

Sunday, January 5, 2024 | Holy Week

Week 14 | Luke 22:47-53 | "Virtue Under Pressure"

We took a break from our Holy Week series during Christmas and are now back!

---

**READ:** Luke 22:47 (ESV)

<sup>47</sup> While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, <sup>48</sup> but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

<sup>49</sup> And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" <sup>50</sup> And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. <sup>51</sup> But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him.

<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the Temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup> When I was with you day after day in the Temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Winston Churchill once said, "You can measure a man's character by the choices he makes under pressure." In other words, we get a window into our truest selves during *hardship*. When the going gets tough, do you retreat or advance? When you're outnumbered, do you bow before popular opinion or stand your ground? When confronted by the enemy, are you a coward or courageous?

In today's passage, we'll see Jesus under unbelievable stress, but he does not withdraw; he *pushes forward*. The Lord does not recant; he *doubles down*. The Son of God does not cower before the enemy; he *embodies valor*. Jesus demonstrates that virtue under pressure does not break; *it shines*.

I want you to notice **three** things:

i. Vs. 47-48 – Judas' **Disloyalty** and Jesus' **Royalty**

Luke tells us about the crowd with Judas at the head, came to Jesus "While he was still speaking, there came a crowd..." Speaking what? Vs. 46 where the Lord said to the eleven disciples, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Luke says, “the man” who was “leading” this “crowd” was “called Judas.” And just so there’s no confusion, our narrator says this was the “Judas” who was “one of the twelve.”<sup>1</sup> Judas' motives are not clearly explained beyond his greed (cf. Lu. 22:5). Do not psychoanalyze Judas. This highlights a crucial lesson: one need not have a great reason to commit great evil. Let this be a lesson to us all. One need not have a great reason to do a great evil.

Luke tells us Judas “drew near to Jesus to kiss him.” This was a common form of greeting, though reserved for those who were very close (cf. Lu. 15:20).<sup>2</sup> Though handshakes are common in the West, many cultures greet one another with a kiss (e.g., the Middle East, Eastern Europe, South America, etc.; cf. 2 Cor. 13:12; Ac. 20:37). In fact, even outside cultural contexts, the kiss is used in all most all cultures when greeting royalty (e.g., kissing the ring of the king). In the O.T., this practice is referenced multiple times (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1; 2 Sam. 19:39; 1 Ki. 19:18; etc.). Particularly relevant to the current passage is Psalm 2, where David uses this custom to make a point about God’s sovereignty.

**READ:** Psalm 2:11-12 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup> Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Earlier in the Psalm, David explains that, because of its wickedness, the Lord will “break” the earth “with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” God will not allow injustice to go unpunished. Thus, knowing that Judgement day is coming, he implores his reads to “serve the Lord with fear...rejoice with trembling [and] kiss the Son.” By doing these things, people will avoid the day of God’s “wrath.” In other words, only those who revere and worship the King of Kings will survive the coming calamity.

Knowing this **background**, how should we interpret Judas’ kiss? Was he trying to take David’s advice? Did Judas want to pay homage to King Jesus? No. Of course not. In one of the synoptics, we’re told that “the Betrayer had given [the Sanhedrin] a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard” (Mar. 14:44). Like tagging animals for the slaughter, Judas’ kiss was used as a means to **mark** Jesus for capture; it wasn’t **tribute** but **treason** (cf. Gen. 27:27). The kiss of Judas was the sort of Prov. 27:6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Bock (1996), p. 1767, “Judas is identified as one of the Twelve in order to magnify the horror of his act.”  
<sup>2</sup> As Garland (2011) explains, the act of kissing a teacher or rabbi was a sign of equality and respect. Judas’ use of this gesture to betray Jesus was not just a breach of trust but the desecration of a tender custom.

Before or after Judas kisses Jesus (cf. Mar. 14:45), the Lord asks, “**Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?**” As we’ve discussed previously, “Son of Man” is Jesus’ favorite self-designation; it was a regal title, referencing his station as the Messiah, David’s descendant, and heir to the throne of Israel. Using the “Son of Man” moniker as a question pointedly acknowledges the **absurdity** of Judas’ actions. The Betrayer wasn’t only Jesus’ longtime friend, disciple, and, as Luke points out, “**one of the twelve**”—i.e., the **apostles**—but Judas was supposed to be one of the prominent leaders in Jesus’ **kingdom**. Just a few verses before, the Lord said to the disciples, *including Judas*, “**You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**” (Lu. 22:28-30). *Including Judas*, the apostles were given notable leadership roles in the kingdom of God. Instead of giving his king **loyalty**, Judas gave him **treachery**.

