

The Traitor's Kiss Part 2

Scripture: Matthew 26:50b-56

Code: 2388

As we draw our attention to the Word of God this morning, I want to remind you that we are going through what has been traditionally known as the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, those events which surround His death on the cross. We're looking at them through the eyes of Matthew, inspired by the Holy Spirit to record along with Mark, Luke and John these marvelous events.

We find ourselves in chapter 26 and looking at the verses 47 through 56. This particular section deals with the betrayal and arrest of Jesus Christ. It brings into clear focus and finality and climax the plot and plan of Judas who had schemed to get out, to get compensation for what he deemed were wasted years of following one who didn't turn out to be the earthly king he thought He would be.

Bethlehem gave the world its most loved and respected person, Jesus Christ. A little town called Kerioth, 23 miles south of Jerusalem, made up of a group of farming villages, gave the world its most despised character, Judas. The two come into stark confrontation in this very passage. Jesus on Thursday night had the celebration of the Passover with His disciples, said one of them was a betrayer, identified the betrayer and then sent him out to do quickly what he was ready to do. And while he was gone they celebrated the Lord's supper and Jesus taught them and prayed to the Father on their behalf. And when the prayer was done, He with the eleven remaining disciples went to the Mount of Olives to a very special place called the Garden of Gethsemane where He went very often, John tells us. And there the Lord entered into prayer. As Satan came in three waves of temptation against Him, He prayed to God the Father and was strengthened by an angel and resolutely ready to go to the cross. While He was praying, the disciples were sleeping. They should have been praying but they were sleeping.

After the third bout, the third time of prayer, the Lord Jesus came back to the sleeping disciples and awakened them, telling them to get up because it was the time of His betrayal. He could see in the distance the torches and the lanterns and the mob of people coming toward the garden led by Judas. And He awakened them for the moment which He predicted would come. It is to that very moment we arrive in verse 47 of Matthew 26.

Now as we look at this scene, as we carefully go through its elements, the best way for us to understand it and to capture all that's there is to look at the participants that are involved in this event. First there is the attack of the mob. Then the kiss of the traitor. Then there is the defeat or defection of the disciples. And finally the triumph of the Savior. As we flow through the text and look at each of

these, it will unfold in all of its wonder and all of its electrifying reality for it is a dramatic, dramatic scene.

Now let me take you back, if I might, to where we were last time and begin with the attack of the mob. Look at verse 47. "And while He yet spoke," and I might just stop there and say His speaking is to arouse the sleeping disciples. They're asleep. Their sleep is not, in a sense, undeserved. It has been a busy week. It has been a busy day. It is after midnight. They have just made a long walk and climbed a very steep hill. They ate a huge Passover meal. All of those things come together along with their spiritual indifference and along with their sense of victory, their sense of invulnerability which they should not have had, contributed to their falling asleep instead of praying. And so they are aroused by our Lord. And while He is still arousing them, Judas arrives early morning Friday, and Jesus will be crucified before Friday is over. In fact, He will be in the grave before sunset. And so, everything is going to happen rather rapidly in a few hours. And it all starts with the arrest a little after midnight Friday morning.

Now you will notice that Judas is identified, as I pointed out last time, with this very interesting statement, "one of the twelve." And that statement is used of Judas repeatedly in Scripture and it has sort of inherent in it a kind of shock sense. Judas unimaginably, Judas inexplicably, Judas inconceivably one of the twelve...as if to say this identification demonstrates better than any other the mystery of how a person could belong to that group and do what this man did. And so Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs and John adds with torches and lanterns and weapons, from the chief priests and elders of the people. And we know that behind the whole thing were the chief priests and elders. The Jews were behind it. They had enlisted the crowd. They had solicited the Roman band, or speira, the Roman cohort of 600 men, one-tenth of a legion that came along. They were behind it all. It was they who wanted Jesus eliminated.

The Romans really had no quarrel with Jesus. Even His cleansing of the temple was limited to a very private Jewish place and had really no impact on Roman rule or Roman law or Roman authority. Jesus did not appear to them to be any threat to Roman power. But the Jewish leaders had convinced the Romans that indeed He was. As I said last time, no doubt they had had some clandestine meeting with Pilate in which they had convinced Pilate that Jesus was like Barabbas. He was an insurrectionist and would lead to a revolution if He was not dealt with immediately. And so they thereby enlisted Roman help. They weren't about to go alone. They tried that in John 7. The temple police went to take Jesus and came back empty handed. So they're not about to be thwarted again. This time they enlist the Romans. And the Romans must have been to some extent convinced of the threat of Jesus to Roman security and so they agreed. And a crowd somewhere near 1,000, very likely, comes clamoring into the garden to take Jesus Christ prisoner.

