

Not My Will, But Yours, Be Done  
Luke 22:35-53  
August 14, 2022  
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CenterPoint Church

Read Luke 22:35-53

*“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*  
(Hebrews 4:12)

### **Introduction: An Imagined Conversation Between the High Priest and His Servant**

“Master Caiaphas, it’s your servant, Malchus. I just returned from the Garden where you sent me to oversee the arrest of that teacher, Jesus. I’m sorry that it’s so late at night, or should I say early in the morning.”

**“Yes, Malchus, come tell me all about it. I’ve been awake thinking about it. Since I am the high priest I’ll have to be part of the trial for Jesus. I’ve got to get ready, I assume they’ll be here soon. But please, tell me quickly how it went during the arrest.”**

“Well, Judas led the large crowd of our people and the Roman soldiers just he was instructed. Everyone was armed with swords and clubs; I had heard that Jesus was peaceful, but I guess they were thinking that you can’t be too cautious with these Messianic types. But when we arrived in the Garden, it was just Jesus and a handful of his disciples.”

**“You caught him off guard, right?”**

“Well, I don’t think we did. He seemed to be ready for us, like he knew what was coming. Anyways, Judas had told us that the signal he would give to identify Jesus was that he would be the one that he kissed. So, Judas goes straight up to Jesus and kisses him and they exchange a few words. Jesus didn’t look surprised, it was more sadness I guess because they were friends. Then the soldiers, after a little hesitation and stumbling, seized Jesus and were starting to bind his hands, when out of nowhere, one of Jesus’ disciples grabs a sword.”

**“Well, it was good thing that you had so many people. He must have thrown down his sword knowing that he was so greatly outnumbered.”**

“Well, yeah, I wish he had thrown down his sword. But instead, he took a wild swing and since I was the closest person to him, he got me. I think he was trying to cut off my head, but I ducked a little so he ended up cutting off my right ear completely.”

**“Uh, Malchus, I think you’ve been awake for a little too long and you’re not really remembering that right. You’re not missing an ear!”**

“Well, that’s the thing, Master. I’m standing there bleeding, in shock as I feel around my head to see what damage the sword had done. I can see the soldiers starting to turn and advance on that disciple, who is holding the sword with a wild look in his eyes. But then Jesus spoke loudly and firmly. And I’m telling you, when that man says something directly, everybody stops. He has authority in his voice like no one I’ve ever heard, no disrespect intended. And he tells the guy with the sword to put it away. And then he walks over to me, picks up my ear and puts it back in place. And I’m telling you, it’s as if the ear had never been separated from my head. The pain stopped, the ringing in my head stopped immediately, and I could hear just as well as I could before.”

**“Malchus, you have never lied to me before. Tell me that you are making this up as a joke, and I will excuse you and be on my way.”**

“No, Master, I am telling you exactly what happened, anyone who was there can tell you that it’s true. This man healed me. Me – a nobody! Someone who was part of the group that was arresting him! Are you really going to condemn him to death?”

**“This man is a revolutionary, an insurrectionist, a false Messiah. He is too dangerous to keep around, he is leading the people astray, and he might bring the power of Rome down on us. He must be stopped.”**

“I understand that, Master. Or I did before tonight. But all I saw tonight was compassion in his eyes, and courage to submit to what he kept saying was what the Scriptures point to.”

**“He must die, Malchus.”**

“Yeah, I know, that’s what he kept saying. But of all the people I’ve ever met, he deserves it the least.”

Now please don’t be confused, there is no encounter like that recorded in the Bible; I was just using my sanctified imagination. No one is going to mistake me for Aaron Sorkin or Tennessee Williams, but sometimes it’s an interesting exercise to imagine the conversations that happened around Jesus that aren’t recorded in the Bible. That conversation would have happened after this passage, so let’s work our way up to it, starting in verse 35 with

### **I. The Hour of Preparation (vv. 35-38)**

*<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.”*

Michael Card, the Christian singer and writer, said that he studied this passage and was puzzled for a full twenty years about why Jesus, the Prince of Peace, would ask His followers to sell their cloaks to buy swords. He finally decided that it had to do with the fact that the disciples soon would be going out from the protective areas of Jewish hospitality into hostile Gentile territory and would therefore need to protect themselves. He told his mentor, who gave the underwhelming response, “You might have something.”<sup>1</sup> I had a similar experience when I was studying Greek. I wrote a paper in which I talked about this passage; I won’t bore you with the Greek part (mostly because I can’t remember and was too lazy to try to find it), but the main point was that there is some parallelism between Jesus’ life and the story of the Exodus. And if that’s true, then Jesus was heading into the part of the Exodus story where God released His people from Egypt’s enslavement and sent them to the Promised Land. And part of that story is the warfare that went along with the Israelites having to defeat the tribes in that area; so the swords are symbolic of that. My Greek professor said something similar to “you might have something.”

