

Matthew 23-01-22b

Let's pick up our study now. We have posed a question for ourselves. We have one very obvious betrayer.

Every time Judas is mentioned in scripture, it seems, he is mentioned as the one who betrayed the Lord. Not so the apostle Peter, although his manifold mistakes on this night are quite evident. Why is it that when we see the apostle Peter mentioned in scripture, it doesn't say, and Peter who denied him, like it does Judas who betrayed him.

God is going to work in Peter's life and use these failures to make him stronger. And you see this in Acts. We've been through the book of Acts and you know that Peter decides this is never going to happen again.

And he becomes a man of courage, a man of faith, a man that God uses in amazing ways throughout the first 10 chapters of Acts. And the saying isn't exactly the same as what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. But the fact that Peter had a heart dedicated to the Lord, you see it after the resurrection when he's trying to fish.

And John looks at the seashore of the Lake Gennesaret, the Sea of Galilee and says, it's the Lord. Peter is ready to dive in and swim. And that heart is what counts.

We can have many failures. We can make many mistakes. We can err and fall short again and again.

But the credit belongs to the man who is not only in the arena, but who recognizes where the source of strength is. Where is our strength to recover? Where is our strength to grow and not repeat failures? This is what we're gonna look at now. So back in Matthew chapter 26, they came and laid hands on Jesus in verse 50 and took him.

Jesus is now in the hands of some individuals at the edge of the mob. It is possible that Malchus, the servant of the high priest is one of these who is physically escorting Jesus away from Gethsemane because in verse 51, suddenly one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand, drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Now to make sense of this, we're gonna do something we don't always do.

And that is to look at the witness of all four gospels. So let's take a look at Mark chapter 14, beginning at verse 43. While Jesus was speaking, Judas one of the 12 with a great multitude with swords and clubs came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Notice we have an addition here. Matthew said chief priests and elders. Now we've got the scribes.

They are also in violation of Passover if this were Passover night, which I'm convinced it's

not. Now his betrayer had given them a signal saying, whomever I kiss, he is the one, seize him and lead him away safely. Lead him away safely.

Don't hurt him. Again, I think this is a clue to Judas motive. He doesn't want Jesus assaulted or beaten, certainly not scourged, whipped and crucified.

He wants a confrontation. If he can just get Jesus arrested, Jesus will have to reveal himself as the Messiah. And in the plan of Judas, this would be a great time for him to do so.

Everybody is in Jerusalem. It's the feast of Passover. The following day, everyone will be in the streets, procuring lambs, gathering to watch the sacrifice at the temple of the Passover lamb proper, and then going home in the evenings to be with their families.

And Judas figures, if Jesus will reveal himself in Jerusalem with all of these people around, this will be bigger than the 5,000 that he fed or the 4,000 that he fed. It will be bigger than the crowds at the Sermon on the Plain, bigger than any of these where great multitudes followed him and he healed them all. This will be the biggest thing ever.

The time is right in Judas' mind. This is my belief. And this is why he says in Mark, I'll kiss him, you grab him and lead him away safely.

Make sure he does not get hurt. Now, do you remember at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, after he was baptized by John in the Jordan, what happened? 40 days, 40 nights in the wilderness. Then you have the three recorded temptations by Satan.

One of which was go to the pinnacle of the temple. And so now here we are. Cast yourself down.

Is it not written? Flights of angels will preserve you lest you dash your foot against a stone. So jump off. If it's the pinnacle of the temple, you're in Jerusalem and there's a huge crowd of people.

There were always crowds around the temple because sacrifice was an ongoing thing, right? I think when Satan entered into Judas, there is a similar plan at work. Make a spectacle of yourself. Force the kingdom.

One of Satan's other temptations is, I'll give you the kingdom. Just fall down and worship me. So I think that's what's going on here.

His betrayer had given them the signal. As soon as he had come, verse 45, this is Mark 14, 45. Immediately he went up to him and said to him, rabbi, rabbi, now we have two addresses of respect.

Teacher, teacher. And kissed him. Then they laid their hands on him and took him.

And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Now we have an address in verse 48 and 49 that we do not have in Matthew. Jesus answered and said to the arresting party, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to take me? Swords and clubs.

Matthew told us this, Mark tells us this. This arresting party brings swords as well as clubs. I was daily with you in the temple teaching and you did not seize me.

But the scriptures must be fulfilled. More about verse 49 shortly. Turn to Luke chapter 22.