And as we looked at that scene last time, I suggested to you that it is a very good illustration of the wickedness of the Christ-rejecting world, that what was done there that gives us so much horror is not

unlike what is done at all times to Jesus Christ. For there is still a world of people who attack Christ, as it were, a world of people who reject Him, who will not have Him as their Lord, will not have Him as their God, will not have Him as their King, see Him as a threat, someone to be done away with, put aside, eliminated.

And I suggested that the characteristics of that crowd that day were these. First of all, it was an unjust mob. In other words, they were carrying out something for which there was no deserving. In other words, Jesus had done no crime. It was utterly unjust to take Him prisoner and execute Him. But the world is equally unjust today and the mob that rejects Jesus Christ and the people who want no part in Him and those who are against Him and those who refuse His love and His truth are just as unjust. For if the truth were known, He is the King of righteousness and to mistreat Him, or reject Him is utter unjust, utter injustice. And so the mob today is equally unjust, rejecting Jesus Christ, refusing Him, denying Him to be the Son of God and the Savior of the world is an unrighteous, unjust, unfair, inequitable act. And the crowds of people today who refuse Christ are no different than the clamoring mob that came up the Mount of Olives.

Secondly, the crowd is not only unjust but last time we saw they are mindless. Typical of any kind of crowd, they are led by a few. The majority are mindlessly doing what a few angry people would have them do. And it is so today, there are people all across this land and all around the world who reject and refuse Jesus Christ simply because that is the mind of the mob, that is the mindless attitude of those that they are around and they are swept up in the bitterness and hatred of others and have made no personal evaluation of Jesus Christ. The wicked world that rejects Him today is just as mindless in many cases as that crowd was on that day.

Thirdly we noted that they are cowardly. The wicked- rejecting world is cowardly. It finds its strength in rejecting Christ in its numbers. And when those people are isolated alone and confronted with Jesus Christ, they are not nearly so bold as they are when they get together with a mindless unjust rabble who come against Jesus Christ.

And then fourthly we suggested that they are an illustration of the wicked world which is profane. Jesus said He would be turned over to the hands of sinners, an inconceivable thing that the utterly holy Son of God should be put into unholy hands, that He should be stained by the filth of the sin of those who took Him captive, whose sinful hands held His body, whose sinful hands tied Him up, whose sinful hands beat on Him and slapped Him and plucked His beard and pushed a crown of thorns on His head and drove a spear in His side and nailed Him to a cross. That He should be so profaned, so treated with sacrilege is inconceivable, and yet it is so today, the mindless unjust cowardly crowd does the very same thing. They treat Jesus Christ with their own kind of profanity in rejecting Him.

So, we saw the attack of the mob. And secondly we looked last time at the kiss of the traitor. We see that, don't we, in verse 48. The one who betrayed Him gave them a sign saying, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He, hold Him fast, or seize Him." And immediately he came to Jesus and said, "Hello, teacher," and kissed Him. Here a fervent kiss, a prolonged kiss, a kiss of affection, an embrace is the sign of betrayal. What kind of deranged mind would choose that? Only one possessed of Satan himself, as Jesus said, Satan entered into Judas.

Jesus spoke when Judas came to Him and began this and said to him, "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Luke 22:48. And Mark 14:45 seems to indicate that it was at that moment that Judas didn't respond but simply said, "Master, Master," and kept on kissing Him. So Jesus is to endure this despicable kiss. In fact, in verse 50 Jesus says to him, and the text should say, "Comrade, or associate, no longer friend, do what you have come to do." The Lord does not blast him out of existence, turn him into ashes with the fire of His fury, He rather submits to this indignity and this shame.

