

Sunday, November 17, 2024 | Holy Week

Week 12 | Luke 22:35-38 | "Keep Calm & Carry On"

Last week, Pastor Bob unpacked the events immediately following the Last Supper. There was disunity amongst the disciples. Judas was disloyal to Jesus, the disciples had a dispute about who was the greatest, and Peter was told he'd deny the Lord. One would think that after following Jesus for so long, these men wouldn't be so dysfunctional. Yet, are we any better? Thankfully, we have their example to learn from. And, as Bob pointed out, the cure for this disunity was this: **humble service is the means to unity and spiritual greatness.** This emphasis on humility is not just a lesson, but a call to action for us to foster a sense of connection and harmony within our congregation.

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**READ:** Luke 22:35-38 (ESV)

<sup>35</sup> And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> 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." <sup>38</sup> And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough."

Benjamin Franklin famously said, "By failing to prepare, we prepare to fail." How many of us can relate? How many tests have we failed because we failed to study? How many times have we been caught unawares by our own shortsightedness? The Lord has given us minds to forecast events to a certain extent. And while it is *folly* to presume to know the future (cf. Jam. 4:13-17), it is just as *foolish* to ignore the future entirely (cf. Prov. 6:6-11; 27:12).

In today's passage, we'll be confronted with an uncomfortable truth: *Christians live in a hostile world*. This is no surprise for some, but for others, this might be genuinely shocking. The world hates Jesus. Unbelievers persecute believers. Though it is *good news*, the gospel is often received as *bad news*. Christ's followers mustn't be naïve about reality. Otherwise, they'll fail to prepare and, in doing so, prepare to fail.

But should we be ready to face trouble, our preparedness will help us overcome any adversity. Such a Christian will embody Britain's famous WWII motto: keep calm and carry on. A believer whose mind is fortified is a believer that is ready to face whatever comes over the horizon.

Even if the devil himself were to march against us, we can keep calm and carry on, knowing that such a confrontation was inevitable and, through Christ, the victory is assured.

Jesus makes **two** points:

i. **The Christian must prepare to be opposed.**

Jesus asked the disciples, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” And they respond by saying, “Nothing.” The Lord is referring to one of two passages: 9:1-6 and 10:1-12. In both passages, he charges his disciples (the twelve in 9:1-6 and the seventy in 10:1-12) to “take nothing for your journey.” They were to walk by faith, and God would provide for them through the generosity of strangers.

Many of the apostles must’ve looked at that early phase of ministry with Jesus with great fondness and expectation. They had been welcomed almost universally by all they met. People were healed, demons were cast out, and the gospel was proclaimed. If you charted the apostles’ ministry at this point, it would’ve been up and to the right. From their perspective, the outlook was promising.

After reminding them of the ‘good ol’ days,’ the Lord says, “*But now [emphasis added] 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.*” Moving forward, the disciples must be prepared for hardship. Why? As Garland puts it, “The tide of popularity will shift against them.”<sup>1</sup> They mustn’t think that past successes are an indication of the future. They mustn’t expect to be received now as they were back then. Thus, as much as is possible through faith, the apostles must be self-sufficient. They mustn’t rely upon the goodwill of others in the future as they did before. Times were about to get really tough.

**Now, there are some who interpret this passage literally.** By saying, “sell his cloak and buy [a sword],” such interpreters argue that Jesus wanted his disciples to **actually** go and get a sword. In support of this view, they point to the fact that the disciple produced two swords in verse 38. Thus, the apostles themselves understood Jesus’ instructions in the plain sense of the word.

But this interpretation is wrong for four reasons: first and foremost, it is in direct conflict with the Lord’s more peaceful ministry and message. Second, the Lord will soon rebuke Peter for drawing a sword (cf. Lu. 22:50; Mat. 26:54). Three, when the Lord said, “It is enough,” he wasn’t saying it was sufficient; he was saying “Enough of this!”<sup>2</sup> Lastly, nowhere in Acts or the rest of

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<sup>1</sup> Garland (2011), p. 870.

<sup>2</sup> Schreiner, Thomas R., *Luke*, The ESV Expository Commentary, Vol. VIII, (Wheaton, IL; Crossway, 2021), p. 1063.

the N.T. is actual weaponry associated with believers. If Jesus wanted his followers to carry swords, the apostles and the earlier church would've done so. Thus, Jesus *wasn't* saying to buy a sword; he was using a *physical* object to illustrate a *spiritual* principle—i.e., be ready for conflict.

**READ:** 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, <sup>6</sup>being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

We defeat our enemies through argument, not armaments.

**An aside** on the topic of self-defense.

First, this does not mean defending yourself or carrying a weapon is wrong (cf. Ex. 22:2-3). Notice that the disciples themselves already had two swords with them. Considering this, we must assume the Lord allowed such action. Thus, arming one's self is at least permissible (cf. Ex. 22:2-3).

Secondly, this is not to say Christians *must* be extreme pacifists, though, by and large, Christians have been characterized by non-violence throughout history.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the use of force is allowed if it seeks to uphold God's justice (cf. Rom. 13:4; i.e., abolition of slavery in the Civil War) or if it can prevent further loss of life (cf. Prov. 24:11-12; i.e., Bonhoeffer's attempted assassination of Hitler).

