

Betrayal in Gethsemane

Mark 14: 43-52

The events of this faithful night are rapidly unfolding. Having departed the Upper Room with the eleven, Jesus had made His way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Knowing what was soon to come, Jesus spent some intimate time in prayer with the Father. We cannot imagine the emotion and burden Jesus felt at this moment in time.

Judas, one of the twelve, knew where Jesus would go following the Passover meal. Having agreed to betray the Lord for thirty pieces of silver, Judas led those assembled by the Sanhedrin to arrest Jesus and bring Him before the council to stand trial. Our text deals with the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. For me, this is one of the saddest passages in all of Scripture. One who should have recognized Jesus and believed on Him as the Christ, abandoned all hope of salvation as he agreed to betray Jesus for a few pieces of silver.

Let's take a few moments to look in on the [details](#) of this encounter as we consider: [Betrayal in Gethsemane](#). First, we discover:

I. The Conspiracy (43-46) – These verses reveal the culmination of the conspiracy between Judas and the Sanhedrin. Consider:

A. The Throng (43) – [And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.](#) This was not a small gathering of people that came to arrest Jesus. They are described as a great multitude, armed with swords and staves. The Sanhedrin, led by the Pharisees, had heard enough of Jesus and they were determined to silence the voice of the one they perceived a threat to their agenda. Most agree this number would have been in the hundreds, possibly as many as 600 men.

- Having a multitude around was not out of the ordinary for Jesus, but this crowd had not come with good intentions. They had not come to hear from the Master or receive a miracle. These had come to arrest Jesus and bring Him before the Sanhedrin. Their determination is evident based on the numbers they sent – hundreds to confront a party of twelve.
- We see an ominous picture that remains in our day as well. Those who are opposed to Jesus and His message greatly outnumber those who embrace Him. However, we need not be alarmed; we serve the King of kings and Lord of lords!

B. The Traitor (44) – *And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.* We know Judas led them to Gethsemane, knowing Jesus would be there. Prior to their arrival, the sign had been given: Judas would kiss Jesus, revealing Him to be the one they sought.

- I have thought of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas many times. What a tragedy this was. Clearly an innocent Man was being betrayed, but this was all within the sovereign plan of God. The tragedy lies in the deceit and denial of Judas. He walked with Jesus as the others had. He experienced the same truth they had witnessed. There could be no doubt Jesus was the Christ, and yet Judas chose to ignore the truth and deny Jesus as the Christ. He refused to embrace the means of salvation, choosing rather a few pieces of silver.

C. The Treason (45-46) – *And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.* ^[46] *And they laid their hands on him, and took him.* If ever an act of treason were committed, this is it. Judas came to the Lord as if all was well. He greeted Jesus in a friendly manner and addressed Him as Master. He then identified Jesus with the kiss. This was not a mere peck on the cheek, but a genuine portrayal of affection. Judas did not love the Lord, but he put on a good show for those who were there. With the kiss of betrayal, Judas identified the one the multitude sought. He had kissed the Door of salvation, but would deny Jesus and walk away lost and condemned.

- Isn't that tragic? We wonder how Judas could've done such a thing and yet many follow his deceitful portrayal. Many offer public affection to the Lord, but there is no change of heart and no genuine desire for Him. Offering a public kiss did not generate salvation for Judas and public shows of worship or affection won't in our day apart from being genuinely born again!

II. The Confrontation (47-49) – Being well aware of what was going on, Jesus confronted those who came to arrest Him in Gethsemane. Notice:

A. The Resistance (47) – *And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.* John's gospel reveals it was Peter who cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. Luke reveals that Jesus immediately healed Malchus and restored his ear. This was all within the will of God and there was no reason to fight against God's sovereign plan. Jesus refused to fight the multitude; this was His purpose for coming into the world.