As we get the multi-dimensional picture here, the not just three dimensions, but four, the 22nd chapter 47th verse, while he was still speaking, a multitude and he who was called Judas, one of the 12, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you betraying the son of man with a kiss? If I were going to make a comprehensive presentation of this, I would begin with what Matthew records and then add what Luke records. Friend, why have you appeared? Judas, are you betraying the son of man with a kiss? They make sense in that order, don't they? When those around him saw what was going to happen, they said to him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? This is new information.

They asked, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear before Jesus can answer just at the suggestion, shall we strike? Well, I'm not waiting for an answer, I'm going to strike. That sounds like a good idea to me. So a preemptive sword strike.

And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. Luke is the only gospel, and I like to think it's because this is Dr. Luke writing. Permit even this, Jesus said, and he touched his ear and healed him.

All four gospels record the chopping of the ear. Only Luke says Jesus healed it. It's his last healing miracle in recorded scripture.

Jesus says, permit this. Here's the arresting party ready to charge Jesus with blasphemy, with false claims of being the Messiah, false claims of being sent from God. And as they are arresting him, he heals a manifest and obvious wound.

The guy didn't drop his sword or throw his sword and stab him in the foot. It's the ear. If you cut off an ear, there's blood, there's a guy yelling, there's torches and light here.

Everybody can see there is this obvious bloody wound to the face. I would guess that there's, he doesn't just cleanly incise the ear off. There's probably a gash on the entire side of Malachi's face that took his ear off.

Maybe the ear is flopping down below. Who knows how gory this was. Jesus heals it.

He undoes the strike of the sword. Permit even this. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple and elders who had come to him.

Notice in the arresting party, not only are these multitudes with swords and clubs outside at night after dark, but the chief priests are there probably in the rear. Captains of the temple are present and elders who had come to him. All of these people are breaking a high Sabbath if this is Passover.

Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs? I was with you daily in the temple. You did not try to seize me, but this is your hour and the power of darkness. We've been looking at the power of darkness in our Wednesday night study about lady wisdom and her broad daylight appeal at the crossroads and at the gates and the crafty harlot coming at night down a dark street in the evening and out of sight and out of mind.

Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Well, finally, let's take a look at John. John chapter 18, beginning at the first verse.

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples to the brook Kidron where there was a garden, where he and his disciples entered. Judas who betrayed him also knew the place. Jesus often met there with his disciples.

Judas having received a detachment of troops and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees. Now we've got a fourth group implicated by John. So we've got the chief priests and the elders and the scribes and the Pharisees.

All four groups have contributed to this mob with lanterns, torches and weapons. Jesus, therefore knowing all things that would come upon him went forward and said to them, whom are you seeking? More words of Jesus that we did not get from Matthew, Mark or Luke. Whom are you seeking? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus said to them, I am, I am. I am sure he was speaking Aramaic. I'm sure that this very closely matched what God told Moses at the burning bush.

When they ask, who sent you? Tell them, I am sent you. They drew back and fell to the ground. He asked them again, whom are you seeking? They said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am. Therefore, if you seek me, let these go their way. Take me, let my disciples go.

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke of those whom you gave me, I have lost none. Then Simon Peter verse 10, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

So Jesus said to Peter, put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup, which my

father has given me? Put your sword into its sheath, into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup? In Luke 22, Jesus tells Peter something that we're gonna take a closer look at.

Back in the upper room, what is the deal with swords? Why does Peter even have a sword? Well, we know from chapter 22 in Luke verse 35, Jesus asked them a question. Now, what is the context of this question? Jesus has just told Simon, Shimon, Shimon in verse 31, Luke 22, 31. Shimon, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat.

Satan has asked for you all, this is plural. Shimon, Satan has asked for you, the group, the 11, Judas has left, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, singular, Peter, that your faith should not fail.

And when you, singular, have returned, strengthen your brethren. Peter says, Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death. Jesus said, I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know me.

And he said to them, these are the ones that Satan has asked for, that he might sift them like wheat. If you're sifting wheat, what's your objective? What is chaff and what is useful? Satan says, I think these disciples are chaff. I think I can sift them and I can expose the chaff.

I'll find that which is not wheat, that's not healthy, that's not the product of the seed of the word of God that's been planted. So in the wake of this prediction that Peter's gonna deny him, Jesus says, when I sent you all without a money bag, without a knapsack, without sandals, did you all lack anything? They said, nothing. It's amazing.

You sent us out two by two. You said, don't take an extra tunic. Don't take spare sandals.

Don't take any money, just go, right? There's been a lot of discussion about this. You can turn back to Matthew chapter 10 and verse nine to get the sending out that Jesus is referring to. Matthew 10, five, do not go in the way of the Gentiles.

Do not enter a city of the Samaritans. Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, which isn't there. Cast out demons freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts.