However, let me be clear: *such cases are the exception, not the rule*. While Christians throughout history have been known as peaceful non-combatants, it must be pointed out that there have been instances in history where the church has used violent tactics to impose its law (i.e., forced conversions of Saxons by Charlemagne, the Crusades, John Calvin burning Michael Servetus at the stake, etc.).<sup>4</sup> Sadly, Islam isn't the only religion to convert by the sword; Christianity is guilty of this, too. Thus, the use of violence is a

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<sup>3</sup> For more on this, see the debate between Bob Thune and Andrew Wilson: "Gun Control and the Right to Bear Arms — Good Faith Debates," May 4, 2022, *The Gospel Coalition*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOMePdBBLnI&t=2619s>, [accessed November 16, 2024].

<sup>4</sup> For more on this, see *Bullies and Saints: An Honest Look at the Good and Evil of Christian History* by John Dickson (Zondervan; 2021).

slippery slope. From the Garden of Gethsemane to now, things went poorly every time the church wielded the blade.

In conclusion, while we are permitted to defend ourselves in particular circumstances, Christ-followers ought to be those who are constantly trying to **de-escalate** a situation rather than **escalate** it. We called to hoard up for ourselves treasures in heaven (cf. Matt. 6:9-21), not to stockpile weapons and ammo. **Personal vendettas are always wrong; we are never permitted to take revenge (cf. Rom. 12:19).** Personal offenses ought to be forgiven; not because the offended is worthy but because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us (cf. Eph. 4:32). Rather than invoke the principle "eye for an eye," we ought to offer the principle of forgiveness (cf. Matt. 5:38-48). **We are called to be peacemakers, not warmongers (cf. Matt. 5:9).**

All that to say, it is better to prepare for opposition and endure tribulation than be caught off guard and risk falling away. Thus, **metaphorically speaking**, it is time for naïve believers to take their "moneybag," "knapsack," and "sword" and prepare for opposition. Spiritually, we must be armed to the teeth if we are to survive the coming challenges.

**READ:** Ephesians 6:10-20 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong **in the Lord** and in the strength of **his might**. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor **of God**, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we **do not** wrestle against **flesh** and **blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor **of God**, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt **of truth**, and having put on the breastplate **of righteousness**, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel **of peace**. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield **of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet **of salvation**, and the sword **of the Spirit**, which is the word **of God**, <sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

We are to fortify our hearts and minds in the Lord, readying ourselves for spiritual combat.

ii. The Christian must prepare to be **vilified**.

Jesus said, “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**.”

“And he was numbered with the transgressors” is a quotation from Isaiah 53:12. Though perfect and blameless, the Son of God was considered a malefactor rather than a benefactor. He was wrongfully accused, abused, and abhorred.

But notice that Jesus said that this vilification is in accordance with Scripture; he said **twice** that being “**numbered with the transgressors**” finds its “**fulfillment**” in him. Even the Lord’s wrongful defamation was a part of his Father’s program.

Likewise, if we’re faithful followers of Christ, we, too, will be wrongfully defamed, criticized, and vilified.

**READ:** John 15:18-25 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> “If the world **hates you**, know that it has **hated me** before it **hated you**. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would **love you** as its own; but because you are **not** of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world **hates you**. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they **persecuted me**, they will also **persecute you**. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

<sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you on account of **my name**, because they do not **know him** who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been **guilty** of sin, but now they have **no excuse** for their sin.

<sup>23</sup> Whoever **hates me hates my Father** also. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and **hated** both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup> But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me **without** a cause.’

**READ:** John 16:1-4 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> “I have said all these things to you to **keep you from falling away**. <sup>2</sup> They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is **offering service to God**. <sup>3</sup> And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. <sup>4</sup> But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you.

The world cannot hate its own (cf. Jn. 7:7). So, if it hates you, it means that you are not of the world. Thus, we ought to wear the world's hatred like a **badge of honor**. As Jesus was "numbered with the transgressors," may we all be numbered with the Lord. **The world does not** look at us like **benefactors**; it looks at us like **malefactors**.<sup>5</sup> And if we're doing right, this is how it ought to be.

**So, what's the takeaway?**

The **condemnation** of the world is the **commendation** of the Lord.

**READ:** Matthew 5:10-12 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> "**Blessed** are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> "**Blessed** are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> **Rejoice** and **be glad**, for your reward is **great** in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

**READ:** 1 Peter 4:12-19 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Beloved, do **not** be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But **rejoice** insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also **rejoice** and be **glad** when his glory is revealed.

<sup>14</sup> If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are **blessed**, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. <sup>15</sup> But let none of you suffer as a **murderer** or a **thief** or an **evildoer** or as a **meddler**. <sup>16</sup> Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him **not** be ashamed, but let him **glorify** God in that name.

<sup>17</sup> For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, let those who **suffer** according to God's will **entrust** their souls to a faithful Creator **while doing good**.

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<sup>5</sup> Edwards (2015), p. 641.

## **Video Description:**

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SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

**Pastor's manuscript can be found here:**

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