



“The Power of Darkness”

Luke 22:47-53

Theme: God uses even the power of darkness to accomplish His purposes & glory.

Introduction: The account of Jesus’ betrayal is so dramatic and dark that it is included in all four of the Gospels. Jesus had spent the evening celebrating the Passover meal recalling the faithfulness of God in delivering Israel from their oppression in Egypt and redeeming them through their faith at Passover. He converted the meal to a commemoration of what He would do to deliver sinners from the oppression by their sin. He taught the disciples a variety of truths in what is known as the “Upper Room Discourse,” and then headed to Gethsemane to pray, affirm His devotion to the Godhead’s plan for redemption, and be betrayed and arrested. His hour had come, and the power of darkness descended as a pall upon Him and the disciples. He was ready for it because of His time in prayer and the grace provided by the Holy Spirit. His disciples had slept instead of watching and praying as Christ had done. The impact of darkness was therefore much different upon them. Let’s observe how **the Lord used the power of darkness to accomplish His purposes and glory**

I. The Infidelity of His “Friend” – 22:47-48

A. THE DISLOYALTY WITH THE CROWD – v. 47a

1. We are told that *“while He was still speaking ...”* – a reference to Jesus’ admonishment to the disciples that they *“pray that you may not enter into temptation.”*
2. Luke adds the word *“behold”* to emphasize the surprise the disciples knew as they became roused from sleep and saw what was happening.
3. They viewed approaching them through out of the city of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley toward the Garden of Gethsemane, *“a crowd came ...”*
 - a. Luke uses the term *“crowd”* [ὄχλος] – a large number of

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people, a “horde” of people.

- b. The descriptive word chosen by Matthew is that it is a *“large crowd”* – [πολύς] – conveying the idea of a great number or numerous – cp. *Matthew 26:47*.
 - c. This throng of the enemies of Jesus included a hodge-podge of hostilities:
 - (1) “chief priests” – v. 52
 - (2) “officers of the temple” – v. 52 – each “captain” was over 24 guards comprised of 3 priests and 21 Levites.
 - (3) “elders” – v. 52
 - (4) Cohort of Romans soldiers – cp. *John 18:1-3* – at full strength would have been 600 soldiers.
 - d. This demonstrates this was not a small band of people but a massive assemblage of people out to vanquish this enemy of established religion and legalistic self-satisfaction.
 - e. Despite the late hour and the remote location of confrontation, they were not certain as to whether there would not be those who could come to Jesus’ rescue and things reel out of control, so the numbers were not perceived as “overkill.”
 - f. Despite the confidence they gained by the number of people coming out to arrest Jesus, Jesus displayed the folly of their arrogance by a demonstration of His authority over them – cp. *John 18:4-6*.
4. Luke provides a disdainful reference ... almost difficult to say his name – *“... and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them ...”*
 5. Judas, having been paid earlier to deliver Jesus to this motley crew of hostiles, was now earning his pay and his disloyalty to the Master was evidenced as he led them out to where they could put their hands on Jesus – *Proverbs 4:14; Psalm 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33*.

B. THE DUPLICITY OF A KISS – vv. 47b-48

1. Luke tells us that Judas *“approached Jesus to kiss Him.”*
2. Jesus had already identified Himself – so that further identification was unnecessary, yet Judas had “sold Jesus

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out” and had to fulfill his part of the “plan” – cp. *Matthew 26:48*.

3. Judas – albeit not called a zealot – was the only disciple from the south – having come from a place called “Kerioth” (“Iscariot” most likely means “man of Kerioth”).
4. Like the rest of the people of Israel, his concept of the Messiah was one of military and political power – having expected far more from Jesus than what Jesus’ power had delivered – having failed to advance the vision of power and prestige that Judas believed would be his if he followed Jesus.
5. Judas had been present with Jesus throughout Jesus years of public ministry – having heard all the sermons, seen all the healings, observed His meekness & power – yet had never embraced either the Man or His message – cp. *John 6:70-71*.
6. Judas had grown increasingly more resentful of Jesus’ methods, priorities, and plans – demonstrating this through the eruption of a critical spirit immediately before he decides to betray Jesus – cp. *John 12:4-6*.
7. Despite all of Jesus’ expressions of truth and love toward Judas, Judas hardened his heart to the point where Satan had the opportunity to overwhelm him and take over – *John 13:27*.
8. Now, this disciple – even called here *“one of the twelve”* to emphasize the treachery of his deed, comes and uses a gesture of affection to identify Jesus to His captors – a *“kiss”* [φιλέω] – a kiss that is a sign of familiar affection and affirmation.
9. In yet another demonstration of His mastery confronts Judas before Judas provides the signal – *“But Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’”*
10. In Matthew, when Judas kisses Jesus, the term used is an

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intensification of the word Jesus uses - [καταφιλέω] - conveying a prolonged, ostentatious display - **Matthew 26:49**.

