

Matthew 26:47-56

<sup>47</sup> While Jesus was still speaking, suddenly Judas (one of the Twelve) arrived. With him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> Now the betrayer had given them a sign: "The one I kiss is the man. Arrest him." <sup>49</sup> Immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. <sup>50</sup> Jesus said to him, "Friend, why are you here?" Then they advanced, took hold of Jesus, and arrested him. <sup>51</sup> Suddenly, one of the men with Jesus reached out his hand, drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, because all who take the sword will die by the sword. <sup>53</sup> Do you not realize that I could call on my Father, and at once he would provide me with more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?" <sup>55</sup> At that same time Jesus said to the crowd, "Have you come out to arrest me with swords and clubs as if I were a robber? Day after day I was sitting in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. <sup>56</sup> But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Introduction: It was a dark hour of loneliness. Not yet the darkest hour, but surely those three hours Jesus spent praying in the Garden of Gethsemane were full of the foreboding of the horrors to come; not only the pain of the scourging and beating and having the nails pierce his hands and feet; not just the fighting for every breath while hanging on the cross, it was also the humiliation and mockery. But through it all Jesus remained committed.

Surely this was not the first time his commitment was tested. There was the temptation by Satan in the wilderness: "I will give you all the kingdoms of the world if you will just bow down to me," Satan had said. What a golden opportunity to walk right past the cross and take up his glory. What a chance to be rid of the pain and torment that from day one had hung over his head, for Simeon had said to his mother, "Yes, and a

sword will pierce your soul too, in reference to the death of her son to come." But despite the threats, despite the sorrow to come he remained committed to completing the mission his father gave him to pay for our sins.

And he remained steadfast, even when people began to desert him, after he refused to let them make him their bread king. Instead he called himself the bread of life and they began to walk away in droves. Yet, he remained committed to following through, because he loves every soul, Yes, not only the soul of Peter who repented and came back, but even the soul of the man whose name history remembers as the most vile of all traitors, Judas Iscariot.

**I. Jesus accepts betrayal to fulfill his Father's will**

- A. **Jesus had predicted that one of his disciples would betray him;** Jesus had said that people needed to put their faith in him and in his father; He had spoken the invitation, come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. He had spoken of his commitment to people, his willingness to give up his life for the sheep, but he was also aware that someone would betray him; it must have hurt.
- B. **He also knew this from Psalm 41:9** "Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me."
- C. **He warned Judas, he warned his enemies,** but he allowed them to do the evil that they had planned because it fulfilled his Father's will
- D. **Betrayal was yet one more form of humiliation that Jesus accepted,** as a proof that he willingly allowed himself to accept humiliation as foretold in Isaiah 53. **"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted."**
- E. But in this hour when he was betrayed by one of his own disciples, Jesus is fully committed to our

salvation. He did not shrink back, he did not become indignant. In one last effort of kindness, he warned Judas by convicting him, "Friend, why have you come?" so Judas might ask himself and see his sin. But he never tried to stop the betrayal. It was his father's will.

**Application:** His acceptance of betrayal proved Jesus' commitment to his mission. And what is so amazing is that even when he was betrayed, he remained just as committed to paying for Judas' sins, though he had rejected Jesus and fallen away. So when you find that you have betrayed your Savior by your sins, when you feel like there is no redemption for a sin or sins you have committed, remember that Jesus stayed committed to paying for your sins right to the bitter end. Your sins are completely paid for, just as were the sins of Judas.

So many events he knew ahead of time; so many events the prophets foretold. And later in his Pentecost sermon Peter told the Jews that their leaders had conspired with the Romans, and done all the things that happened to Jesus by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. Jesus was one with the Father and complied with his Father's will even in this most horrible of deeds. Because he wanted to save us.

Who of us would accept betrayal as part of God's purpose? Who of us would accept betrayal by a friend or family member and then forgive the wrongdoer and believe that God could and would use such betrayal for our good?

Aren't we more apt to look at the sorrows of our lives, trials we have no control over and accuse God of betraying us?

Transition: Betrayal is one thing. What about being rescued from betrayal? But Jesus refused rescue, because he was committed to our rescue.

## **II. Jesus refused rescue so he could rescue us**

### **A. Peter's action while impetuous was not the worst of it. Peter was taking matters of eternal importance into his own hands.**

1. Did he really think Jesus needed to be rescued? Did Peter honestly think Jesus

needed his help? But here we see our own sinful nature in action: Human deeds, human efforts, all for human glory. What a hero Peter would have been if he had rescued Jesus. As if Jesus needed saving!!

2. Could have called on his Father to send him 12 legions of angels.
3. We can think back to the marvelous confession Peter had made that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God; but then some time later when Jesus told them all that he would be taken captive, beaten and crucified Peter acted as if Jesus were just being negative.
4. This will never happen to you Lord, as if Jesus needed to be rescued. Jesus did not want nor need what Peter offered. Do we think that Jesus needs anything from us? Our good works, our offerings, our words in defense of his teaching? Yes, he does want us to defend him, but in the right way, with words and not with force.
5. What is more Jesus did not want Peter's form of rescue for if he had, Peter's rescue would have been all too shallow.

### **B. Peter's rescue attempt was**

6. Misguided
7. Served only Peter's purposes
8. Would have left Jesus' mission unfulfilled
9. Peter was short-sighted; and are we not also often short sighted when it comes to spiritual matters? Often we think in terms of earthly success, we think of large numbers instead of individual people who need to hear and learn and come to believe in Jesus. We think of glory associated with OUR success instead of the glory of the Savior and his Word. The Savior saw the big picture. He refused to be rescued so he could rescue us.

11. Application:
12. Application:

Conclusion: When someone betrays us, that really tests our commitment to that person doesn't it? If a man or woman betrays their spouse by being unfaithful, that surely tests the commitment of the one whose is wronged. But we who often feel betrayed for much less than adultery are also guilty of betraying our Savior. When we let our sinful nature lead us to seek glory for ourselves, above that of Jesus, we betray our Lord, do we not.

And even while we seek glory for ourselves, we forget that human works always fall short. In Alaska some years ago the Coast Guard made a valiant attempt to rescue the 7 man crew of a fishing vessel that capsized off the coast of SE Alaska. Miraculously they were able to rescue 5 men. But the captain and one other crewman were lost. Human efforts often fall short and so do our attempts. We should never foolishly think we can save ourselves from sin as if Jesus needs our help. But the sinful nature thinks it can. Yet, when we remember our Savior's commitment and that his was a perfect commitment to save us from sin, why will we ever want to do anything, but look each day to give him the glory for remaining committed to saving us because he loves us and saw that we could not save ourselves. That is commitment unlike any human being. It is only the commitment of the Son of God. Amen.