Now what we see here as we saw with the mob is another illustration. Not an illustration of the wicked world, but an illustration of false discipleship. Here is the ugliest of all illustrations, one who feigned love and loyalty and betrayed Christ. Judas is a classic. He is the epitome of all examples of lost opportunity. No one ever had greater opportunity and lost it. He is the ultimate example of wasted privilege. And he is a perfect picture of the love of money. No greater illustration of the love of money could ever be found because there was nothing more priceless than Christ and he sold Him for 30 pieces of silver. He is the classic illustration of the hypocrite. He is the supreme false disciple who loses his opportunity, who wastes his immeasurable privilege, who loves money more than the Son of God and who is the hypocrite of hypocrites who can betray the priceless Son of God with a kiss.

And many today are the same. They are false disciples. The church is full of them. They feign loyalty to Christ. They feign love to Christ. They pretend to care but they don't care and they would sell Jesus for anything else that seemed more valuable at any moment to them. And they do. And when they see that it isn't going the way they thought it would and they're not getting out of Jesus what they thought He would deliver, they will go for something else. And so we looked at the matter of false discipleship. That isn't anything isolated to the garden either, that's with us even today.

Now that brings us to the final two points. The third one is the defeat of the disciples. Notice verse 50 again. In the middle of the verse, after Judas had applied his kiss on the face of Christ and embraced Him, "Then came they and laid hands on Jesus and took Him." After the identifying kiss, the authorities don't waste any time. The sign was the kiss, Judas gives the kiss, they act fast. They, John tells us in chapter 18 verse 12 as he looks at the same scene, they were--the Roman soldiers, the temple police, the Jewish authorities--they all did it together, they all worked together. They came and grabbed Him.

Now they grabbed Him to tie Him up, as you would any prisoner that you wanted to take away and not have him escape or give you trouble. But before they could tie Him up, we have to bring into this passage Luke's text. And in Luke 22, I think it's verse 49, Luke says at that moment, the disciples said to Him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" Shall we smite with the sword? Lord, do You want us to fight? Do You want us to defend You? Do You want to have a battle here in the garden?

Well, there's nothing in Scripture to indicate that the Lord had a chance to answer the question because no sooner had the question of Luke 22:49 been asked then guess who acted. Just take a wild guess...Peter. And verse 51 of Matthew 26 says, "And behold," with a shock, an exclamation, startlingly, "one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his machaira, his short sword."

Matthew doesn't tell us who it was. Mark doesn't tell us who it was. And Luke doesn't tell us who it was. John tells us who it was. You say, "Why did John tell us?" Because John was written long long after this, many many years after this. The gospel of John was the last one penned. And it was safe to say who it was then. It's as if the earlier writers, Matthew-Mark- and Luke-don't want to identify Peter lest Peter come under some kind of difficulty for his act against the Jews and against the Romans in drawing a sword. So there's a certain amount of protection, even accommodated by the Spirit of God in this text, and we are not told who it is until later when John writes and everything is by the board by then. And so he tell us it was Peter, but we could have guessed, couldn't we?

He stretched out his hand and drew from his sheath the sword, the short sword, and struck a servant of the high priest and John also tells us his name, no one else does but John. His name was Malchus. And he must have been a very important personality, like an adjutant to the high priest. And he cut off his ear. Now I can promise you that Peter was not going for his ear, he wasn't that good with a sword. He was going for his head. And he ducked, obviously. Peter's idea was, "We'll just take them on, all of them." This guy was first in line, he would just get him and go through the crowd.

You say, "Well, what ever gave Peter such boldness?" Well, it's rather simple. You see, when...when that whole mob came into the garden, as we'll see in a little while in John 18, as soon as Jesus went out and said to them, "I am He," they all fell down to the ground. So Peter had the idea in his mind, if I get into trouble the Lord will knock them all down anyway. He had to draw a sword and do something, after all, didn't he have to keep up his reputation and hadn't he said I'll never deny You, I'll never be offended by You, though I die first I'll never be offended, hadn't he said that? He had to keep up his boast.

Furthermore, it was just part of his impetuous nature to react rather loudly and violently to the scene. And then, of course, he knew he was with one who could knock everybody down anyway so he couldn't lose, he thought. And so he hacked off the ear of the servant of the high priest.

Now where did he get a sword? Did you ever wonder about that? What are you doing with a sword, Peter?

Luke 22 verses 36 to 38 tell us that earlier the disciples had managed to get a hold of two swords. And in Luke 22 it's probably well to note the verse, verse 38 of Luke 22, they said, "Lord, behold," this is right before the betrayal, right before the garden agony, "behold, here are two swords." Lord, we're ready for anything, we have two swords. "And the Lord said unto them, That's enough."