Judas thought he had everyone fooled. **Everyone was fooled** (cf. Jn. 13:22), but the glaring exception was Jesus. The Lord knew Judas would betray him; he even handpicked his own Betrayer (cf. Jn. 6:70)! This is why the Lord was not surprised. **Even when he was betrayed by one of his closest companions, Jesus was lucid.**

Of course, this is not to say Judas’ betrayal did not sting. The Lord was still human, and, as such, he would’ve felt every bit as hurt as anyone else. Foreknowledge of pain does not spare one of pain. Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane teaches us this (cf. Lu. 22:44). But Jesus’ lucidity at this moment illustrates his sovereignty. Though Judas didn’t kiss Jesus as king, Jesus was still the King of Kings. The Lord was in control, even at this most dark hour.

**So, what’s the takeaway?** Though the enemy is **treacherous**, the Lord is still **triumphant**.

ii. Vs. 49-51 – Peter’s **Hostility** and Jesus’ **Civility**

Luke says that, after hearing Jesus’ question, the eleven finally connect the dots between Judas “**and what follow.**” As a group, the disciples said, “**Lord, shall we strike with the sword?**” As we know, the group, **having misunderstood** Jesus’ admonition to get a sword, brought two to the prayer meeting (cf. Lu. 22:36-38). **And as before, they once again misread** the situation. They thought it was time to use the sword, that it was time to defend Jesus and either win or die trying.

**To be clear, this wasn’t feigned hostility**; the disciples weren’t putting on a show. When they asked, “**Shall we strike with the sword,**” they meant it. They came to Jerusalem thinking they would get into some kind of conflict (cf. Jn. 11:16), and now the fight had come. So, Luke tells us, “**One of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.**” **We know from**

John's account that Peter attacked and that the man he hurt was named "Malchus" (cf. Jn. 18:10).

In response to the violence, "Jesus said, "No more of this!" Though modern readers might think the disciples were courageous, the Lord thought it foolish. Violence is a sword that cuts both ways. Or, as the Lord himself told Peter at this very moment, "all who draw [emphasis added] the sword will die [emphasis added] by the sword" (NIV - Matt. 26:52). The Lord was a peaceful non-combatant, and he expects his followers to follow in his footsteps. If he allowed the founding members of his kingdom to resort to violence, they, and the entire gospel movement, would've been destroyed. The strength of Christianity does not come from military might but from the Almighty. We defeat our enemies through **argument**, not **armaments** (cf. 2 Cor. 10:3-5). The cause of Christ has not and will not be advanced by **the edge of the sword** but by **the sword of the Word** (cf. Heb. 4:12). We do not escalate; we deescalate situations by utilizing the Scriptures. We're **civil** when others are **hostile**.

Furthermore, there are three reasons why fighting would've been futile.

First, They were a band of men comprised mostly of fishermen against an armed task force in the middle of the night. The apostles were **outnumbered**, **outgunned**, and **outmaneuvered**. Judas had picked the best time to betray Jesus. Whatever little skirmish might've occurred wouldn't have lasted long. This is battle-tactics 101: *never start a fight you can't win*. Jesus' surrender was partly motivated by a desire to protect his disciples (cf. Jn. 18:8). Taking up arms will subvert his efforts.

Second, if the Lord wanted to fight, **do you not think he could've won singlehandedly?** Yes. In Matthew 26:53, Jesus told the disciples, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Third, fighting **for** Jesus would've meant fighting **against** Jesus. Jesus said, "But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so" (Matt. 26:54)? Jesus came to fulfill the will of his heavenly Father (cf. Jn. 6:38-40). Keeping Jesus from being captured would not only mean going against the Sanhedrin's thugs, but it also means going against God himself (cf. Mat. 16:23).

After rebuking his friends, the Lord heals one of his foes. Luke said the Lord "touched" the ear of Malchus "and healed him." This is Jesus's last miracle in Luke's account.<sup>3</sup> Why does he do it, though? Because Jesus **loves his enemies**.

---

<sup>3</sup> Bock (1996), p. 1765.

**READ:** Matthew 5:43-45 (ESV)

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

God is good to the evil and just to the unjust. The Lord is loving to the unloving and merciful to the unmerciful. And if he returns virtue for vice, so should we. **Civility in an age of hostility is Christianity at its best. Hostility in a hostile world is just worldliness.** Garland notes, "Jesus' last miracle recorded in Luke reveals a total rejection of violence in his name."<sup>4</sup>

**So, what's the takeaway?** Though the enemy is **fearful**, the Lord is still **fearless**.

iii. Vs. 52-53 – The Crowd's **Hypocrisy** and Jesus' **Honesty**

Jesus addressed Judas, rebuked the disciples, and then healed Malchus. Now, he turns his attention to "the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him."

The "chief priests" made up the body of the Sanhedrin, with the high priest presiding as the head. It is likely that the term "Sadducees" was another name for this group.<sup>5</sup>

An "elder" was the head of a local Jewish community throughout Israel. Together, these two groups comprised the spiritual leaders of Israel.

