

MALCHUS'S EAR

Date: April 8, 2020

Scripture: Luke 22:47-51

Well, good morning, Eleven22, or good afternoon or good evening, whenever you're listening to this. My name is John Barringer, campus pastor at our Arlington location. This Lent season, we are working through some of the miracles of Jesus recorded in the gospel accounts, seeing how each one of them points us to the greatest of all miracles, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The miracle of Jesus that we're going to read today is found in Luke 22:47-51. I'll go ahead and read it.

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" ⁴⁹ And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him.
Luke 22:47-51

This miracle happens during the betrayal and arrest of Christ. Side note, to our knowledge, it is the last miracle by Christ prior to His resurrection. Here, Jesus has prayed throughout the entire night in the Garden of Gethsemane. It's now early morning before sunrise when He makes it back to the disciples. He is exhausted. He's sweating. He's bleeding. Without any kind of break from this night long spiritual battle, He is immediately surrounded by a crowd of men with swords and clubs from the high priest led by none other than Judas. The miracle happens during a skirmish that breaks out once the crowd actually goes to lay hands on Jesus. It says that one

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of the disciples draw a sword and cuts off the ear of one of the men sent to arrest Jesus.

In John's gospel account, he fills in some of the details for us. It's Simon Peter who drew the sword and cut off the ear and it's a man named Malchus who gets his ear cut off. The miracle happens very quickly. You'll almost miss it if you read it too fast and this account in Luke is the only place where the actual miracle is recorded. In verse 51, it says, "But Jesus said, 'No more of this!' And he touched his ear and healed him."

Now, this is maybe one of the shortest miracle accounts in the Bible. It's an eight-word sentence and we know nothing about the man named Malchus. He's never brought up by name again in the Bible, but this is still in many ways a fascinating miracle and its absence of a lot of details in depth allow us to remain laser-focused on the miracle itself and the incredible job it does, especially as being the final miracle pointing to the miracle of the resurrection and the resurrected.

For starters, we see the incarnation of Christ at full work here. Jesus is 100% man and so naturally He is exhausted and tired, as would anyone be who stayed up all night in fierce prayer and contemplation. I mean, think about the one or two biggest days of your whole life. How'd you sleep the night before, right? Jesus last ate or drank maybe ten hours ago. He's drenched in sweat. He's lost blood.

Maybe He's hitting the edges of dehydration and He knows in His heart and His head that His whole ministry in life is beginning its final crescendo right here in this moment and yet He's also 100% God. Given all that would've drained Him as a human, He is

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still with the supernatural spiritual power inside of Him to interrupt the very nature of creation, take it over and heal this man's ear.

How could Jesus, a human being, die a human death and still perform the godly act, the powerful spiritual act to save everyone who would believe in Him? How could they do that? How could He die a human death and still perform a godly act? Well, just like this final miracle, He is 100% man and 100% God capable of simultaneously being drained of life and strength and being full of power.

The power that Christ exercises here with this miracle is very timely. I mean, think about the crowd needed Judas to kiss Jesus so that they would be able to know which of the twelve men is the one claiming to be God. If they just walked up and said, "Which one of you is Jesus," and no one raises their hand, what would they do? But right after the kiss, Jesus outs Himself anyway by healing the ear. None of the disciples had displayed the ability to do that at this point. Christ is not hiding. He's not concealing His identity. He didn't even really need to be betrayed. He is who He says He is. Jesus was the one throughout His entire ministry flipping the economy of how we think through His preaching.

Remember He said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 'Love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.'" Right? Here, there's this minor fight that breaks out, violence and blood being spilled for the defense of Jesus and He yells for everyone to stop, "Stop it!" Maybe in this moment the disciples are thinking that they're finally going to see the power of God prove Himself against His enemies. He even approaches one of His enemies, right? But what does He do? He does exactly what He's preached, He does

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exactly what He said all the time that everybody else should do, He loves His enemy even at the cost of Himself.

CS Lewis famously made the claim that Jesus was either a lunatic, a liar, a demon, or actually the Savior of the world because He never backed down from His claim and He died practicing all that He preached. This miracle points to the resurrection in that Jesus practiced what He preached and was who He says He was. He said, "I will die for you and I will have the power to save you," and He does and did. Finally, this miracle points to the resurrection in that we are in the story in a way. The person who we are in the story is certainly not Jesus and we're not even the disciples as much as we'd like to be. We're not the disciples busting out swords to protect Jesus. Before meeting Christ, Malchus, the guy who got his ear healed, he is a stand in for us. We are or were enemies of Christ.

With our sin and unrighteousness, we mocked the claim of Christ. We saw His name being cursed, we saw His commands being disobeyed and we never came to His defense. We actually joined the mob and mutiny and all the good that we did has its origin and pride or self-preservation. None of it was for His glory. But when we finally come eye-to-eye with Christ, exposed for who we really are, bleeding all over the place, Jesus reaches out to us and instead of finishing the job, He restores us. He passes His goodness, transfers a part of His power, His eternal self into us by giving us new eternal life. We go from enemy to son and daughter. Something only made possible because of His death and resurrection.

If you ever need reminding of where we come from or if you ever find yourself puffed up in your faith or in your Christianity, you can go back to this eight word miracle and remind yourself that we are Malchus, an enemy of God looking to only serve

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ourselves, but bleeding out with no hope and instead of using His power to destroy us, He heals us and saves us.

Let's pray.

Christ Jesus, we thank You that on the morning of Your betrayal, You were not too exhausted and tired to heal Malchus, that You are not too considered with Your own wellbeing to hide Yourself from him, that You weren't too angry and bitter to heal him. It's a reminder that You are not too tired of us, that You do not hide Yourself from us, that You are not angry and bitter towards us. Instead, in our worst possible moments, You love us. You care for us. You save us. Despite our own desires being hostile to You, we received the benefit of the grace and the mercy and the kindness that You have on us, that we go from enemy to heir. Amen.