

## Who Is In Control?

Series: Encountering Jesus (through the Gospel of Luke)  
March 15, 2020 – Brad Bailey

Luke 22:41-42

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Luke 22:45-46

When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. <sup>46</sup> "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Luke 22:47-53

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Series #62 / Text: Luke 22:47 – 53

Note: The following message was given on the Sunday in which our community began to conclude public services due to the outbreak of the coronavirus. The text follows our flow through the Gospel of Luke but includes some reference to the unprecedented change in daily lives and concerns at hand.

Intro

Welcome... whether sitting in these chairs or at home.

All are present together...in this same moment.

And that is **a quality that we are so thankful** for as we **enter into the next few weeks** in which we gather through our own online portals.

This week...we have begun to face **more change to our daily lives and plans** than any point in most our lifetimes.

**Just a week ago** that Italy brought the shocking news that that there would be restrictions on it's northern provinces... by **Tuesday morning** expanded to the whole country...and then the recognition of containment spread and spread fast... reaching our own lives...and is still spreading.

**My wife and I didn't expect** to start **home schooling now**...but now have two college student home or on their way home...plus a high school student. I didn't expect to face greed in relationship to toilet paper...or to embrace the need for "social-distancing"... to be communicating about a shift to live streaming.

Many are facing uncertainty in ...travel... various plans... work... financial stability... supplies... and ultimately health.

**At such a time we do well to ask: Who is in Control?**

**It's timely that in our journey** through the Gospel of Luke... **we come to a juncture that speaks to that issue.**

We have come to the point at which Jesus has entered Jerusalem... and been heralded as the Messiah... Savior. But what Jerusalem represented for him was quite different than what it represented to the people. They presumed he offered to save them from the oppression of the Roman Empire which ruled over them. But there was something so much bigger at hand. What is emerging is the reality that Jesus was the embodiment of The Torah (the revelation of God)...and the temple...the place at which a perfect God and imperfect people can meet)... and the final sacrifice. As he gathered to share the Passover meal with his followers... he said...this meal that remembers God's provision when judgment had come to Egypt... and would pass over those for whom the blood of a lamb had been placed over their doorway. What was at hand...is that he was now the embodiment of God's Word...God's Temple...and God's provision of a sacrifice.

And this is what is now at hand. The hour had come. One had betrayed him...and they will be coming to take him. So he leaves that Passover meal to enter the garden of Gethsemane joined y his followers.

And to reach back...we read...

**Luke 22:41-42 (NIV)**

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.

In that moment we see **the essence of the restoration that is at hand.**

Humanity had declared it's independence.

But the truth is that **our existence is rooted in the will of God.**

**In declaring our independence...we were like the state in which people assumed that the sun revolved around the earth. We declared that we were the center... but in truth...the sun is the center...life exists only in it's alignment to the sun.**

In that moment... the culmination of all that Christ represented came to it's profound conclusion... he accepted the ultimate alignment... he fulfilled that a life was now aligned ...and will make that alignment possible again for all who receive and follow him.

### **Luke 22:45-46 (NIV)**

<sup>45</sup> When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. <sup>46</sup> "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

What is he warning about? He is saying that what was coming...they would not be prepared for. They would not be prepared for the conflict... for the forces that were coming to try and take control.

**It is this that leads to the central scene we engage today...**

### **Luke 22:47-53**

While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, <sup>48</sup> but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" <sup>49</sup> When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" <sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. <sup>51</sup> But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup> Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour--when darkness reigns."

This is the text that had been set for today when we planned this 70 week journey through the Gospel of Luke. And it strikes me as prophetic in nature.

Everyone had **their own positions** and ... their **own sense of order** and **the way things should be...** and their **own wills to exercise.**

Now disrupted. When we lose control....we want control most.

If we look at this scene, we see **everyone is in a play for control.**

**There are five entities in this scene.**

**Religious leaders** – they have religious control... rule keepers.... and the people are turning to Jesus ...as he is exposing their hearts and hypocrisy. They'll call upon the authorities to get him arrested.