Now some people think what the Lord meant was that will be enough to win the battle, but obviously that's not what the Lord meant because the Lord said to Peter as soon as he pulled out his sword, do what?... "Put it back." What the Lord meant by that's enough is, "Look, that's enough...that's enough of that...we're not into that." Peter had no business having that sword and acting that way.

You say, "Well wait a minute, hadn't the Lord said there was a time when I told you don't have a purse and there was a time when I told you don't take an extra coat, and there was a time when I told you don't take a sword, and now I'm telling you take your purse and take your coat and take your sword? Wasn't that back in Luke 22 also?" Yes, verse 36. "Weren't they taking those swords because the Lord said we were going to need a sword?" Yes, but the Lord said that but that isn't what the Lord meant. You see, the Lord again was speaking to them in spiritual terms and blockheads that they were they saw everything only in its physical form. What our Lord intended to say was there's going to come a time when you're going to need resources, there's going to come a time when you're going to need to defend your life. But, in the words of the Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians 10:4, the weapons of our warfare are not...what?...fleshly, they are spiritual and mighty to the pulling down of fortresses. And so when they pulled out those two swords and said we've got two swords, the Lord said that's enough of that...that's not what I meant. Christianity makes no advances by weapons. There are no holy wars...none. And any so-called holy war in the name of Christ is utterly unholy. The Kingdom of God does not advance with fleshly weapons. We do not conquer that way...but with spiritual weapons, tearing down the dominion of Satan that rules and reigns in the hearts of men and women.

And so Peter is out of line. He is out of sync with spiritual reality here. He starts swinging his little machaira around like a Roman soldier would swing a rhomphaia which is a four-foot broad sword, and cuts off the ear of this poor guy.

You remember what Jesus said in John 18:36 to Pilate? He said, "If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would...what?...fight." If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight. What did He mean by that? My Kingdom is not of this world, so My servants don't fight. My Kingdom is of another world. Christianity gains nothing by using military might, nothing. There are no holy wars. They are all utterly unholy. And anything done like that in the name of Christ is an affront to Christ Himself, such as the Crusades, or even the terrible terrorist kind of things that go on in Ireland today.

Spiritual battles are never won with military power.

So, in John 18:11 Jesus says, "Put up thy sword into the sheath, put that thing away. The cup which My Father has given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" This has to be, Peter, put it away. And then, having taken hold of Him and Peter reacted, cut off his ear, the Bible says Jesus reached out, touched and healed the ear of Malchus...gave him a brand new ear.

By the way, that is the only miracle recorded in Scripture where Jesus heals a fresh wound. So it's unique. It's also, I think, very insightful because there was no faith on the part of Malchus. The miracles of Jesus were sovereign miracles. Sometimes there was faith, sometimes there was not. This guy just stood there, lost his ear and the next thing you knew, got another one. It wasn't a question of his faith. It was a sovereign act of Christ.

So, Peter--put away the sword. You folks, allow this much, I'll give him a new ear and we'll leave it at that. Quite a remarkable scene.

Now why didn't the Lord allow a war? Hmph...that's as I said, that's not His approach. If His Kingdom was of this world, He would fight. But He gives some very interesting reasons here, three of them. He says, "Peter, put your sword away, it's got to be this way." And here He gives three reasons. Three key words will unfold these reasons. Number one word is "fatal...fatal." Verse 52, "Jesus said to him, Put up again thy sword into place," put your sword away. Just as He said and recorded in John 18. Put your sword away. Here comes the reason number one, "For, or because, all they that take the sword shall die with the sword." You know what He's saying there? That's not philosophizing, no, no, no. He's not saying, "Boy, if you live that way, you're liable to get it." That's not what He's saying. What He is saying is this, people who use a sword for personal acts of violence will be punished with execution, that's what He's saying. You use a sword, you'll die with a sword.

Listen, that goes right back to Genesis 9:6. That is our Lord out of His own mouth advocating capital punishment. That is Jesus Himself saying what was said in Genesis 9:6, "Who so sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed also." You kill someone, you die. That's God's law. And Jesus reiterates it right here. "Peter, put that thing away. You take a life and they have a right to take your life, that is God's divine law for the preservation of the sanctity of human life."

