worst human act up to now perpetrated on Jesus. Despicable kiss.

Now the disciples knew what was coming down. They had just seen Judas and it all became clear. He is the greatest illustration of wasted opportunity, squandered privilege, love of money, love of sin, hypocrisy, false discipleship, apostasy, it's all clear now.

And the disciples respond and that takes us to the third point, and how do they respond? So we see the arrival of the crowd, the kiss of the traitor, and then we come to the rebuke of the disciples. For that we go back to Luke's text and this is what we read, verse 49, "And when those who were around Him saw what was going to happen," that's the Apostles. They were around Jesus, the eleven, when they saw what was going to happen...they knew it was going to go... There's almost a thousand people there. They see them all. They've got torches, lanterns, it becomes clear there are Roman soldiers there with all their regalia and armor and weaponry, all of the religious elite of Israel are there. Judas is in front, it's all crystal clear. It's clear about Judas and it's clear about the intent of the crowd.

And so, when those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, meaning it was the collective response of these Apostles, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?"

Now remember, earlier Jesus had said, "From now on if you have a sword, you better carry it." And you remember back in verses 36 to 38 they said, "They have two swords," right? So, Lord, is this the time you want us to use our two swords? By the way, it's pretty evident, I think, that being adept and an efficient swordsman is a skill you don't develop by catching fish. Just to make that point. Although Peter would try anything. His sense of competency stretched to all categories even though it wasn't realistic.

The soldiers then grabbed Jesus and tie Him up. John 18:12 describes them tying Him up. And the disciples watch this happen. But they've also seen something else happen that energizes them. Go to John 18 and I'll show you what happened. This is one of the most amazing elements to this event. When they all arrive, the entourage with Judas, verse 3, John 18, "They came with lanterns and torches and weapons. The Roman cohort, the officers and chief priests, the Pharisees, everybody else." This is what happens. Before Judas does anything, "Jesus therefore knowing all the things that were coming upon Him," He knew about the kiss, He knew about the arrest because He knew everything, "went forth..." He didn't go backwards, He didn't run. He didn't hide. He stepped out front and He said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

Wow! "And they answered Him, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He said to them, 'I am.'" And He gave the Greek version of the tetragrammaton, or the Aramaic version of the tetragrammaton, the name of God, "I AM that I AM.... I AM. Judas, also who was betraying Him was standing with them. When therefore He said to them I AM, they drew back and fell to the ground." The whole crowd went down to the ground on top of each other at the very name of the eternal I AM.

Well, that would energize the Apostles even if they only had two swords...right? What do we got to worry about, guys? All He has to do is say I AM again. They were courageous because not only they knew His power, His miracle power, they knew His power over the elements of nature, they knew His power to escape situations that He didn't want to be caught in, or trapped in. They knew He had power over the forces of hell as well as the forces of this world. They had no question about that, but it was that immediate experience that vindicated their confidence in His power, even power to be

expressed in that moment.

And by the way, just to finish that part in John 18, again therefore He asked them, second time, "Whom do you seek?" After they picked themselves up and dusted themselves off. And they said, "Jesus, the Nazarene."

What He's saying to them is this, I want to hear your orders. Who do you have a right to arrest? And He made them say it twice, "Jesus the Nazarene, Jesus the Nazarene," which is to say you have no right to arrest these other men.

Jesus answered then in verse 8, "I told you that I am He, if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way." He was protecting the disciples. It's going to be hard enough for them when He was arrested. If they were arrested too, it would destroy them. He knows how much we can bear, doesn't He?

There He is in that very moment, as always, protective of His own, and not allowing any temptation to come into our lives that we are not able to bear because He doesn't lose any of His own, He protects them. O, by the way, they were feeling somewhat invincible by now. They just watched the whole mass go down to the ground when Jesus spoke one word...I AM. And so they responded. According to Luke, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" Probably Peter we know had one of them, somebody else pulled up his little *machaira*, about that long.

Luke says, "And a certain one of them," but notice what...as long as you're in John 18:10, verse 10 says, "Simon Peter therefore having a sword," he had one of the two, "Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it and struck the high priest's slave," which means the high priest was in the front of the line by Judas to bring religious authority to this thing. And by the high priest was his slave, "And cut off his right ear, and the slave's name was Malchus." It is Peter, John tells us, using one of the two swords. And feeling pretty confident cause he had just seen the whole crowd go down.

By the way, he wasn't going for the ear. He was much better with a net than a sword. He was going for the throat, but the young guy ducked, lost his ear. How did Jesus respond? Let's go back and see. Luke 22, "Jesus answered," in verse 51, "and said, 'Stop, no more of this.'" Stop, no more of this. In John 18:36 Jesus later says to Pilate, "If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight. But My Kingdom is not of this world." It doesn't advance militarily. It doesn't advance by the sword. It doesn't advance by war. Listen, there is no such thing as a legitimate Christian war of any kind. There is no such thing as a legitimate Christian revolt. We do not advance the cause of God with a sword. Peter's act was violent. It was inappropriate. Stop, no more of this! His Kingdom does not advance in that manner.

And then verse 51, at the end, "He touched his ear and healed it." That's the only New Testament illustration of the healing instantaneously of an open wound. No faith required, just sovereignly gave him an ear. Why not, Lord? Why not let the battle go on? Why not destroy the crowd with a Word? Don't just send him down, kill them all. Why not?