- There is a greater thought in mind here though. Jesus wanted Peter and the others to know this was not a physical altercation. The warfare they would be called to engage in would be of

spiritual nature, not physical. Jesus was committed to fulfilling the plan of redemption and He wanted to prepare the disciples for the battles yet to come! 2 Cor.10:4 – For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Eph. 6:17 – And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

B. The Rebuke (48-49a) – And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me? ^[49a] I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not. This was not an effort to avoid arrest and escape the cross, but to rebuke the absurdity of their appearance and weaponry. This was the One known for compassion and revealing truth. He had not come to destroy or kill, but to heal and provide life. They had come as if they would face a dangerous criminal, but He was only guilty of love and sacrifice. Jesus had sat daily in the Temple, teaching the Word of God. They hadn't tried to apprehend Him there. Instead they waited for the cover of darkness to carry out their sinful deed.

- Is that not how Satan and those who follow him continue to operate? They wait for a time when their genuine motives and tactics can be hidden from view. They seek to work when others cannot see them for who they truly are!

C. The Reality (49b) – I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled. This night would be the beginning of the greatest injustice ever committed. The cowardly acts of the multitude and betrayal of Judas were unwarranted, but they were carried out for a purpose. Jesus had power to defeat them if He desired, but He had resolved to submit to the will of the Father. He knew He must go with them and die for the sin of humanity!

- It seems unnatural to rejoice in such a situation, but I am thankful Jesus was willing to fulfill His Father's will. I am glad He went to the cross for me! Had He not been willing to suffer the agonies of the cross and die in our place, we would have no opportunity for salvation. We would not have an Intercessor who identifies with our infirmities. Jesus did all of this because He was determined to secure our salvation!

III. The Calamity (50-52) – Here we discover the beginning of fear and uncertainty that will grip the hearts of those who followed Jesus. Consider:

A. The Desertion (50) – And they all forsook him, and fled. A very simple statement, and yet very profound. We know that Peter will follow Jesus to the home of the high priest, and I believe John

is also there as Jesus is tried. We do know that John is found at the feet of Jesus as He hangs upon the cross, but at this moment, Jesus is forsaken by all the disciples. As He is arrested for crimes He had not committed, He is lead away alone!

- This reveals two great truths to us. Many continue to forsake Jesus when it comes to the crucifixion. Many agree that He was a great teacher, prophet, and man, but refuse to embrace Him as the Christ. It also reveals that what Jesus was about to do, He must do alone. No one else was worthy to die for our sin. No one else could drink of the cup He was about to taste and drink. Jesus alone secured our redemption as He offered His body the perfect, living sacrifice for sin.

B. The Humiliation (51-52) – *And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: ^[52] And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.* Here we find an unusual detail regarding that faithful night that is only recorded in Mark's gospel. I don't want to over-spiritualize this, but it is there and we need to consider it. Many scholars agree this was likely John Mark. If true, he recorded this because he remembered well being there that night. It is assumed that he was likely already in bed and rose to see what was going on as the multitude came to arrest Jesus. (Some think the Upper Room was located in John Mark's childhood home.) Being considered one of Jesus' followers, some among the angry mob tried to take hold of him. He was able to get free from the garment he wore, and was forced to flee into the night, naked.

- This is just another reminder of the animosity held toward those who followed Jesus. The multitude was determined to silence Jesus and decimate His following. They wanted to strike fear in the hearts of all who followed Him. This animosity remains today. When we are faced with attacks from the enemy, how do we respond? Do we stand boldly, confident in our faith in Christ, or do we flee as the disciples did? I want to have the boldness to stand for the Lord, regardless of the opposition!

Conclusion: We have considered a familiar account in Scripture. Again, I believe it is one of the most tragic accounts recorded. Judas had an opportunity to believe, but he chose to deny Christ. Have you believed the Lord and received Him by faith? If so, are you willing to stand firm in the faith, even when facing opposition? He alone can save from sin and reconcile to God. He alone provides the strength and courage we need to endure.