And by the way, in our study of Romans 13, we're going to go into that in depth as we unfold that very powerful passage. Because in Romans 13:4 it says this, it says, "The government bears not the sword for nothing." Now why does God give a sword to the government? You don't get spanked with a sword, you get killed with a sword. And governments have a sword and not for nothing, but for something and something is to use it. God has given to government the right to take the life of murderers. And Jesus is saying if you kill somebody, they have a right to take your life, you'll die that way.

Paul the Apostle even said when he was confronted with the law, he said, "If I've done something wrong, take my life." He was upholding the law of God. If I deserve death, then take my life. That's God's law. It is an unacceptable thing for anyone to take a life.

Peter, I don't care if this is unjust, I don't care if this is unfair, I don't care if this is inequitable, I don't care if this is ungodly, I don't care what this is, you have no right to personal vengeance because if you take a life, you forfeit your life. It's just that simple. That's God-ordained law.

And so, no Christian under any circumstances has the right to ever take a life, not even to defend Jesus Christ's honor. Now I'm not talking about self-defense and defending yourself from someone who's trying to kill you or those around you. I'm talking about an act of violent vengeance against someone else. You will bring about the penalty for murder.

Secondly, it is not only fatal, He says, but it is foolish because of who Christ is. Notice verse 53. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father and He shall presently give Me more than 12 legions of angels." See how foolish it is. What are you doing with that dumb sword, Peter? If I want help, I'll just tell the Lord and He'll send Me twelve legions of angels, 72,000 angels, more than twelve legions, more than 72,000 angels.

Now you know how powerful 72,000 angels are? Well, according to 2 Kings, I think it's chapter 19, there was one angel who slew 185,000 Assyrians all by himself. So 72,000 angels could do a lot of damage. See how foolish it is. You don't need to defend the Kingdom of God with your sword. God is not without resource. That's foolish. The Lord doesn't need that. He says, "Do you think that I can't now arti, now meaning now, immediately, presently...the Father will give Me," the word "presently" is the word arti, it means immediately, I can now pray and He will now give Me, or immediately on the spot all the help I need. Don't you realize I can do that? But I am not doing that. I don't need that. Christianity does not need to conquer that way. God will conquer on God's own time and God's own way and God's own place by His own power.

So He voluntarily yields to the murderous plot. It is not...it is not an attack on Him outside the law, believe it or not. It is unjust but they're doing it within the framework of a supposed legal approach. In other words, they're not lynching Him in the garden, they're going to give Him a trial and so forth and so on. It is the government of that nation, it is the law of that people being exercised, even though it's unfair and unlawful and illegal from the viewpoint of the Lord and His disciples. It is nonetheless an act of that government and He says you have no right to take personal violence against them. And if God wanted to defend Me, He could. And so, when governments do things...the things that are unfair and people do things that are unfair in the name of the government, we have no right to draw the sword. If the Lord wants to deliver us, He can deliver us. If we use personal vengeance and violence, we bring upon ourselves the death penalty.

And then there's a third and very important one and that's the word "fulfillment," fatal, foolish and then He uses the word fulfillment. Verse 54, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" Do you know Scripture says it has to be this way? Jesus has to be taken captive. Jesus has to be led away like a sheep to slaughter, not with a war but a sheep is led to slaughter quietly, peacefully, calmly, not violently. It has to be this way. It has to be that I was betrayed. It has to be like Psalm 41:9 that Mine own familiar friend has lifted up his heel against Me. It has to be like Psalm 55, that one with whom I break bread is turned against Me. It has to be like Zechariah chapter 11, that I be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. It has to be the way Psalm 22 says, with all the events of the crucifixion. It has to be like Isaiah 53. It has to be like Jeremiah 23. It has to be like Zechariah 13:1. It has to be like all the prophets said it would be. That's how it must be. And so put that thing away or the Scriptures can't be fulfilled.

Peter who boasted too loudly, prayed too little, slept too much, acted too fast was still off base. Put it away, this is how it has to be.

And then in verse 56 He says it again, "All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." It had to be that way. So He gives him three good reasons not to use the sword. Number one, it's fatal to you if you use it. Number two, it's foolish because God doesn't need it. And number three, you've got to go with the plan of God and this is the plan...this is the plan.