Three reasons. Go back to Matthew 26...three reasons. And Jesus gives them. Verse 52, "Jesus said to him, to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its place, for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.'" Quite a statement. All those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.

What is Jesus saying? He is saying this, murder is a capital offense. Jesus is upholding capital punishment. Genesis 9:6, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Romans 13:4, "A government is ordained of God, they do not bear the sword for nothing."

God instituted human life, the sanctity of human life, the value of human life. Made in the image of God is such that God establishes that if you kill somebody, you give your life up. It's a capital offense to God, that starts all the way back in Genesis chapter 9 and verse 6, and Jesus reiterates it right here in the New Testament, "You use the sword and you'll die by the sword." The authorities have the right to take your life if you do that because government has been given that right.

Any kind of insurrection, any kind of revolution, any kind of supposed Christian war is illegitimate. Any Christians advancing the Kingdom in any way through any kind of acts of violence is wrong. Yet you have supposedly Christians fighting Muslims in Eastern Europe and you have Catholics fighting Protestants in Northern Ireland. Through history all kinds of supposed holy wars. You have the Protestants going under the spiritual leadership of John Owen with Cromwell to Ireland and massacring Catholics in the name of Christ. That's not how the Kingdom of God advances. You live by the sword, the government has a right to take your life. Murder is a capital offense.

So, the first reason you don't do this, it's fatal. It will stop our movement. Secondly, it's foolish. You think I need your sword? Verse 53, "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?" If a legion is six thousand, twelve legions is seventy-two thousand angels. Do you think I need your sword to advance My Kingdom? In a split second I can have seventy-two thousand angels. And by the way, if you remember your Old Testament, remember 2 Kings 19, one angel killed 185 thousand Assyrians. What damage could seventy-two thousand angels do? Put your sword away.

Thirdly, He says, it's not only fatal to do that, it's not only foolish to do that, but it's against fulfillment to do that, verse 54. "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen this way?" What did Scripture say? That He would be betrayed by His own familiar friend. That He would be taken. That He would be executed. Etc., etc. Even that they would give Him vinegar to drink on the cross. You know all the Old Testament prophecies and they'll all unfold as we go through this portion of Luke. This all has to happen, everything is on course, it's determined by God. It must happen this way. What a great statement, you ought to underline that. Every single detail in the life and the death of Jesus was designed by God, it must happen this way. Put your sword back. I don't need it.

Down in verse 56 of Matthew 26, "All this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." It's all been prophesied in the Old Testament. Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, "And they then arrested Jesus, seized Him, tied Him up." Verse 56 says, "All the disciples left Him and...what?...fled." And they fulfilled prophecy. Zechariah 13:7, "Smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered."

They couldn't handle it. They should have been praying instead of sleeping, right? They fled. They fled. Now He's alone and He's arrested. And therein fear, terror, chaos, they're gone. But still we see the triumph of the Savior in the last two verses. Go back to Luke 22, verse 52, "And Jesus said to the chief priests and the officers of the temple and the elders who had come against Him, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs as against a robber or an insurrectionist? While I was with you daily in the temple, you didn't lay hands on Me. If I was such a threat, if I was such a danger, if I was a rival to Caesar, why didn't you arrest Me on Monday or Tuesday, or Wednesday, or find Me on Thursday? Have you come out with swords and clubs now as if I were a revolutionary?'" The whole

scene is absolutely ludicrous. You didn't touch Me. You didn't seize Me. Why now?

Here's why. "But this hour and the power of darkness are yours. God has given you this hour to do exactly this. This is your hour in association with the power of darkness, Satan." You're doing it though hell is energizing you, you're doing it because God has designed it.

What majesty. "Take Me, I'm yours. This is your hour and the hour, the power of darkness to achieve the purpose of God." What a scene.

Do you see yourself there? You might be there by comparison. There's the rejecting crowd. Some of you this morning are with that crowd. You don't want Jesus as your Lord and Savior. There is the indifferent soldier, doesn't really care about the whole thing, secularist. There's the false disciple, the hypocrite who kisses the Savior but hates Him in his heart. And there are the disciples weak and vacillating, struggling, live with profound affection for their Lord.

Where are you? What category do you belong to? And towering over all is the triumphant Savior who walks out, gives His name, they all fall down, takes the kiss, lets them tie Him up and haul Him away because this is God's purpose. And while we could feel sorry for Judas, mourn for Judas, grieve for Judas, we do understand that we can't get caught up in vitriolic attitudes toward Judas because he didn't function outside the plan of God, he functioned inside the plan of God and that brought about our salvation.

Father, we thank you again for the vision that that event that's given to us on the pages of holy Scripture, stunning and riveting reality to be there. So much more could be said. Help us again to see the triumphant Savior who always triumphs over trouble wherever the trouble comes from, even in these hours when it's trouble upon trouble upon trouble, whether it comes from the disciples, or the Romans, or the Jews, or the devil, He is majestic. He stands towers triumphantly over it all and goes unhesitatingly to the cross to be the Father's sacrificial lamb to pay for the sins of those who will and have believed. May we stand with the disciples not indifferent like the Romans, not resentful like the Jews, not false and hypocritical like Judas, but may we stand with those disciples, sure weak and struggling, but loving and being restored as they were all restored and served faithfully until they gave their own lives as martyrs for the Savior. May we be among the faithful, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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