

Matthew 26:47-56 “The Betrayal of Jesus”

7.15.18

Have you ever been betrayed? Perhaps by someone you were very close to...maybe a friend...a co-worker, maybe a family member. Was it for money? Was it for power or prestige? Was it out of revenge or anger? Whatever it was...I guarantee if you've ever been betrayed, you experienced deep hurt and deep pain.



Betrayed... Jesus knows that feeling well. Jesus suffered one of the greatest betrayals of all time at the hands of one of His own...with a kiss no less...

Everything about betrayal is distasteful, demeaning, unfair, unjust. And so it was for Jesus...When I think about Judas and the betrayal of Jesus there wells up within me a certain amount of anger, a certain amount of indignation for this traitor! If there is a more ugly or repulsive word in the English language than the word “traitor,” it would have to be the name: Judas. Oh, to be betrayed by a man that you had hand-picked and trained for close to three years! The agony of it!!

Yet, on the other hand, as we'll see today, Jesus handled His betrayal with perfect and controlled calmness in the midst of the unfolding of what was God's plan to save those who would receive Jesus by faith. After all, it was the betrayal of Jesus that was part of the plan that would lead to our salvation. Today we come to a passage of Scripture that will lead us to a mixture of emotions...we'll see Tragedy and Triumph.

Matthew 26:47-56

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” ⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

In Matthew's account, in the Garden of Gethsemane on this Thursday evening, the suffering and agony of Jesus had begun. When we left Jesus last week, we saw Him with dirt on his robe, having been on His face praying to His Father...there's blood on His robe too...



Blood pouring out of His skin mixed with sweat because of the weight of what was ahead for Him. Drinking a cup. A cup that He would drink to the dregs! A cup filled with God's wrath for sin. The repulsiveness of all of this had brought Jesus to the place where He felt as if He would die in that Garden. Knowing He would go to the cross alone, without the aid of His Father, separated from Him...Oh...it was almost more than He could bear. But, Jesus made up His mind that He would do it. It was the Father's will, and so He resolved to go to the cross for you and for me even though it cost Him His life and brought into His soul the horror of separation from His Father. Jesus made up His mind in the Garden, He accepted the will of His Father and now, He had a mission to complete.

Matthew 26:46-47

⁴⁶Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand." ⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all say the same thing. They all say that while Jesus was still speaking, the mob arrived. What was Jesus speaking? "Let's Go" Forward, march!! A military command: RISE! I've got a mission to complete. It's approaching midnight by now. The apostles had to believe they were just at a stopover in the Garden of Gethsemane...on their way over the Mount of Olives to Bethany, where they could finally lie down and rest. But, instead, they would never make to Bethany. The Garden of Gethsemane is where they would leave Jesus, because there is now a "great" crowd headed their way with torches, swords and clubs. And who was leading them?

Judas. Amazingly, one of their own! You know the 11 had to be shocked! Of course we know Judas had already made a deal for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave, to betray His teacher. He loved money and he was a thief. He wanted compensation for what he had seen as wasted years. Judas had come to the place that he was convinced that Jesus was not the Messiah he had been looking for and when he saw Jesus wasn't setting up a kingdom and was only speaking of death...he said, "I'm out!"

Yes, the Gospel writers say the same thing about Judas as he came: "one of the twelve." So shocking! See the scene...



Impossible! Judas is leading this mob! Judas had been with the Lord for almost three years! It's inconceivable! It's a statement of shock: "Judas, one of the twelve."

Did you know that Judas' name means: "he shall be praised?" Yet, every time the name of Judas is spoken of today it's used in derision, not praise. Who would ever name a son: Judas.

You remember we saw in the upper room, at the celebration of the Passover meal, how Satan had entered Judas. Now, there just needed to be the plan put in place to capture Jesus. But this wouldn't be hard for Judas...he was insider...he knew Jesus often stopped over in this private garden called Gethsemane to pray. After all, it was on the way from Jerusalem to Bethany...where Jesus and His disciples would go to pray before they arrived to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany. Now Judas would take advantage of the night and the fact that it was late and Jesus was away from the adoring crowds to unfold his plot.

Let me show you this in more detail from John's Gospel. **Turn to John, chapter 18.** As you are turning, think with me... I think back to the upper room, and you know that Judas knew Jesus was on to him. After all, Jesus said, "What you're going to do, do quickly." Judas had to believe that Jesus would head back to Bethany, but would likely stop over in Gethsemane to pray. Yes, Gethsemane, that would do it. Gethsemane would be the place where Judas would betray Jesus to the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest.