Don't take money with you. Do not take a bag for your journey. Do not take two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs.

A worker is worthy of his food. So Jesus said, you go forth, you're a worker. Who are you working for? You're working for the Lord God in heaven.

You're preaching the kingdom of heaven. So you will be provided for by your father in

heaven. Look at the lilies, they toil not, neither do they spend.

Your father knows what you need, before you ask him, take no thought for what you will eat, what you will drink, what you will wear, right? Now, let's think about that. If this were simply a literal command, we could quit our jobs and wait for manna, right? What does Jesus mean when he is sending the disciples out in this fashion? Is this a model for missionary work, that missionaries should go with nothing and expect miraculous provision? What is the point of this instruction in Matthew chapter 10? It is symbolic. There was a command given, do not do any work on the Sabbath.

Immediately after the 10 commandments were given to Israel, a guy went out on Saturday and began gathering sticks for a fire, and he was stoned to death for picking up sticks on a Saturday. Why? Is this a death penalty offense to work on the Sabbath? Obviously not. It was symbolic that all of the 10 commandments were to be taken seriously.

Do these and thou shalt live. Violate them and God's blessing and God's provision is going to depart. And this is played out in the whole later history of the nation.

Same thing here. It doesn't mean every time you take a trip, just divest yourself of everything except the bare clothing you've got and expect divine provision. They are sent out to preach the kingdom and the message of the kingdom is being preached non-verbally in their reliance on God for their power and their provision and their preaching.

Jesus didn't say, here's a script I wrote up for you to give the preaching of the kingdom. He said, you go preach the kingdom. As he told them in another place, when you are hailed before authorities, it will be given to you in that hour what you should say.

It will be given to you in this hour what you shall eat and what you shall wear. It is given to you. And this is a sign to those who are receiving this preaching that these men are from God.

It is unique. It's kind of a one-time thing. And their lives as the 12 are to be a living representation of reliance on the father, faith in the Lord Jesus as the son of God, as the Messiah, as the one who shall come and so these 12 are uniquely acting out, if you will, the message that they are preaching.

They are unusual. John the Baptist was unusual in that he didn't have an extra pair of sandals or two tunics. He was eating locusts and wild honey.

He was wearing a camel's hair garment. Why? It's symbolic. It doesn't mean everybody that preaches the kingdom should dress or eat that way.

It is a part of the message. He is the last of the Old Testament prophets and he dresses like one. He is observable as one.

When you went out in the wilderness, Jesus says, "'What did you go out to see, a reed shaken by the wind?' No, you went to see a guy who looks, acts, sounds and operates like a prophet. That's what you went out to see." So here, now we're back in the upper room just before this Gethsemane arrest. Jesus says, Peter, you're going to fail tonight.

You have already failed tonight actually, but you're going to deny me before the rooster crows three times. So he says to them, "'Satan has asked for you all to sift you like wheat. I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail.

That this sifting doesn't do you in, doesn't cause you to resign and quit. And afterwards, you'll return and strengthen your brethren.'" And he's talking specifically to Peter. Hard on the heels of that, in verse 35 of Luke 22, this gets to our sword puzzle.

"'When I sent you without money, knapsack, sandals, did you lack anything?' They said, we didn't lack a thing. Why was that? Their power and their provision came from God, right? We relied on God for our guidance, for our message, for our sustenance, for the ability to carry out the commission, to heal, to preach and so on. Back in Matthew 10, God provided everything we needed to fulfill that calling.

All of God, all of grace. Then he said to them," verse 36, Luke 22, "'But now he who has a money bag, let him take it. And likewise, a knapsack.

And he who has no sword, let him sell his cloak and buy one.'" This isn't just any old garment. This is your cloak. This is like your main piece of protective clothing.

This would be like the wintertime, sell your coat and get a sword instead. "'For I say to you that that which is written must still be accomplished in me.' He was numbered with the transgressors. "'For the things concerning me have an end.'" Have an end.

What on earth is going on here? The words of the Lord Jesus in John, he who lives by the sword will perish by the sword. The contrast of sell your cloak and buy a sword, put your sword into the sheath. This is John 18, verse 11.

We come back to our passage in Matthew 26. "'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.'" 26, 52. "'Do you think that I cannot now pray to my father and he'll provide me with more than 12 legions of angels?'" What's going on here? Does Jesus want them to have swords or not? Does he want them to have them, but not use them? All kinds of speculation has taken place.

People have said, well, when Jesus said sell your cloak and buy a sword, what he meant was you need some knives to take with you on the journey so that you can cut your food. They said, well, there are those who say Jesus wanted the disciples to have two swords. When they say we have two swords and he says, it is enough.