We don’t know exactly why Jesus told His followers that they needed a sword when we know that He rebukes Peter a couple hours later for actually using the sword. Many commentators suggest that Jesus was speaking metaphorically about getting a sword, and when the disciples say they have two swords, he tells them “*It is enough*,” as in “No more talk about this, you knuckleheads.” Everyone agrees that Jesus did not mean that they needed swords for the next encounter. There is a famous quote by the Russian playwright, Anton Chekhov: “If in the first act (of your play) you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired.”<sup>2</sup> That’s where we’ll put this talk of swords – it’ll be used later. For now, we move to a different time,

### **II. The Hour of Prayer (vv. 39-46)**

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Card, *Luke: The Gospel of Amazement* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chekhov%27s\\_gun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chekhov%27s_gun)

<sup>39</sup> And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." <sup>41</sup> And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." <sup>43</sup> And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup> And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup> And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

Here are two very different responses to stress: intense agony and falling asleep. Maybe the disciples had a lame excuse for falling asleep: "You said to pray that we wouldn't be tempted. Well, we can't be tempted while we're asleep!" But Jesus rebuked them and said, "No, you have to be awake and prayerful to avoid temptation." Thabiti Anyabwile mentions several things that this passage teaches us about prayer:

- 1) Prayer protects us from temptation – Jesus says that twice, in verses 40 and 46,
- 2) Prayer requires effort and self-denial,
- 3) Prayer is submission – Jesus' accepted God's will as He prayed, that should be our goal also,
- 4) Prayer is always answered, but sometimes with a "no", as we see with Jesus' request to have the cup removed from Him,
- 5) Prayers answered "no" don't mean that God has abandoned us.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus asked the Father in verse 42 to "*if You are willing, remove this cup from me.*" What is this cup that He spoke of – is it the cup from the Passover? No. Old Testament passages talk about Jerusalem having "*drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of His wrath*" (Isaiah 51:17) or the nations drinking from "*the cup filled with the wine of my wrath*" (Jeremiah 25:15). The cup that Jesus would be metaphorically drinking from was the cup of God's wrath. Why would God's wrath be poured out on Jesus? Because He would be dying in our place, taking the punishment that all of His people deserve. Every sin that every believer has ever committed would be poured on Jesus on the cross. To understand why Jesus sweat drops of blood and was in such agony, we have to understand that it wasn't His fear of dying, even a death as gruesome as crucifixion. His real angst was that He knew He would be taking God's wrath for our sins on Himself. He knew the unbearable agony that the punishment of our sins would inflict on Him, and in His human frailty, He prayed that perhaps there was another way. He knew that His taking on our sins and being punished by God would cause the Father to look away from Him, to abandon Him in a sense.

Does it make you think less of Jesus for being in such agony or for asking that God spare Him if there was another way? Dale Davis explains why we should not: "To be cut off from the light of God's face, to be under some outpouring of His anger... that is the one thing the godly man does not want. How then could Jesus be a perfectly righteous Savior if He did not abominate such a portion and plead to escape it? His plea is not a blemish on His perfection but a sign of it."<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, we are drawn into the deep mysteries of the two natures of Jesus, the divine and the human. What we see here is Jesus' acknowledging His absolute obedience to His Father's plan despite His fear and dread of the pain that would be involved.

Luke is the only Gospel writer who mentions an angel coming to minister to Jesus, to strengthen Him. We saw angels attending to Jesus at the beginning of His public ministry, after His 40-day trial

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<sup>3</sup> Thabiti Anyabwile, *Exalting Jesus in Luke* (Nashville: Holman, 2018), pp, 331-32.

<sup>4</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 14-24: On the Road to Jerusalem* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2021), p. 181.

in the wilderness, and so we have a nice bookend at the end of His ministry of having the comfort of an angelic presence. But that comfort gave way to

### **III. The Hour of Darkness (vv. 47-53)**

*47 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, 48 but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. 52 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? 53 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."*

Luke doesn't mention that there were Roman soldiers in the midst of this arresting band like John's Gospel does. He only mentions the priests, officers, and elders of the Jews. Jesus highlighted the absurdity of this big armed mob in v. 53: "I've been teaching peacefully in the temple and you were too scared to arrest me there? And you bring this lynch mob as if I'm a dangerous threat?" What's ironic is that even bringing a huge group was actually underestimating Him. He was a much greater threat than they realized – He could have called down angels to fight for Him or spoken a word to destroy them, and none of their weapons or the size of their group would have made any difference.