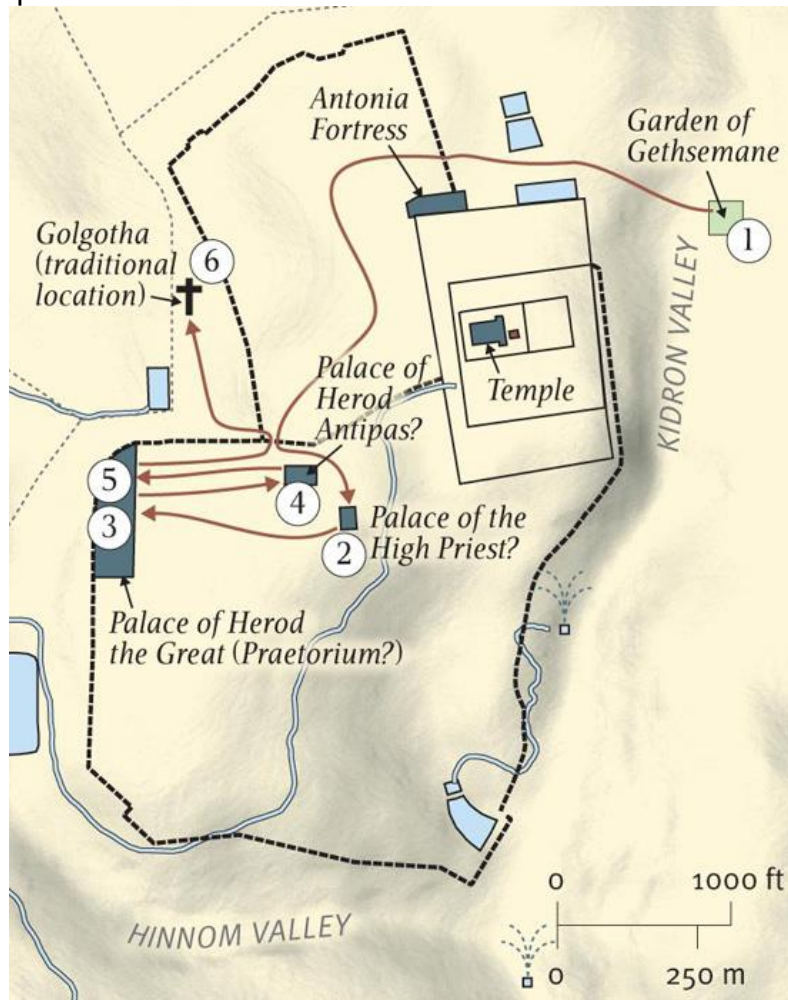
John 18:1-3

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Judas is leading a mob. And in that mob are soldiers. It's obvious that after striking the deal with Judas that the Jewish leaders had gone to Pilate, who was in town to keep peace during the Passover, and they asked for Roman soldiers. How did they convince Pilate? That Jesus was a trouble-maker, an insurrectionist. A man who was saying He would be King...and the Jewish said to Pilate...that means He wants to overthrow you and the Roman Government...insurrection. So, the Jewish leaders were given a band of soldiers.

The word "band" used in John 18:3 means "cohort" in the Greek. The word is (Spy-RAH):
Speira-the tenth part of a legion, 600 men.

A Roman Legion was 6,000 men. So 1/10th of that was 600 men. A band. Now, this band of soldiers would come from Fort Antonia, where they were stationed at the military garrison there. Take a look at this map:



You'll see Gethsemane at the top right of the map. You'll see to the left from there Antonia's Fortress...that's the Roman Garrison where the soldiers were kept. See it's attached to the Temple compound. From there in the middle at #2 is the Palace of the High Priest where Jesus will ultimately be taken for trial. For now, the Pharisees, the Elders, Chief Priests, the Temple Police and this Roman band of 600 soldiers are all on their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Easily a mob of over 700 people...and Judas has given them a sign so they'd know who Jesus was... Back to Matthew 26.

Matthew 26:48-49

⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him.

Church family, truly, this is a disgusting scene, if you ask me. See the depiction of it...



Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss. Amazing isn't it? After all this time...all the teaching...all the miracles...all the powers of Jesus displayed for 3 years...and they still didn't get it. They should have been welcoming the Son of God...embracing the long-awaited Messiah; instead they come as a group of blood-thirsty vigilantes seeking to kill a man who hasn't done anything wrong.
Church, as I look at this scene:



and I as I thought about it...it's a vivid illustration of the wickedness of the world.

In my mind, the wickedness of this world is on full and twisted display by how Jesus, the sinless one was treated. Listen, if you don't think the world is wicked, then ask yourself how can it reject the most spotless, pure and wonderful person who ever walked the face of the earth? If this is not a wickedness personified, I don't what is. Even Pilate would eventually ask the question: "What has this man done?"



He would say, "I find NO FAULT in this man." That's why Pilate would literally wash his hands of the whole sordid affair. Yes, what was done to Jesus was utterly unjust and wicked.

Yes, I categorically tell you, those men in Gethsemane, were cowards, coming under the cover of night. Why? Because wickedness comes under the cover and cloak of darkness, always fearing it might get caught, that it might get what it knows it deserves. Wickedness seeks the darkness where it can thrive like cockroaches. Wickedness wants to hear no truth. It plugs its ears. It accepts lies for honesty and deceit for truth.

Listen, understand this: wickedness and the world gangs up on the truth-tellers. Wicked people find strength and safety in the hordes of the mob. The world hides in the wickedness of the mobs.

So Judas comes with a kiss! How sad! Kissing, you see, was a mark of friendship in that day. Remember the Bible says over and over, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." It's what you see in the Olympics when the countries of Europe and the Middle East greet each other as teammates...running off the mat. You know Solomon had something to say about this...

Proverbs 27:6

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

Judas used the common greeting of that day...the kiss...as a weapon. See this picture...



Do you ever wonder if Judas hesitated to kiss Jesus? Maybe he would change his mind? **Look at verse 49...**

Matthew 26:49

⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him.

Judas, said, "Hello, Teacher." Maybe he hesitated. And what's interesting is the fact that the Greek construction of the sentence means Judas kissed Him repeatedly...almost as if making sure the soldiers knew without any question whom Jesus was. What did Jesus say?

Matthew 26:50

⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

Now the word "Friend" that Jesus used is not the word "friend," like you and I are probably thinking about it. Remember, we struggle sometimes with Greek to English translations. This word, "Friend" in the Greek is the same word Jesus used in the parable of the 10 virgins, describing the guy who tried to bust in on the wedding party. The word used here, yes, is a greeting, but it's not all warm and fuzzy. It's a salutation only. It's not the welcoming of a true friend or buddy. No, this is Satan-possessed, Judas.

Well, now that Jesus has been identified with these kisses...the soldiers grab him! That's when one of the disciples springs into action! **See verse 51...**

Matthew 26:51

⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

I'll give you three guesses as to who that disciple was and the first two don't count. Of course it was Peter, always the impulsive one! John's Gospel tells us it was Peter, and John also tells us the name of the man whose ear Peter cut off: Malchus.



Of course, Peter wasn't trying to cut off his ear. He was trying to kill him! Obviously, Malchus evaded the sword, but it caught his ear. Luke's Gospel tells us in chapter 22 that Jesus healed Malchus' ear. Can you imagine?



Jesus kneels down and heals the man's ear. And what's amazing...is everyone in that crowd of 700+ people saw this. Come on PEOPLE!!! This is not an insurrectionist! This is God in the flesh. Only God can put a man's ear back on his head!

And I believe every time Malchus touched that ear for the rest of his life, he had to think of Jesus, don't you? Something else...if Jesus hadn't healed Malchus' ear...there could have easily been four crosses on Calvary the next day...with Peter being on the fourth one. Poor ole Peter... He had to live up to the boast... "I'll die with you Jesus!" After all, he must have felt so guilty for falling asleep three times just minutes ago. Jesus said, "Not this way Peter!"

Matthew 26:52-54

⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"

Jesus said, I could call 72,000 angels to come help me...but, this is all part of the plan. Jesus was so calm in the midst of all of this chaos. He's healing a man's ear and calming down a crowd of thugs. He said, "It's all in Scripture...this has been planned from the beginning." Church, this is yet another example that we can trust the words of the Bible. They aren't just idle words. This book contains forecasts of the future that come 100% true!