He says, well, numbered with the transgressors. By having swords, the arresting party

can number Jesus with the transgressors because his disciples have unauthorized weapons, which makes no sense. This entire mob has got clubs and swords and torches and the rest of it.

So it's not illegal to have swords. So what is going on here? Wouldn't it be easier if we just didn't have this one verse in one gospel that says sell your cloak and buy a sword and the disciples respond by saying, it is enough. They say, we have your two swords and he says, it's enough or that's enough.

And people have tried to parse that as Jesus saying, that's enough talk about swords. What on earth is going on? Well, let's focus on Luke 22 and figure this out. How does Jesus introduce this? One of my favorite Warner Brothers cartoons is where Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny are talking about, is it duck season or is it rabbit season? And then they get to saying, shoot me.

No, shoot me. Not me, you, shoot you, shoot me, shoot you. And anyway, Elmer winds up shooting Daffy and he looks out at you and says, pronoun trouble.

Notice the pronouns. I have canvassed the earth. I can't find anybody that has noticed the pronouns here.

So we'll see if this is the magic clue. What is the pronoun usage in verse 35 of Luke 22? When I sent you without a money bag, without a knapsack and without sandals, did you lack anything? They said, no, we didn't lack anything. In verse 36, then he said to them, but now I want you to take a money bag.

I want you to take a knapsack. I want you to sell your cloak and buy a sword. That's not what he says.

It's even quoted that way by people who aren't actually looking at their Bible while they're writing their article. Why did Jesus tell his disciples to buy two swords? I mean, you can't believe the confusion that comes from lack of attention to detail and pronoun trouble. Jesus says, now he who has a money bag.

What has Jesus been trying to teach his disciples for over three years? Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. I sent you out with nothing to teach you to rely on God. It doesn't mean every time you go out, you take nothing.

I'm trying to get you to learn to rely on God, to work in his power, under his guidance, to let the scriptures be your guide, let the Holy Spirit be your guide, especially in our day. If you have come three years plus with me and you still have a money bag, well, you better take it because you're not relying on the Father for your sustenance. If someone has a knapsack, if you're still not aware that God is supplying all of our needs according to his riches in glory, if you haven't learned by now to look to God for provision, to look to God for protection, to look to God for the necessities of life, sometimes that will

involve providing for ourselves.

Workman is worthy of his hire. Work quietly with your hands, make your own living, earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. These are also biblical principles.

What was Jesus trying to accomplish when he sent them out without anything? It was one of the hardest things they'd ever had to do. It required faith and reliance upon God. If you've not learned that lesson and you are still relying on your money and your own ideas of what is right, then he who is doing so should sell his cloak and buy a sword.

If you're gonna work in the ways of the world, you're gonna use the world's power, the world's leverage, the world's means of getting things accomplished. Well, if you're still at that stage, then you'd better go do that because you're hopeless when it comes to relying on the power of God and the provision of God and the protection of God and the guidance of God. Those who are still hanging onto their money bag and still hanging onto the cloak I told you you don't need, well, you'd better sell it and get a sword because now you're not just gonna need a cloak.

If you're gonna operate in the ways of the world, you're gonna have to get a weapon. You're gonna have to be prepared for the authorities and you're gonna be having them pry your cold dead finger off the trigger and so on. This isn't about the second amendment.

This isn't about should we have firearms for personal protection or in that day, should they have carried a sword to protect themselves? Although in the New Testament scriptures, you don't find a single case of any disciple who gets arrested and thrown into prison resisting with a sword. If Jesus was telling the disciples, sell your cloak and get a sword so you don't get arrested and you can keep on preaching, they didn't do it. Peter's gonna have to be sprung out of prison by an angel.

Paul is gonna go to prison multiple times. He never swung a sword. This isn't about swords.

Just like the parable of the crafty harlot isn't about young men being waylaid down a bad path. This is about what you choose with your faith. Are you gonna put your faith in your energy, your possessions, your ability to defend yourself from attack or are you going to rely on God? And Jesus says, I'm gonna be numbered with the transgressors.

There's gonna be some hard days coming up here. If you haven't learned where the power is and where the provision is and where the protection is by now, you're on your own. You might as well sell your coat and get a sword for all the good it will do you.

Does it make sense? It's hard on the heels. You're gonna betray me. You're gonna deny me.

You're going to lose it because you're gonna try to operate in your own courage instead of looking to God for your provision, your protection, and your power. Peter in the courtyard talking to the young maiden at the fire isn't the Peter who went out without sandals and without a staff and without money and was able to preach and heal. What happened to that Peter? What happened to those disciples? If you haven't learned the lesson of no money bag, if you haven't learned the lesson of no sword, the best you can do is go fail by relying on your own strength.