I've already talked about verses 47-48 three weeks ago in my sermon about Judas, so we'll get back to the swords from the first point. The disciples had been told to bring swords, so they naturally asked Jesus, "Is it time to use them?" And before Jesus could stop them, one of them had struck the servant of the high priest. There are no names of either aggressor or victim here, but John 18:10 says, "*Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)*" I guess that's what happens when a fisherman starts swinging a sword – he only catches the ear of an unarmed bystander. Matthew 22:52 adds to Luke's record of Jesus' rebuke: "*Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.*" This is a reminder that the power of the sword cannot advance Christianity in the New Covenant. Douglas Sean O'Donnell says, "If you want to know what Jesus thinks about Christians bombing abortion clinics or crusading against the Muslims, wonder no more. Perhaps there is even something symbolic about the servant's ear being cut off, for where Christians have used violence to promote Christianity, those regions of the world are somehow least receptive to the gospel. Having no ears, they cannot hear!"<sup>5</sup>

And Jesus is not just rebuking Peter when He tells him to put away his sword, He's also protecting him. That whole "die by the sword" part was a very real possibility with these Roman soldiers standing around. Some scholars speculate that if Jesus hadn't healed Malchus, there would have been four crosses up that next day and there would be no 1 or 2 Peter in our Bibles.<sup>6</sup> Jesus protects all of His disciples – in John's Gospel He says, "you've got me, let these men go." Jesus' healing of Malchus' ear would be the last healing of His life and ministry; how touching that it is granted to someone who is associated with His enemies.

Jesus would submit to arrest and to death, He would not defend Himself or bring about His kingdom by force. But make no mistake, one day Jesus will come with a sword and an army to bring judgment – Revelation 19:11-16:

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<sup>5</sup> Douglas Sean O'Donnell, *Matthew* (Wheaton, Crossway, 2013), 807.

<sup>6</sup> Bill Crowder, *For This He Came: Jesus' Journey to the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Discovery, 2006), p. 85.

*"11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."*

The Lord will ultimately judge and conquer, bringing complete victory to the kingdom of heaven over His enemies. But for now, the gospel goes forth through the way of the cross – through suffering, forgiveness, healing, prayer, and love.

## **Conclusion**

Who would have found fault with Jesus if He had called forth His angels to defeat His enemies, to stop this arrest? When the created human beings were threatening to kill God the Son Himself, the One who had created all things, the very One who holds the universe together with His power – they deserved to be wiped off the face of the earth. And yet, God the Father did not will that that was how Jesus' life would play out and how His kingdom would advance. Salvation would come through Jesus' suffering and dying, not through protecting Himself and striking down His enemies. John 10:17-18 says, *"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 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."*

It wasn't up to Judas, it wasn't up to Peter, it wasn't up to the Jewish authorities, or even the Roman soldiers and governors. Though they all played a role, it was God's design from the beginning, prophesied throughout the Old Testament, that Jesus submitted to. Jesus' life was one of purpose and determination. He came to accomplish something, and nothing would distract Him from that. Though He had no death wish and in His human frailty shrank back from the pain, His obedience to His Father and His love for us propelled Him forward. He knew that He would be the sacrificial Lamb, slain once and for all, for the sins of His people. So He was willing to put up with the humiliation, the injustice, the horrific pain of the cross so that He would pay the penalty for our sins as He hung there. Because Jesus drank the cup of suffering, we don't have to!

How many of you have had uncomfortable or confrontational conversations about Christianity? I remember sitting down at an Applebee's bar many years ago because I was picking up a "to-go" order. The guy next to me started making small talk and when I said something about being a pastor, he immediately launched into an all-out rant about how wrong Christianity is, how anti-scientific, how backwards and oppressive Christians are. At first, I was just thinking, "Can I just get my food?!?" But then I was running through the options in my head of how to respond to him: change the subject, tell him he's an idiot, or witness to him by taking him down "the Romans road" or the four spiritual laws. Ultimately, I just remember challenging a few points he made, and then smiling and inviting him to church.

I'm sure you've had those friends, those classmates, those family members who are critical of Christianity. And you've had to choose how to respond- you have a choice whenever you hear Jesus and Christianity being attacked or ridiculed or questioned. This passage shows us four responses we can choose from when Jesus is attacked:

1) You can choose Judas' way, which is to help Jesus' enemies, His critics. You can aid them in their condemnation of Jesus, you can betray Him and join in the attacks and the ridicule.

2) You can choose Peter's way, which is to lash out at His critics. You can take the sword of truth and slash them with it, in anger striking out at whoever is closest. You can ridicule people who don't understand Him and choose the way of aggression and antagonism.

3) You can choose the way of the other disciples who, Mark 14:50 says, "*they all left him and fled.*" Slink away, avoid the conflict and the ridicule, and hope nobody notices that you are a follower of Jesus. Or

4) You can choose the way of Jesus Himself, at the same time showing love and standing firm in what you know is true. When He healed Malchus' ear and submitted to His arrest, His love and compassion poured forth on His enemies. At the same time, He took the time to tell them that the Scriptures are truth and that what they testify about His life, death, and resurrection truly were happening as they said they would. So when people attack Jesus to you, first communicate love and care to them, and then offer them the truth of the Scriptures.

Will you choose Judas' false kiss, Peter's unwise sword, the disciples' cowardly evacuation, or Jesus' beautiful mix of loving gentleness and courageous stand for the truth?

#### Benediction

Philippians 4:19-20 - "*And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*"