And then it says at the end of verse 56, "All the disciples forsook Him and fled." And the all is emphatic and that's what He said back in verse 31, didn't He? He said all you shall be offended because of Me this night, and they all fled, everyone of them. They fled. They fled out of fear. You see, Jesus said we're not going to fight it. By now, Jesus was tied up. Being taken off. Peter when he drew the sword thought if he got into trouble the Lord would knock everybody over. The Lord didn't do that. The Lord let Himself get tied up and now they were afraid. And even though the Lord had made those Romans and those leaders say that they only had a right to take Jesus of Nazareth, the disciples knew they'd come after them, too. And they didn't trust that Jesus would deliver them, and so they probably missed out on a great miracle of their own deliverance.

I don't know how they would have been delivered, but I know there was one guy who was delivered. Maybe you never even read about him. Mark 14, it says in verse 50, "All the disciples forsook Him and fled." Okay, Mark's looking at the same scene and everybody flees. But, "There followed Jesus along with the crowd a certain young man," now we don't know who it is, it's a certain young man, that's all, that's the only place he's ever mentioned, we don't know anything more about him, just a young man. Obviously someone who cared about Christ. "And he had a linen cloth thrown about his otherwise naked body," it doesn't mean stark naked, he had a loin cloth on and then over that he had thrown a linen cloth which meant he probably had come hurriedly. Maybe he had seen the crowd moving through the streets, didn't know what was going on, maybe he suspected something, maybe

he was even, some people assume that he may have been a person in the house where the upper room was. Some people conjecture that it was the house of John Mark and this was John Mark, but we don't know that. He may have been there and so he was sort of following the scene. And he threw his outer linen cloth on hurriedly to follow and be there and there he was in the garden. And when everybody else left, he followed along.

"And the young men," that is the rest of the crowd, "laid hold on him," they seized him, "and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked." Here he was sort of following Christ and the others must have assumed that he was indeed a follower of Christ and they seized him and he ran out from under his linen cloth and got away.

Now it's hard to understand dogmatically, that is, why the Lord put that little incident in there and didn't tell us anymore about it, but it may be at least an indication of the fact that if the Lord allowed this man to escape, He would have had some wonderful deliverance planned for the disciples even if they had been faithful, huh? Even if they had followed. But they never knew what that deliverance might have been because they fled fast at the very beginning before there was anything that could happen.

They couldn't handle it, see. They couldn't handle it. They weren't up to the moment. The trial was too great. "O Lord, we'll go with you even to death...O Lord, we'll never be offended, we'll never deny You...we'll be faithful all the way," and they all chimed in, didn't they? They all chimed in. Didn't happen that way. When the trial came and their life was on the line, they ran.

Now we look at them and we say, "Boy, what...how could they do that to the beloved Son of God?" And then we look at ourselves and say, "Wait a minute, have we done that?" Have you run from the moment of trial, run from the moment of testing, abandoned Christ? Have you been unfaithful to stand with Him when it got tough and the heat was up and there was a price to pay and you had to be true against those who were there? I mean, they are good illustrations of a defecting disciple, of one who runs when he should stand with his Lord.

And there were some things that marked them. We saw the marks of a wicked crowd. We saw the marks of a false disciple. Let me give you some marks of a defective disciple. First of all, they were unprepared. They were sleeping instead of what? Praying. Why? Oh, because they thought they were okay. You see, they confused good intentions with strength. They confused good wishes with true courage. They were overconfident. And so they didn't need to pray. They didn't need to take into heart the marvelous teachings that Jesus gave them that would have strengthened them, the promises of John 13 to 16 given them that very night. If they had listened to His prayer in John 17 as He prayed for the Father to hold on to them and to keep them and uphold them to Himself, if He had...if they've had listened to that and if they've had captured the essence of what He said in John 13 to 16 about all power being theirs and all resources and anything they need they could ask for and

they would receive. But they didn't...they didn't listen with the ears that they should have listened to so we could say they ignored the Word and they ignored prayer and thus they were unprepared. And I can tell you it's a gilt-edged guaranty that if you ignore those two things, you'll be unprepared, too. People defect when they're weak in the Word and they're weak in prayer.

Secondly, they were impulsive. Not unlike many of us, they acted on impulse rather than reason. They acted on emotion rather than revelation. They did not think through what was right. They did not reason through what was best. They just reacted to the moment. Out comes a sword, whack goes the ear. The next thing you know, they're running out of the place, totally impulsive with no sense of what was going on and what would be a proper reaction.

