

Matthew 23-01-22a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 22nd day of January 2022 or 2023.

Boy, I'm going to be making that mistake for a month. 22nd of January 2023. We're continuing our study in the Gospel of Matthew.

We're in chapter 26. The Lord Jesus and the disciples have left the upper room. They have gone to the Garden of Gethsemane and Peter's nine failures are currently under our gaze.

He is well known for having denied the Lord thrice, but as we have seen, he has already denied the Lord three times and they haven't left the Garden. He has also failed three times in terms of falling asleep at a time where he should be watching and praying. We are going to see a tenth failure on the part of the Apostle Peter and I hesitate to point these out in one sense, but I know Peter is grateful that God is using his life to help us and to warn us and to encourage us.

So although this is one of the darkest times in Peter's life, it is going to serve and work together for good in God's plan and purpose for us. So we're going to look at it this morning. This is going to be looking ahead to the three denials that haven't happened yet, but this is going to be the seventh failure that we look at this morning.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study and we'll get started. Father, how grateful we are for another time of fellowship and learning and seeking a better understanding of the truth of your word. How important it is for us to understand the scriptures, Old Testament and New, to enable us and empower us to a life to which we've been called that we can't live in our own strength.

Thank you for providing your spirit. Thank you for providing the truth of your word and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we study these together this morning that the spirit will impress your word on our hearts, that we can grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior.

We pray it in his name. Amen. Let's pick up at verse 46.

Rise, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand. We saw the three instances of failure on the part of Peter, James and John in the garden after Jesus had explicitly warned them, had explicitly brought them with him, much as he did to the mountaintop for the transfiguration, as he did to the upper room for the raising of the little girl.

And yet, on this occasion, there is failure. We're reminded of the prophecy that the Lord Jesus quoted, strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter. Why do they scatter? They're not focused on the shepherd.

They haven't taken to heart the training. It's a wonderful thing if you have a pet and you can train them. It's a wonderful thing if you have students or trainees and they respond to training.

It's a wonderful thing if you raise children and you teach them things that you believe are for their benefit and will serve them throughout life. If they respond, if they take it to heart, and independently and on their own, without further coaching, they can put those things into practice. This is what the Lord Jesus ideally intended for his disciples.

But on this night, they are tested and they fail. We're going to see the nature of this failure and we're going to solve a bit of a spiritual and scriptural puzzle. At least I think we're going to solve it.

I've solved it to my own satisfaction. You can make up your own mind. So let's pick up in verse 47.

While he was still speaking, Jesus is in the midst of saying, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand. When he says, look, while he is still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude, with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

As a side note, you remember that there is a huge debate and we are in a small minority to the extent that we believe that this is the night previous to Passover and not the Passover night. One other possible piece of evidence that this is the night of the preparation, as John declares it in his gospel. Notice Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude, with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders.

These have not come from the Romans. They've come from the chief priests and elders. So the chief priests and elders commissioned these people.

They're all Jews who live in Jerusalem, supposedly observant Jews, and yet there is a great multitude of them that are not observing Passover at this point. They are not indoors. They don't have their sandals on their feet and their staff in their hand.

They're not hiding the matzah bread and partaking of the various cups and the lamb seasoned with bitter herbs and so on. If this is Passover, every single one of these people is breaking the law of Moses, one of the first, foremost, fundamental, definitional commands for Israel. They're barely out of Egypt.

In fact, they're not out of Egypt on the night of Passover. This is what is going to deliver them from Egypt and define them as a nation, the people who come out of bondage under the blood of the Passover lamb. It's definitional.

If there's any feast that even a mildly observant Jew would adhere to, it is Passover. And yet there is this enormous multitude of people with swords and clubs out well after dark

to form this arresting party, and they have been commissioned and sent by the elders and the chief priests. None of them can be indoors with their staff in their hand and their sandals on observing Passover either, because this arrest has been organized, commissioned, and executed in the late evening hours of this night.

So, behold, Judas, one of the twelve. Lest there be any doubt that the leader and the guide for this party is the disciple Judas, Judas Iscariot. He is manifestly identified here by name and by position as a disciple.

A great multitude with swords and clubs came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now his betrayer had given them a sign saying, Whomever I kiss, he is the one sees him. And we looked at this concept of the kiss last week.

