

Intro: As Jesus moves toward the horrors of his execution, everything around Him begins to fall apart for him personally. His distress, while surely rooted and centered upon the “cup” of God’s wrath which he was to drink, was also connected to the desertion of all his beloved friends. Thus, Peter’s “falling away” from him was deeply troubling to him as well, and Judas’ hypocrisy is surely disheartening as well, even though he knew it would happen. Mark tells us that Jesus told all the disciples in the upper room that they would “surely fall away” (14:27). This is the moment in the story when their faith fails, when their love wavers, and when their courage slips. They all left him at his arrest, and Luke emphasizes this distance when he notes at the end of this passage, that “Peter followed *at a distance*.”

1. Three Questions: Of Belief, Treacherous Affection, and Injustice

a. "Why are you sleeping?"

- i. Open your eyes and see the danger of self-reliance.
- ii. The temptation was to "fall away" from him in the time of trial, to lose hope and faith in Him
- iii. It was a crisis of faith, and they were emotionally exhausted, fallen asleep "from grief".
 1. From this point on Jesus is shown as the only one who doesn't fall away from the Father's word and the Father's plan even though it costs him more than all
 2. He was strengthened to pray fervently, to persevere through agony, and to SUBMIT to the Father's will
- iv. This is always the temptation to which we must implore the Lord for strength: the strength to entrust ourselves to the sovereign will of God.

b. "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

- i. Jesus speaks to Judas by using his name, with a tender question but with a firm judgment of his behavior
 1. Though he is Satan’s tool, Jesus still refers to him in brotherhood, with an implicit appeal to repentance
 2. Knowing why Judas is there (betray him), he shows an amazing restraint and even more amazingly, respect and compassionate language
- ii. He calls it betrayal, the handing over to one's enemies, a deeply hard-hearted and evil thing to do
 1. Betrayal: A Handing Over to an Enemy
 - a. to hand one over, to deliver one up
 - b. Judas is delivering Jesus over to his enemies, those who were seeking to destroy him
 - i. Judas is indicated as "one of the 12" - in other words, one of the inner circle, the closest friends, of Jesus
 - ii. He was a confidant, a brother, a close family member, so to speak
 - c. PSALM 88 - READ IT
 2. Betrayal is one of the most difficult emotional burdens for the human heart to carry.
 - a. It is directly opposed to the good of the Garden because it is opposed to the nature of God. God, in triunity, is always loving and never self-serving. Betrayal is self-serving and unloving, full of deceit rather than truth.
 - b. Thus, Judas plans and schemes, making sure that the arresting group is hidden until he identifies Jesus in the darkness.

- c. Surely, this is hypocrisy at its worst: acting like parting of the team, dressing down, going to practice, but you've mailed it in and are actively working to make your team lose. It is treachery in the guise of affection. Killing with a kiss, an embittered embrace, a guiling greeting, betrayal in the name of brotherhood.
 - 3. This loneliness is part of the cup which Jesus must drink and of which caused him such agony and distress. From distress to desertion in an instant, but he is prepared by prayer to entrust His soul to His Father through the dark despair of desertion and of death.
 - a. It is important to know that Jesus, though he was overwhelmed by doom, swallowed up by the darkness of his travail, and seeking with great anxiety a removal of such distress, continued to submit to the Father.
 - b. Note, in his prayer, that the Father's answer was an angel to strengthen him, and *then* He prayed fervently and was agonizing to the point of physical exhaustion through profuse sweating. Thus, the Father's gift of "strengthening" was the strength to pray more fervently and to bear up the agony with faith in Him. It was not the strength to overcome, but the strength to submit.
 - 4. We, too, in the darkness of desertion and the bowels of betrayal run to the Father with our requests for alleviation, knowing that the strength which He sends is the strength to entrust ourselves to Him and to pour out our fervent prayers with submission to His Word and the necessary faith to entrust our souls to it. This how we handle betrayal in a manner that loves rather than seeks to destroy, like Jesus loved Judas "to the end" and did not seek His destruction, but His salvation.
- iii. He boldly questions the hypocrisy of Judas' actions - a kiss of affection and brotherhood
 - 1. A Kiss: An Affectionate Greeting of Brotherhood
 - a. Kiss: "affection" - from the term for love, *phileo*
 - i. It is a concrete mark of love, of affection
 - b. Jesus is questioning the horrific irony of betraying someone with a greeting of affection
 - i. See Luke 7:45; Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12, etc. for the term "holy kiss" as a greeting of affection
 - ii. It is a sign of committed affection and love, and it was being used in humiliating mockery of exactly the opposite
 - c. To betray to destruction a brother with a sign of affection and love is truly monstrously hard-hearted
 - i. It is a sign of a heart settled on hatred, on using another for personal gain while acting like a friend
 - ii. It was not a one-moment slip-up, but the culmination of many nights of sin-baked thoughts of selfishness and pride – Judas fell away long before this night, but he hid that, pretending
 - iii. This is the same kind of hard-hearted and self-serving "love" that is reserved for the harshest condemnations of doom and destruction in the New Testament
 - 2. This mocking sign of affection as a token of betrayal is what makes Jesus' calm and compassionate response to Judas even more wonderful.