And I fear that so many Christians who are unprepared, who are not in the Word, who are not saturated with biblical thought, who don't spend time in communion with God so that there is a trust connection, and that there's a line of communication and communion there that's always open and they sense the thoughts in the heart of a God for a given situation, people who don't do that have to react to their impulses and their emotions and their feelings and they run here and there dependent on how they instantly feel. And I said this in years past, you want to come to the place in your Christian life where your involuntary and immediate responses are godly. And that only happens when you're controlled by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. If you're a victim of your own anxieties, you're going to have problems.

The third thing that I see about this kind of defective disciple is that they are impatient. They cannot wait for the deliverance of God. They cannot wait to see what wonderful thing God would have done. The young man that was attempted to be captured was free and maybe by the providence of God they perhaps, as I said, might have seen a greater miracle if they had waited patiently to see God deliver them.

There are many Christians like that. And all of us from time to time are like that. Rather than wait to see God deliver us, we take the easy route of escape and we bring reproach upon the Savior because we aren't up to the task. And if we saw it through and endured it, we would see the delivering hand of God and give Him glory and praise.

Furthermore, they are carnal. That is they are dependent on their fleshly power, their fleshly weapons. And when they lose their fleshly weapons and their resources have to be put back in their sheaves, they don't know where to go. They don't know what it is to trust. They don't know what it is to believe.

So, we could say in summation that defective disciples basically are inconsistent. They promise all kinds of things, they just don't deliver. So many like them today.

And then finally, the last and most wonderful of all, the participants in the scene, of course, is Christ Himself. And we see the triumphant of the Savior. And it is majestic. It seems as though it's Matthew's special joy to preserve Christ from any diminishing of His glory, no matter how ugly the scene gets. I mean, just think of it this way, the world hates you and wants you dead. One of your own who has spent three years with you sells you for the price of a slave. And the rest of your disciples flee and get out for their life.

Now what does that say about you? Not much at first thought. You can't even hold on to those who are your most devoted friends when the stress is difficult. And one who knows you so well would sell you for the price of a slave and the world that you've been ministering to for three years wants you dead. That doesn't have a lot to say about you at first thought. And you could look at a scene like this and it could look like something that tears down Christ's glory, something that robs Him of any majesty. But on the other hand, if you listen to it carefully through the words of the Spirit of God and the heart of Matthew, you see just the opposite. It's in spite of all of these things that you see the triumph of Christ.

First of all, you see the triumph of Christ in His confrontation with the crowd. Would you notice verse 49 again? It says the mob came and the sign was given, the sign was to be a kiss. Immediately Judas comes to Jesus and says, "Hello, teacher," and kisses Him.

Now at that point, I think something happened. I don't know where it happens in here but some time in the moment when Judas arrives and comes to kiss Christ, some people say before the kiss, some after the kiss, but at that moment something remarkable happens. And you need to note that in John chapter 18. Jesus went forth, verse 4, and said to them. Now it may have been after the kiss, I tend to think it was. He walks to the crowd and He says, "Who do you seek?" As if to say you don't need this kiss, I'm not hiding. As if to strip Judas from any satisfaction that he had accomplished anything, or done anything in any way meaningful or necessary. He walks right up to the crowd and says, "Whom do you seek?"

In other words, who do you have a right to capture? And they said to Him, "Jesus of Nazareth. And He said, I am He. And Judas also who betrayed Him stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them 'I am He,' they went backwards and fell to the ground." A thousand people fell over like dead fish, hit the ground, flat on their backs. Who do you think's in control here? One word of His mouth, "I am He," or literally He says, "I am," the name of God. "I am," and they just went right down to the ground. You see, the point is, in His confrontation with the crowd we see who was in charge, don't we? You might think Jesus was a victim for a moment. Oh, no, no, He's not a victim. The fact that they were allowed to stand back up again was because He allowed them to.

And then He asked them again, I suppose while they're all lying there in the dirt, and if they came up the hill they're lying at a slant. He said, "Who do you seek? They said, Jesus of Nazareth. I told you I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way."

You see, He was working out the disciples' deliverance which deliverance they never experienced because of their impatience. He was working it out. But the amazing thing is that He had total control of that mob. But a mob is so mindless and so stupid that they crawled up out of the dirt and went on with what they were doing as if it never happened. Now does that tell you something? Judas was possessed by Satan and this, Jesus said, is your hour in Luke's gospel, and the power of darkness. Hell has total sway for this hour so you will respond to hell, not Me. But He was in control.