**Temple Guards** – representing Roman authority. They don't really care...they presume there is no authority greater than the empire of Rome itself.... this is the Roman empire... They run the world. So they are glad to come show their control.

**Judas** – one whom Jesus had chosen to be among the 12 disciples. But he always wanted things to be different.

You may recall...he had served as the treasurer of the group. Jesus welcomed people to provide for he and the team... from which Judas was taking money..

He wanted to make God do what would serve him.

**Peter** –always ready to show his loyalty... but trusted in his own passion and power. He draws a sword... a large dagger. He'll show Jesus how to take control of a situation.

And there in the center is **Jesus**.

I found this scene captured well in the Passion of the Christ film...

> **VIDEO Clip** (from The Passion of the Christ)

**As we look at this defining moment... we see everyone making a play for control... and do well to ask: Who is in control?**

Again... there is a profound paradox before us.

Immediately we everyone trying to take control... trusting in their various forms of power.

This moment captures the paradox of control.

It becomes clear that everyone trying to take control... is not ultimately in control. Jesus reaches the defining moment... in which he concludes “not my will be yours be done”... he joins into the divine control of heaven.

The one who we may assume is losing control...is the only one who seems is free. Jesus may be the one bound physically...but all those around are bound in fear... trusting in forces that cannot prevail... except he who had trusted in his Father.

**And Jesus makes this clear for each of these entities. He says...**

"Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup> Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour--when darkness reigns."

> He is saying in essence: I am not coming in some rebellion by physical force...so why do you bring swords and clubs? You didn't come during the light of day because you couldn't confront the force of God that is at work.

And then (vs 53)...

**“But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”**

Jesus says the physical darkness is a representation of something deeper.

**He is declaring... this is the moment in which they cannot see clearly... and you will turn to what you trust in.**

**And there is an element which each group must face.**

**The Religious leaders – They presume that their religious identity should give them control... they may even feel it is part of their position.**

From the start... this confrontation with the religious leaders begins to rise.

And it never ends.

**Soon the same religious leaders** would face a **similar dilemma**. After his resurrection, crowds of people began to gather around his disciples...and the religious leaders were brought every force against him... and at one point when arrested...and wondering what to do...

**“a Pharisee named Gamaliel**, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up and said: **“Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men.**

### **Acts 5:38-39 (NIV)**

Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

We do well to listen to those words.

They were so proud of their positions...and their opinions...that they became blind to their lack of submission to God’s will. As the words of Proverbs had declared...

### **Proverbs 19:21**

Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

The purposes of God will prevail. [1]

And then there is the role of the...

### **Temple Guards - representing Roman authority**

Very soon the local ruler Pilate would be responsible for what was to be done with Jesus.

Jesus remained steadfast and silent.

Pilate’s question is so telling...as he said: **“Don’t you know that I have the authority to release you or kill you?”** He was **reminding Jesus of the great authority that accompanied his position. And Jesus’ response is so pointed...**

### **John 19:11 (NIV)**

**“You would have no authority over Me at all unless it had been given you from above.”**

“All authority comes from God” was **the truth that the bloodied Messiah forced upon the wealthy ruler.** God is in control, and He is the One who ultimately possesses all authority.

You may have some forms of control...but you are not in ultimate control.

And then there was...

**Peter - he was the disciple that was always first to step out... in loyalty and passion.**

He was the one who stepped out of the boat and tried to run to Jesus ... the first to run to the tomb... and was likely physically strong as the leader of the fishermen. **So he’s ready to take draw a sword and take control.**

**To this Jesus says...“No more of this!”**

Other accounts include his statement...”He who lives by the sword...dies by the sword.” In other words... **if you make human force the power you trust in...you will also face it’s end yourself.** [2]

> Our problem is that we trust in human force more than God’s power.