Jesus said, "Put up your sword...for if you live by the sword, you'll die by the sword." **Turn to Luke, chapter 22.** I want to show you something about the sword that's important for us to understand. Did you know that Jesus and the disciples had just talked about swords at the Lord's Supper a couple of hours earlier that night in the upper room (still fresh on their minds)? Look at it:

Luke 22:35:38

³⁵ And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." ³⁶ He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. ³⁷ For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment." ³⁸ And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough."

Let me try to explain what I believe Jesus was saying. In that upper room, Jesus was preparing them for something NEW. He had just introduced and instituted the Lord's Supper to replace the Passover and now Jesus is saying, "Whereas in the past, when I sent you out 2 x 2 with nothing, now you have to go prepared."

You see, during their time with Jesus in His 3-year ministry, when He sent them out, they went with special authority, and they were treated with great respect and much appreciation because Jesus was very popular among the people. But now all of that was changing. By tomorrow afternoon, (Friday at 3 pm, when Jesus cries out: "It is finished"), it's a whole new ballgame. The disciples will become enemies of the world and they are seeing that **begin** now in the Garden with this mob.

Jesus is saying, "Now you've got to go prepared... take a moneybag, knapsack and sword. You'll need provisions." And you see, I believe Jesus expects us to use our common sense in situations. We shouldn't foolishly place ourselves in harm's way and expect the Lord to bail us out. He gives us a brain and provisions and He expects us to use them. **MEANING: Don't put yourself in a tight spot and expect the Lord to bail you out of your stupidity.**

Here's another point when it comes to Jesus and His command to buy a sword. Many people describe Jesus as a total pacifist, and believe that we, as His disciples are to be as well. Well, I believe we can see clearly from this passage in Luke that wasn't the case. Why? Because Jesus instructed the disciples that it was okay to protect yourself and carry a sword. But don't misunderstand...as Jesus told Peter...you are not to use the sword unless you are willing to die by it. In other words, the law applies to you as well. If you kill a man, you can expect the governing authorities to do the same to you. **After all Romans 13 says this about the governing authorities:**

Romans 13:4

⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

You see, Peter was trying to advance the Kingdom of Jesus with a sword. Jesus said, "No! That's not how my kingdom works." That's why the crusades were a travesty. The kingdom of Jesus does not advance with fleshly weapons. Oh, you can protect yourself...do so in self-defense to defend you and your family, yes. But, Peter had no business pulling out that sword and acting the way he did. No one was trying to kill him. He was being the aggressor. Peter, in his zeal, went outside the plan of Jesus. Like Moses in the wilderness when he struck the rock, instead of speaking to it, Moses got ahead of God's plan and so did Peter. Trying to do it their way. **It's easy to do isn't it? To get ahead of God's plan and try to do things in our own way and our own strength.**

Well, they have Jesus in custody now...



And I want to point out another instance of where Jesus is not a wimp or weak...but, calls out sin...where Jesus calls a "spade a spade." Watch...

Matthew 26:55

⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me."

Do you see it...Jesus is unmasking their evil. Jesus said, "Are you trying to take me like I'm a thief...you had your chance to do that on Monday and Tuesday in the Temple." No, Jesus wasn't the thief that should have been arrested...Judas was the thief and they were the unlawful ones (the elders, the chief priests and the Pharisees). No, the reason they didn't take Jesus in public is because they didn't have anything on Him.

One last thing, as we close. See the screens...I want to show you something from John's Gospel that's astounding... **Jesus once again professes to the crowd that He is God. Watch...**

John 18:4-9

⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" ⁵They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." ⁹This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."

Dear people, listen...and we're done...which one are you? You see, we're all represented by this scene in the garden! Are you part of the unbelieving mob...part of the wickedness of this world who won't accept the truth? Are you like Judas, who is a fake, a pretender, saying that you are a disciple of Christ, but ultimately by how you are acting and living, you are betraying Him? Are you like Peter, yes, a follower of Christ, but continually getting ahead of the Lord and trying to do it all on your own, in your own timing? But, there's one more option. Jesus.

Oh would we today follow the example of Jesus who was in total control? Even in the midst of all of this chaos. Jesus trusted the plan of His Father. Oh, would we follow the example of Jesus? Would we realize and understand that there is a plan that's bigger than we are? Would we today...trust Jesus no matter what? Would we today not be betrayers of the Lord Jesus, because of our great devotion and gratitude to the One who would never betray us!