Now go back to Matthew and there's another scene, another element here that shows us His confrontation with the crowd, verse 55. We skipped it earlier so we'll look at it now. "In that same hour, Jesus said to the multitudes, Are you come out as against a thief?" Literally the word is a robber. "Are you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to take Me?" You treating Me like a robber? "I sat daily with you teaching in the temple and you did not seize Me."

And it may well have been that He even went there on Thursday while the disciples were doing preparation for the Passover. The Scripture doesn't say. Why didn't you take Me then?

You see, it's as if He is saying to them, you know that I'm not the robber, you are. You know that you would have taken Me any day this week in the temple if you had justification for it. But you didn't take Me because you knew you had no right to do this and you feared the people.

He is unmasking their evil. They didn't take Jesus in public because they knew they had nothing against Him. And they feared the crowd who thought Him to be the Messiah. He isn't the robber, they are. He isn't the thief, they are. And, of course, they were being led by Satan. But He says, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." You are under the control of hell. By God's sovereignty He has given hell this moment. This is hell's day, from midnight until just after dawn on Sunday when the tomb is burst. This is hell's moment. So you are under hell's control.

Why didn't you take Me? Because at the time it wasn't ready. This is hell's time and you are hell's agents.

So there's a two-fold intent, I think, in the statement. One is to show them that what they did was evil and they knew it or they would have done it in public. Two, they were acting under the direction of Satan himself and he had brought it to this.

And so we see His total triumph, even as He faces the crowd. It's God who controls it all. The crowd is a victim. They fall down when they meet Him and they do what they do under the power of hell

because God has made it so.

Secondly, we see the triumph of the Savior in His confrontation with Judas, don't we? Do what you've come to do, He says in verse 50. No struggle, no anger, no rage, no wrath, no venom, absolute calm, absolute commitment, absolute trust, totally putting Himself in the hands of God. What majesty. He doesn't react as a criminal would react in this case. He doesn't react as an innocent man would react and scream that He was innocent, He was innocent, He was innocent. He is calm. He is controlled. He is majestic.

And we see His triumph also in His confrontation with Peter. Peter has no trust. Peter doesn't understand His spiritual resources but Christ does and we see Him compared to Peter and He is totally calm. He's placing Himself in the Father's hand. He has a heavenly loyalty that Peter and the disciples don't know anything about. They are disloyal, they run. He's loyal, He stays. And His temptation was infinitely stronger than theirs. And so, I believe, we see the triumph of the Savior even in this scene.

Now listen. Where are you? Where are you in the scene? You're there, so am I, everybody's there. Are you with the rejecting mob? Jesus said, "He that is not with Me is against Me." Are you there? Are you with that unjust, mindless, cowardly, profane group of people who just deny Christ, don't want Him in their life? You there? You're no better or no different than that mob.

Or maybe you're one of those false disciples who pretends to love God and love Christ and serve the Lord and want His will but the truth of the matter is you're after what you can get and if you don't get what you want you're going to get something else. And you'd sell Jesus if something better came along.

Or, are you a part of those disciples who are so weak that when the temptation gets hot, they run and lose the battle? Or do you stand there with the triumphant Savior, victorious, willing to endure whatever comes along?

You're somewhere and you know and God knows where you stand. We close in prayer.

Our Father, after this vivid scene and we want to examine our hearts, not somebody else's but ours. Some of us have heard so much for so long that we get nothing but the fascination of the story. We want to go beyond that to the conviction of its intent. And I pray, Lord, for those who may be in the crowd, the unjust, mindless, cowardly, profane crowd that takes the holy Christ into unholy hands and pushes Him out of their life. O God, may this be the day they come to know the Savior for who He is. May they come away from the crowd and come to Christ, seek to know Him.

I pray for those who may be false disciples who are tares sewn among the wheat, who are seed that springs up for a little time but bears no fruit. And when trials come, they're gone. For those who pretend, that are not real, only seek personal gain. I pray for those of us who are true disciples but find it hard in the stress of temptation to stand true. God, help us to stay in the Word and prayer and trust and wait patiently to see the hand of God in deliverance.

And we thank You for those who stand with the Savior in the midst of the difficulty, victorious and triumph. May we find ourselves, Lord, and then take steps immediately to move to the place of victory.

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