And finally...there is

**Judas –**

There are various views about what Judas' motive may have been in betraying Jesus. [3]  
What seems most clear is that while he had a long and profound relationship with Jesus... but now perhaps out of fear...chose to get in good with the religious leaders who were going to come after him. He was trying to control the situation with using duplicity... deception.  
**But earlier that night... Jesus had already told the group** that he knew one was about to betray him.  
**Even this deception... was not one of ultimate control.**

And now Jesus says: **“Judas, do you betray me with a kiss?”**  
What kind of question is that? That's not trying to get information to Jesus. It's trying to get information to Judas. He's trying to say, “Judas, do you know what you're doing? Do you see? Do you realize with a kiss you betray the Son of Man?” He's reaching out even to Judas.

He's reaching out to each of us.  
**How does this call speak out to us?**

In the hour of darkness in which the world may seem out of order... we may feel threatened by a virus... or what is always under the surface.

## **1. We are not in ultimate control... but we can unite ourselves with God who is.**

**We all like to have control.** It makes us **feel significant.**

The truth is that we are in ultimate control of so little. **Control is the grand illusion.**  
Hard to face because **order is essential to life.** We want to **avoid chaos.**

**But we are NOT facing mere chaos...** or meaninglessness.  
Look...we find a world rooted in profound order... even if not fully aligned with that order.  
That is exactly what God has communicated.  
We can unite ourselves with God who is.

This is what Jesus meant by **the good news of God's kingdom.**  
We each have a small kingdom... the sphere of our will.  
It is the realm for which we do have control... responsibility.

He is inviting us to **bring our kingdoms under his kingdom.**

In this way gain life by losing it... we align with the true control.  
**The control of everything around us... people ...circumstances... is an illusion.**  
**It comes not through exerting our will... but submitting our will.**

## **2. God's will is the center of the ultimate good... what our longings point to.**

When Jesus gave himself... it was an act of trust in the good that is God.

And we see this in a striking way as we look at one other life in the garden that night. The servant of the high priest. As other accounts tell us...his name is Malchus. And there in the midst of the arrest of Jesus...the attempt of humanity to bound the God who created us... he reaches out and heals the ear of this man. Jesus touches his ear...and there we see what God does. And there... that man... knew what God was like. [5]

> God wants each of us to know that he is bears good.

## **Romans 8:28**

**We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**

Notice that it says “in all things God works for good”...not that all things are good.  
The current virus we face... is neither good nor simply from God.  
But God is able to work good through what is in itself bad.

Realize that **amid all the bad news** in the headlines, the **Good News** is that God has **provided for an even greater virus.**

The great virus that brings death is our declared independence from God... sin. And with this virus, there is absolutely no immunity and no survivors. It infects 100 percent of all humanity.

And Jesus came to save us from that virus.

### **3. Within God’s will we are never alone.**

What Jesus reveals is God’s personal nature...and desire.  
Jesus bore the separation that humanity faced... to become a means by which we could accept his sacrifice...and his life... as that which can set us right with God.

Jesus had **made a choice** to fulfill what was at hand. [6]

**Jesus CHOSE to fulfill what was needed.**

*He* endured the indignity of the howling mob, the false accusations, the brutal beating, and the shame of death on a cross.[4]

Jesus was aligned with the Father in an act of love.

When you know what he chose to do for you will know “No matter what I do, he’ll always be there for me.”  
...that he is with you.

You’ll be steady no matter what the situation.

You’ll be able to deal with guilt. You’ll be able to deal with criticism. You’ll be able to deal with suffering.

You’ll be able to deal with everything.

Prayer: Let us take a moment and take this in.

Take a moment and take this in: Jesus at the center of this scene and of our lives today.

Now take in this: The center of your existence is not his virus. It is not your will. It is the will of God and it is good.

**Closing / Responsive Song:** Sovereign by [Chris Tomlin](#)

**Resources:** Tim Keller (The King Is Abandoned); Freddy Fritz (Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus)

### **Notes:**

1. Consider also:

Proverbs 21:30

No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel can prevail against the LORD.