11. In what ways does infidelity to Jesus exist in our lives – what do we do that “kisses” Jesus but in actuality we are disloyal to Him?

II. The Intemperance by a Follower – 22:49-51

A. THE DANGER OF ASSUMPTIONS – vv. 49-50

1. Having kissed Jesus, the crowd came to apprehend Jesus and *“when those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword?’”*
2. As I described in an earlier sermon, His disciples were confident that Jesus was the Messiah and they assumed that once this altercation began, Jesus would do something to completely vanquish His enemies.
3. This was the expectation that prevailed in their view of the coming of the Kingdom over which Jesus would rule and they would have the preeminence.
4. Without waiting for an answer, *“one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear.”*
5. Although Luke does not name this intemperate disciple, we are told by John that it was Peter – cp. **John 18:10**.¹
6. There were hundreds of people in this crowd all armed with clubs and swords – cp. **Matthew 26:47**.
7. They all assumed that the will of God was to defend Jesus, the Messiah, from the treachery of Judas and those in

¹ Only John identifies this disciple as Peter – possibly because the other writers sought to protect Peter from any reprisals – attempting to keep him anonymous until after he had passed away. Since John wrote so late – probably after Peter had died – he was free to identify him.

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league with him.

8. This must have been the reason Jesus had instructed them to buy a sword – cp. v. 36.

B. THE DISAPPROVAL OF ANIMOSITY – v. 51

1. Jesus immediately corrects them and rebukes Peter – *“But Jesus answered and said, ‘Stop! No more of this.’”* cp. Matthew 26:52.
2. In this Matthew reference Jesus provide several reasons that they should not show animosity or aggression against their enemies:
 - a. **Punishment** – “... all who take up the sword shall perish by the sword” – cp. Romans 13
 - b. **Power** – “... do you think I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than 12,000 angels?”
 - c. **Prophecy** – “How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?”
3. Jesus thus demonstrates an absolute commitment to these priorities and calls on the disciples to do the same – 1 Peter 2:21-23.

III. The Incrimination of His Foes – 22:52-53

A. THE IRONY OF THEIR HOSTILITY – v. 52

1. Jesus then turns to the crowd – after healing Malchus, the high priest’s servant – and confronts them for their clear hostility – *“Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber?’”*
2. Their plot to arrest Jesus in the middle of the night, in a isolated spot, armed *“with swords and clubs”* indicate that they were aware that what they were doing was a display of what they considered to be shrewdness and wisdom.

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3. Their covert conniving was indicative that their actions were without justice and integrity.
4. As will be demonstrated in the following verses, their hostility toward Christ was filled with false accusations, exhibitions of power, and willful dismissal of obvious demonstrations of His glory.
5. Their great fear was evidenced through the reliance on numbers – coming to get Jesus in such a large, armed crowd – gaining both the temple guards, religious officials, civil officials, and Roman soldiers.
6. Their hostility was the natural outworking of their depraved disposition – God’s eternal purpose and predetermined plan to redeem men through the sacrifice of His own Son was executed through most eager participants.
7. In fact, there is a level of ironic foreshadowing here by Jesus as He states they were treating Him like *“a robber”* - [ληστής] – a “revolutionary, insurrectionist, or guerilla” – the very word used to describe Barabbas – ***John 18:40.***

B. THE INDICTMENT OF THEIR HYPOCRISY – v. 53

1. He then states: *“While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me ...”*
2. His message of reconciliation with God, peace, love, and mercy was clearly delivered day after day, yet their response to it was to use subterfuge, deceit, a cloak of darkness to arrest Him.
3. Jesus uses this opportunity to point out their hypocrisy and unbelief – justice, truth, legality, and righteousness has nothing to do with what was happening.
4. His indictment formalized their corruption – *“... but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.”*
5. In God’s sovereign purposes, Jesus was being mistreated and would be executed to pay the penalty of the very sins

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being perpetrated against Him – cp. [Acts 2:22-23](#).

So What?

1. Those in darkness eventually find each other as allies in their hostility to God; beware being yoked with unbelievers.
2. Insincere demonstrations of “devotion” [kisses] do not fool God.
3. Because God doesn’t “do something,” does not mean that He cannot – we must trust Him and pray through our trials.
4. God’s purposes are frequently much greater than our personal circumstances or struggles.

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