I say to you, and notice in verse 37, sell your cloak and buy a sword. People forget about go ahead and take the money bag and take the, they're cool with that. It's the sword that everybody, wait a minute, aren't we pacifist and nonviolent and anti-military and the rest of it? It has nothing to do with personal protection.

It has nothing to do with serving in the military. When Jesus says to Peter later, after Malchus's ear gets struck off, he who lives by the sword will perish by the sword. He who lives in the power of his own arm, remember our memory verse, cursed is the man who trusts in man, who makes flesh his arm, who has a heart that departs from the Lord.

He's gonna be like a shrub in the desert and not see good when it comes. Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength. If you try to live by the sword, if you try to live by perpetrating, this is what Judas is trying to do.

I'll bring in the kingdom by a mob carrying swords. I love you, master, I'm helping you here. Trying to do it with a sword.

And so when Peter pulls out the sword, Jesus says, put that sword away. You didn't get the message. When I was talking about people, don't you remember that I preceded it with, did you need anything by way of protection or provision when I sent you out to preach the kingdom? If you're living for the kingdom, if you are living to serve God, you're gonna be cursed if you trust in your own strength.

You will not be able to do it. Put that sword away. If you're gonna live in the ways of the world, take your money bag, take your cloak and sell it by a sword for all the good it will do you.

I'm gonna be numbered with the transgressors. These things concerning me have a telos, they have an end. The things concerning me, these object lessons I'm giving you, these exhortations I'm giving you, these symbolic sendings forth and upper room teachings, washing your feet.

I'm not trying to teach you that every time you get together, you should take your shoes and socks off and wash each other's feet. Get above the literal, get above the physical, and think in terms of spiritual truth. This is not about swords.

It's not about living by military conquest or living by keeping a gun in your home for

safety. A gun may or may not be a good choice for any individual person. How do we know if it's a good choice? We look to the Lord God.

What is my particular situation? I pray over that decision. I think about it, but I'm not putting my faith in my weapon or how many rounds I've got in the closet. My faith is in God.

Jesus doesn't say to Peter, throw that sword away. He says, put it away. It's all about where is your confidence on what does your faith rest? If it's your job, if it's your skills, if it's your looks, if it's your talent, if it's your personality, that's your sword.

And the things that you really ought to keep, like your cloak, you're going to end up selling it and buying something you don't really need and can't use in the service of God. Whatever else you want to say, the sword is not a tool of evangelism. It's not a tool of preaching the gospel.

It has been, people have tried to use it that way. Look at the history of the Catholic church. How did that turn out? Look at the conquest of America and bringing the savages to Christ by force.

How did that work out? That's the message here. And it's consistent. Jesus says, now he who has a money bag, and you could add the word still, if you haven't learned by now, you're hopeless.

Put that sword away. This is not how it's done. Well, we have a lot more to see here.

Let me leave you with a thought. When Jesus says, for the things concerning me have an end here in Luke, he says in Matthew chapter 26, do you think that I cannot now pray to my father and he will provide me with more than 12 legions of angels? If this were something to be accomplished by force, you think your two paltry swords wielded by fishermen and tax collectors are gonna do any good? I've got 80,000 angels my father can send if I say the word. This is not the time for that.

This is not the place for that. This is a time to look to the father. Shall I not drink the cup the father has given me? This is a time to drink the cup, not a time to swing the sword or call for legions of angels.

But look at verse 54. This is what we're gonna pick up next time. How then could the scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen thus? How then could the scriptures be fulfilled? Put your sword in its place.

Otherwise, how can the scriptures be fulfilled? You shouldn't be operating based on a sense of clear and present danger or immediate threat. You should be operating on what the scriptures say. This is a time of scriptural fulfillment.

What say the scriptures? If you keep swinging this sword, how are the scriptures gonna be fulfilled? Don't you know your scriptures? If Peter had been praying for those three hours in the garden while Jesus was praying, those scriptures would be in his mind because that's what you pray. You pray what you know. You converse with God about a common topic of interest, which is God's word and God's plan and God's purpose.

Fell asleep. How can the scriptures be fulfilled? And Peter's probably saying, what scriptures? Tragic. That's what we'll look at next time.

We'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you that we have the scriptures. We have the revelation of your purpose, your provision, your plan for us.

We thank you for the gift and presence of your Holy Spirit who activates and enables and empowers that word so that we can live a life beyond our courage, beyond our strength, beyond our resources. We pray that as we reflect on these truths, that your Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts so that we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds and we will understand what is your good and acceptable and perfect will. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

Amen.