The nature of this is denoted in the Proverbs that say, Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kiss of the wicked is a betrayal. And that's what's happening here. Sometimes we have to take well-meant and needed criticism from those who are near in hand, and it's a wound.

This is not my friend taking wounds on my behalf. This is a friend inflicting a wound. That is a faithful friend who is willing to say the hard things.

The people who have their own interests at heart will greet you with a kiss, and they are actually stabbing you in the back as they do so. That's what's happening here. There are those who pretend affection and loyalty to God, to the Lord Jesus, and are ready to express it with verbal and action-related manifestations.

And yet, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Sometimes the lips are forming words. Sometimes they are kissing the cheek, and they are in the very act of betraying the cause.

We, by way of application, want to examine ourselves and make sure that our deceitful heart is not telling us that we are loyal, that we're faithful, that we are a friend, when we are actually working against. It's my personal opinion, as I've told you before, I think Judas thought he was doing the Lord a favor by forcing a confrontation with the authorities. I don't think he's being completely false and acting apart here.

His betrayer had given the arresting party a sign in verse 48 saying, Whomever I kiss, he is the one sees him. There were those who felt the need for the kingdom to happen now. There are people today who feel the need for the kingdom to happen now, and they will kiss the Lord Jesus and express honor and affection and appreciation for the Lord in all kinds of ways.

In that regard, they are now trying to go out into the world and force a confrontation. It can be trying to enforce Christian morality on people who cannot observe it from the heart. They will try to exert societal influence or social influence to bring in the kingdom,

to express the kingdom, to make the kingdom happen.

They'll quote the Sermon on the Mount, they'll do the red ink portions of the gospel and say, We need to be doing this now. I believe Judas is one of these. I think he felt like Jesus was dragging his feet and avoiding confrontation, and he got impatient.

Judas is known to be one who wants to gratify his desires now. This is why he raids the money box and wants to take shekels out of there, denarii out of there, and buy things for himself. 30 pieces of silver is a paltry sum.

It's like a couple of hundred dollars. So much so that they had it in the slush fund. They just reached into a box and handed him the 30 pieces without him even fulfilling his promise to deliver Jesus.

30 pieces was such a small sum. Remember, it was the price of an injured slave in the Old Testament. And they just hand it to him and say, Well, maybe he'll do it.

Maybe he won't. If he does, great. But it's not very much.

But Judas is all about instant gratification. I think it ought to happen now, and I'll make it happen by means fair or foul. If I need to skim something off the treasury to make it happen, I'll do that.

If I need to get the authorities to come and arrest Jesus, because Judas believes Jesus is the Messiah, he's gone out under the power of the Holy Spirit and healed people and preached the gospel. He has seen his companions do so. He's seen Jesus do so for three years.

He knows he's the Messiah. He just doesn't like the timing. So he says, Whomever I kiss, he is the one sees him.

So immediately, verse 49, Judas goes up to Jesus and says, Greetings, Rabbi, and kissed him. Greetings, Rabbi, teacher, a word of respect. So when he does this, Jesus replies in verse 50, Jesus said to him, Friend, why have you come? This is a fascinating response.

Friend, why have you come? Judas greets him as Rabbi, teacher. Jesus greets him as friend. There's only two places in the New Testament besides this one where someone is greeted as friend.

They're both in Matthew. We have seen them both already. If you keep your finger here and turn back to chapter 20, Jesus in the parable of the workers, the workers in the vineyard, you remember there are those that are hired in the morning and agree to work for a denarius.

There are those who are hired in the middle of the day, and there are those who come just an hour before the work is concluded. And so when evening had come in verse 8 of

Matthew 20, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first, beginning with the last. This way, the guys that have worked all day will see the one hour workers get the same denarius.

This is intentional. So when those who came about the 11th hour received a denarius, the first came, they supposed they would receive more. They likewise received each a denarius.

So verse 11, when they received it, they complained against the landowner. I don't agree with your plan. I don't agree with your perception of how things ought to go.

Saying these last men have worked only one hour and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day. So the landowner answers one of them and said, Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Remember when Jesus climbed the mountain and called the disciples and they came to him? Did Judas not agree to follow the Lord Jesus and acknowledge him as master and that he's got a better grasp of the plan than any of the disciples? Friend, I am doing you no wrong.

Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Friend, this is the Greek word hetairos, h-e-t-a-i-r-o-s.

Hetairos, it's a comrade, it's a friend. It's not the same as a philos, an intimate acquaintance, philadelphia, brotherly love. This is a more formal address.

As I said, there's only three times in the entire New Testament where someone is addressed this way. That's the first, Matthew 20, 13. The second, turn just a couple of pages forward to Matthew chapter 22.

This is the parable of the wedding feast. Remember what invitations are sent out, people don't want to come. So in verse 10, the servants go out into the highways and byways and gather together all whom they found bad and good.

The wedding hall is filled with guests. When the king comes in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? And Mr. Friend is speechless.

There is no defense. So the king says to the servants, bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Many are called, but few are chosen. If you respond to the call, you conform to the plan. Whatever that plan is, the plan is made by God himself.

If the plan is you work your part of the field for your agreed wage, you don't look over to

the other guy and say he didn't work as hard as me. Why is he getting paid the same as me? If you agree to come to the wedding feast, you put on the wedding attire, which is provided. If you recall, when we studied this some months back, royal wedding feasts, when the guests came, they were given a wedding garment.

This guy came to the feast, he smells the food, he hears the music, he anticipates the entertainment, but he doesn't want to put on the garment that the king himself has provided at the entrance. Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? The king doesn't say, could you not afford it? Did you leave it in your other suitcase? Did you not understand clearly that this was a wedding? The man is speechless because there's no excuse. The wedding garments are just in the other room.

He has come in without it because that's his idea of how to party. So both of our previous occasions, when someone is addressed as friend, it's not a happy circumstance. They are doing something that makes sense to them, that seems right in their eyes, but not in the eyes of the authority at hand.

That's what we have here, and it is no accident. Jesus doesn't say, Judas, why have you come? Member of the Twelve, why have you come? Mr. Iscariot, why have you come? Friend, friend, and there is an irony there because the friend is not actually a friend. A friend would have thinking in common, viewpoint in common, shared values, priorities in common, and someone who should be a friend is not acting as a friend.

A friend loveth at all times. There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. In the upper room in John 13, Jesus says, I no more call you servants, I call you friends.

And the upper room discourse is the inception of church age teaching about what it is to be friend. What is the highest compliment, the highest level of attainment in the Old Testament? I'll give you a hint. It's Abraham's and David's and Moses' attribution.

Abraham, friend of God. David, a man after my own heart. Moses, with whom I speak face to face as a friend.

That's a genuine friend. So we can ask ourselves the question, am I willing to come up and kiss the rabbi? And is he going to respond by saying, friend, what are you doing? A poignant moment for sure. Friend, why have you come? So then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took him.

This is a mob with swords and clubs. And suddenly one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand. This is verse 51.

One of those with Jesus stretched out his hand, drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Can you imagine the scandal if a servant of the high priest was violating Passover by being a part of this mob? If this were Passover, this would reflect on the high priest. Even if these people aren't really dedicated to genuine

righteousness, they're going to observe the forms and they don't want to be scandalized.

This is the servant of the high priest. This is his right hand man. This is his XO.

And the servant of the high priest is with this arresting party. Well, we know this is Peter. We know the servant of the high priest is named Malchus.

We know that his right ear is struck off. And we know that Jesus is going to heal it. But for all of those facts to come together, we have to look at all four Gospels.

But as we go to the break, here is my question. Look at verse 52. Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Looking at all four Gospels, do we not also remember that in Luke chapter 22, Jesus said, if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one? Well, here's a guy that's got a sword, and Jesus says, put it away. So which is it? Are we supposed to have a sword or not? Selling your cloak, your cloak is your most valuable. Remember the law said, and Jesus said, if somebody gives their cloak as pledge, give it back to him before sundown so that he doesn't freeze.

This is a very important article of clothing. And Jesus says, sell your cloak and a sword if you don't have one. Or so he is often quoted.

This is what we're going to look at when we come back from the break. This is the puzzle we hope to solve this morning. You have a contrast of two disciples.

You have Judas. You have Peter. Judas left early.

Peter has already denied the Lord three times this evening. He has failed the Lord three times in the garden, and he is about to deny the Lord three times in the courtyard of the high priest. That's nine failures in one evening.

This is number 10. How do I know this? That's what we'll look at when we come back from the break.