The "officers of the temple" were a *Jewish* patrol unit that policed the Temple grounds. Given the sheer volume of people who visited the Temple daily, officers were necessary to keep the peace.

According to Mark, "scribes" were part of this crowd that came to capture Jesus (cf. Mar. 14:43). Though these men weren't of a priestly household, they were still well-respected in Jewish circles. This is because they were experts in the Mosaic law, relegating, interpreting, and applying it to the populace of Israel.

According to John, "Pharisees" were also present (cf. Jn. 18:3). This was a collection of religious lay leaders concerned with adhering to extrabiblical traditions.

John also says that this predominantly Jewish contingent was accompanied by what he calls "a band of men" (cf. Jn. 18:3). He uses the Greek term **σπείρα** (*spi'-ra*), which refers

---

<sup>4</sup> Garland (2011), p. 885.

<sup>5</sup> "Who were the Sadducees?" <https://www.gotquestions.org/Sadducees.html>

to a platoon of *Roman* soldiers (cf. Mat. 27:27; Ac. 10:1; 27:1). The term *spira* is not as specific as we might like; it could refer to as much as a thousand, or as little as a dozen. Such soldiers were present everywhere in occupied Jerusalem, especially during festivals, to keep the influx of people from rioting. Apprehending someone as famous as Jesus had the potential to become dangerous, maybe even violent.<sup>6</sup> A little Roman muscle would ensure the peace.

What does this all mean? The Betrayer came with a mixed military unit, made up of Jews and Gentiles alike. They were prepared for a conflict. They came to Jesus—a peaceful/charitable teacher—armed to the teeth.

How does Jesus react to this armed guard? As with Judas, he asks a simple question: “**Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?**” The Greek term Jesus uses (*lēstēs*) doesn’t mean “thief” but “insurrectionist;” it is also the same term used to describe Barabbas (cf. Jn. 18:40). The term assumed violence (cf. Lu. 10:30, 36). They did not view Jesus as a mere crook but a revolutionary, hence the “swords and clubs.” They thought of this peaceful, people-healing preacher as a militant leader.<sup>7</sup>

But the Lord explains their show of force is odd. The Lord explains, “**When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me.**” Jesus’ arrest occurred in the middle of the night, sometime between Thursday evening and Friday morning. Jesus has been teaching in the Temple *every day* since his “Triumphal Entry” on Sunday (cf. Lu. 19:47; 21:37-38)! These thugs had every opportunity to capture him. But now they come with an armed guard in the middle of the night? If anyone’s actions are suspicious, it isn’t Jesus; it’s this crowd. **They were the ones who were being hypocritical, and he was the one who was being honest.**

Though Jesus’ rationale is flawless, this mob will still arrest him. Though Jesus’ authority is supreme, this horde will still deliver him to be executed. How can this be? Jesus explains, “**But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.**” **Darkness has been given full reign at this moment to do whatever it wants to do.** The evil powers that be—i.e., religious (Sanhedrin, scribes, temple officers, elders; cf. 20:19-20), political (Pilate, Herod; cf. 23:7), and spiritual (Satan; cf. 22:3)—have **joined forces** to conspire against Jesus.<sup>8</sup> Of course, this is **not** to say their powers combined are more powerful than Jesus; he is still omnipotent (cf. Jn. 10:18).

**READ: John 10:18 (ESV)**

---

<sup>6</sup> Carson (1991), p. 577.

<sup>7</sup> Bock (1996), p. 1772.

<sup>8</sup> Edwards (2015), p. 651.

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.

In accordance with divine providence, the hour of evil has come (cf. Jn. 19:11; Rom. 9:22). But that hour will not last forever. The night cannot withstand the dawn. Though death will take Jesus, it will, ultimately, fail to keep him.

**So, what's the takeaway?** Though the enemy is mighty, the Lord is still the Almighty.

## **Video Description:**

### **Holy Week | Week 14 | “Virtue Under Pressure” (Luke 22:47-53)**

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

Winston Churchill once said, “You can measure a man’s character by the choices he makes under pressure.” In other words, we get a window into our truest selves during *hardship*. When the going gets tough, do you retreat or advance? When you're outnumbered, do you bow before popular opinion or stand your ground? When confronted by the enemy, are you a coward or courageous?

In today's passage, we'll see Jesus under unbelievable stress, but he does not withdraw; he *pushes forward*. The Lord does not recant; he *doubles down*. The Son of God does not cower before the enemy; he *embodies valor*. Jesus demonstrates that virtue under pressure does not break; *it shines*.

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

---

Grace Pointe Baptist Church

12029 Eastern Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21220

Contact: [info@GracePointeLife.com](mailto:info@GracePointeLife.com)

Website: <https://www.gracepointelife.com>

Give here: <https://www.gracepointelife.com/give/>

## **Podcast Details:**

Season 39 | 14