- a. In the words of the 19th century Scottish preacher, Alexander MacLaren:

“Every word of Christ’s answer to the shameful kiss is a sharp spear, struck with a calm and not resentful hand right into the hardened conscience. There is wistful tenderness and a remembrance of former confidences in calling Him by name. The order of words in the original emphasizes the kiss, as if Jesus had said, ‘Is that the sign you have chosen? Could nothing else serve you? Are you so dead to all feeling that you can kiss and betray?’ The Son of man flashes on Judas, for the last time, the majesty and sacredness against which he was lifting his hand. ‘Betrayest thou?’ which comes last in the Greek, seeks to startle by putting into plain words the guilt, and so to rend the veil of sophistications in which the traitor was hiding his deed from himself. Thus to the end Christ seeks to keep him from ruin, and with meek patience resents not indignity, but with majestic calmness sets before the miserable man the hideousness of his act. The patient Christ is the same now as then, and meets all our treason with pleading, which would fain teach us how black it is, not because He is angry, but because He would win us to turn from it. Alas that so often His remonstrances fall on hearts as wedded to their sin as was Judas’s!” (*Expositions from Luke, Gethsemane*)

- c. "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?"
- i. Jesus questions the justice of his arrest, making it clear that they are acting in cowardice and with injustice.
 1. Cowardice because they feared the people.
 2. Injustice because he had broken no law to be worthy of such treatment
 - ii. Jesus makes it very clear here and during his trial that it is proper to speak up against injustice, to speak the truth, to question the process and the claims made
 1. John 18:23 – “If what I said was wrong, then bear witness against me. But, if I am right, then *why* do you strike me?”
 2. Submission does not imply silence towards injustice.
 3. However, it also does not imply violent resistance to injustice
 - iii. When Jesus' disciples try to operate on these same terms, violence against the authorities which God had ordained, Jesus reprimands them harshly.
 1. Note that they asked him if they should fight back, but they don't wait for his answer in the dark tension of this surreal moment of betrayal.
 - a. This is probably because it wasn't really a question of strategy from Peter (note that Luke 18 tells us that he is the one with the sword and who had made such brash claims of following Jesus to prison or death!)
 - b. Rather, it was a bold cry of violence – a call to arms
 - c. Thus, he rushes in to fight injustice with faithlessness, already falling prey to the faithlessness of which he was supposed to pray to escape
 - d. For, faith would have entrusted his plan to Jesus rather than marching forward in bold foolishness, stepping up with swinging sword to help Jesus avoid the cross
 2. Jesus rebukes him harshly: “That is enough!”
 - a. It's almost as if He has had enough of their petulant unbelief, from arguing about who is greatest at dinner, to seeking to serve themselves, to grabbing an extra sword for the journey, to falling asleep because they didn't understand the real danger of falling away from trusting Him when things got agonizing and costly.

- b. Peter's impatient self-reliance comes forth with great determination – he is courageous, but foolish
 - i. Jesus had just finished telling them that he must be handed over, that he must die, that it is necessary, and that he will be raised up
 - ii. Yet, Peter didn't listen to plans, he had some of his own, his own assessments sufficed for him to take action, but his determinant, sincere, courageous, daring actions were opposed to the will of God – and earn another rebuke from Jesus
 - iii. John 18:36 – Jesus' argument is that His kingdom is not of this world, thus Peter's violence had to be explained by Jesus to Pilate as cross-purposed with Jesus Himself
3. Then Jesus heals the severed ear of his arresting enemy
 - a. Don't miss the significant power and patience of this final miracle by Jesus' hands
 - b. To reattach a severed ear is undoubtable power, and the moment must have silenced the building turmoil between the two groups
 - c. Jesus made this servant's ear "whole" – fixing what His church had ruined by swinging a sword that wasn't theirs to swing, so that this man could hear
2. The Authoritative Powerful King Submits Himself to Darkness Out of Faith in His Father
- a. "this is your hour, and the power of darkness"
 - a. This may have been the most troubling for the disciples: it is one thing to be defeated, but a completely different category to simply submit to "defeat"
 - b. To them, a Messiah who gave in to the enemy was questionable, thus they fall away
 - b. The Son of Man, the eternal Son of God, entered willingly into the evil hour of the power of darkness, to be swallowed up by it so that He might destroy the darkness by destroying its darkened heart, death
 - a. This hour belonged to the enemies of Jesus, but also the hour of our salvation!
 - b. Thus, he enters into this darkness, submits to its unjust power, and drinks the dregs of the cup of God's wrath and Man's unjust violence, that He might bring many to redemption and glory through His death and consequent victorious resurrection over death
 - c. Christ calls us to entrust our lives to the Father even when it means that He has called us to lay our lives down for the sake of another
 - d. We remember that this hour is only an hour, it is not final
 - a. The hour may be dark, heavy, horrible, but it is temporary and the dawn of the comfort of God is near and sure and perfect

Conclusion: What kind of martyr is Jesus? A powerless martyr is to be honored when his life is taken from him by an enemy. But, a powerful martyr, a man capable of victory, who submits to the will of God to love the ones who betray him, who deny him, who desert him, who are foolish and hard-headed and hard-hearted, and submits to suffering through He wields the super-sword of world-creating words? That is Jesus. God is in control in the hour of our darkness as well, and we submit to Him, trusting His promise. Dawn will come when the sun of righteousness rises to bring life to all things and to restore all that is broken and downcast. It is true. It is true. It is true.