Isaiah 46:10

I distinguish the end from the beginning, and ancient times from what is still to come, saying: 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'

2. Matthew 26:52-54 (NIV)

52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.  
53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?  
54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

2b. Some may assume that with these words Jesus is teaching complete pacificism. However, the larger ethic seems to maintain that force may be a necessary element to protect against the consequences of evil. (The role of government... military ... police... seems to be accepted for what it is.)  
What Jesus makes clear is that human force will never bring forth the righteousness of the Kingdom of God.

Our pride gravitates to having power. We tend to lift up warrior heroes more than the one who is willing to suffer for others. Peter's use of the sword demonstrated zeal, but it was short-lived. His courage soon faded. Even as Jesus was arrested and taken away, he withdrew into the background. A short while later he denied knowing Jesus not once, not twice, but three times! The disciple who went so far as to say that he was ready to go with Jesus both to prison and to death had actually forsaken Jesus and fled.

3. Judas mentioned 20 times in Gospels and twice in the Book of Acts. He was chosen by Jesus. In John 12... women brings perfume in worship... told he is angry because he was treasurer and took money. As for why a betrayal...some simply to force his hand...some just the money... or maybe to avoid what he thought was coming in terms of what the leaders would bring against Jesus. (He may have thought that that Jesus wasn't rising up in force...and so he better get in good with the religious leaders who were going to come after him. When Jesus said one was going to betray him... they all seem to ask "Is it me?"... to imply that perhaps any of them could have been reaching this point of fear and temptation.)

4. Consider: Isaiah 53:10 (GNT)

The LORD says, "It was my will that he should suffer; his death was a sacrifice to bring forgiveness. And so he will see his descendants; he will live a long life, and through him my purpose will succeed.

Bishop J. C. Ryle makes the following application:

The lesson before us is deeply instructive. To suffer patiently for Christ is far more difficult than to work actively. To sit still and endure calmly, is far more hard than to stir about and take part in the battle. Crusaders will always be found more numerous than Martyrs. The passive graces of religion are far more rare and precious than the active graces. Work for Christ may be done from many spurious motives, from excitement, from emulation, from party-spirit, or from love of praise. Suffering for Christ will seldom be endured from any but one motive. That motive is the grace of God. (From Freddy Fritz – "Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus")

5. As to why only Luke includes the healing of the ear. The following is adapted from some good comments from a forum <https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/23082/why-is-the-healing-of-malchus-ear-only-found-in-the-gospel-of-luke>

It's legitimacy is suggested given the contemporary witnesses to substantiate these claims, given the acceptance of Luke's gospel by those apostles who were there at that time, given the values and ethics of the followers of Jesus.

Some reasons that it may have been maintained by Luke:



- His Gospel was formed by seeking the details drawn from every source. As he explained at the beginning.  
 "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." -Luke 1:1-4. The reason for this letter, is to give a very accurate account of what Jesus said and did.
- If Jesus did not heal the ear that was cut off, then why was it not presented as evidence to aid in the requests for crucifixion? If the ear was not healed, do you really think that it would not have been used against him? Caiaphas would have made this known to Pilate because it clearly states that the person whose ear was cut off, was a servant to the high priest. Yet, they did not mention it. Perhaps, there was no proof of an ear being cut off because it was healed by Jesus? Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed. The only crime they claimed was that Jesus was claiming to be king and that meant that he opposed Caesar. True, it was not Jesus who cut off the man's ear but, do you really believe that they would have not held Jesus responsible for the event?
- Luke was concerned primarily with the humanity of the God-man, Jesus. He has much detail with Jesus' care, His touch, etc. As such, the addition may have been an important detail for Luke to add, given what he was trying to accomplish with his writing.
- It reflected what his unique work as a doctor would have stand out.

6. Note John 18:11

Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"