

Jesus Bears our Betrayal

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Bible Text: Luke 22:47-53

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If you would please turn in your copy of God's Word to Luke chapter 22. We will read verses 47 to 53.

If you would please stand for the reading of God's Word.

Luke 22 beginning at verse 47. Hear now the Word of the Lord.

While he [Jesus] 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, but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him.

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?"

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."¹

Heavenly Father, we ask now that you would open our eyes to see and our ears to hear and our hearts that we might understand and know you more and love you better. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please be seated.

¹ Luke 22:47-53.

Sarah and I had been dating just a little over two years when we broke up. We were very close. We thought that we loved each other. We had even planned to get married. In fact, we had picked colors for our wedding already. We had a green and a bright yellow. Sarah had even bought towels and was storing them.

I will never forget that day shortly after my first semester of college as we sat together on a hill in a park in Sturgis, Michigan. Sarah explained to me that we needed to take some time to pray and seek the Lord about our future together and what was going to happen with us and what were we going to do with our lives? We separated for what I thought was... it is going to be short time to pray and seek the Lord.

I was selling life insurance at the time and I had gone away on a trip. That next day I came back on Friday. We were attending a youth event together out in a field that had a warehouse with a basketball court. The boys were staying in a tent out in this field and I was walking back from those tents with one of my friends named Matt and Matt nervously explained to me that Sarah was now dating my best friend, Jesse.

It had only been three days since we had separated and my heart was torn in pieces. It was... it hurt so bad. I couldn't cry. I couldn't talk. I just sat down on the grass.

Betrayal hurts. My best friend had betrayed me. It rips out our hearts. It is infuriating. It is horrific. And we have all been the victims of betrayal at some time or other in our lives from little tiny things that seem not to matter years later, but small things can be betrayals nonetheless.

Like last year as the Colts were pursuing a perfect season in that last stupid game against the Jets when they set their starters, some of us felt betrayed.

Betrayal can take larger forms of Jesse and Sarah, unfaithfulness in a marriage.

We have all felt betrayed in some form or another.

And some of us have betrayed, betrayed our friends, betrayed our loved ones.

And our passage this morning is about betrayal. It details one of the, if not the most famous betrayals in history Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss.

In our passage this morning Luke shows us three people and their response to betrayal in order to lead us to Christ and to the truth that Jesus bears our betrayal for us.

Our passage begins by telling us that there came a crowd. We learn a lot about this crowd in our passage and from the other gospels. There were a lot different people who had come for Jesus. Malchus is there, the high priest's personal servant. The temple police had come. And there was even a detachment of soldiers and their commander which could have been as many as 600 soldiers, but it was probably only a portion of the nearby garrison.

And it would have taken some time for this crowd to get together. After all, it wasn't that long ago that Judas had left Jesus and the disciples at the supper, at their Passover meal.

William Hendrickson helps us piece together the events of that night. He writes, "Act quickly," Judas must have told the Jewish authorities, "preferably by night when there is no crowds around. Act tonight."

The authorities had been waiting for him. So busy were they with this plot to destroy Jesus that they themselves had not yet partaken of the Passover meal. The probable whereabouts of Jesus had to be ascertained. A posse had to be organized. The temple police must be notified. Permission has to be obtained whether from Pilate or from the Roman chiliarch so that a group of soldiers could accompany the temple police. All the members of the Sanhedrin must be alerted.

Annas the high priest must not be left in the dark. Lanterns, swords, clubs must be collected and, of course, the need of secrecy must be emphasized to all those who are in on this.

And then once everything was ready the crowd went to Gethsemane, a favorite place of the rabbi, hoping to find him there. And the crowd finds Jesus. They approach to apprehend him and who is leading the crowd of a few hundred people? Luke tells us it is Judas, one of the 12.

One of the 12 is an interesting phrase that Luke adds to show us that this was not some man on the fringe of the disciples and in a dark trench coat and sunglasses and his hat hiding and spying. This is one of us. This is the man that we used to eat together with. We prayed with. When we greet each other we would hug and we would kiss and slept in the same room. The disciples trusted this man so completely they put him in charge of the treasury. Judas kept the disciples' money.

You see, it is uncomfortable when an enemy offends us. It is annoying when a stranger inflicts some wound, but only somebody close to you, only someone who has your trust, someone you love and confide in can really inflict that deep wound of betrayal. And that is why Judas uses a kiss to show the crowd which man he was betraying.

That same January that I met my wife I had the privilege of going to Romania to teach in a Christian school in Campina, Romania to teach about Christ and theology of our Savior. And I knew going there that I was going to get the privilege to meet an American missionary who was living in Campina. His name was Mort. And I new he was an affectionate man. I had been warned. And when I met him he grabbed me, gave me this huge hug and he kissed me. And this was not some European kiss on the cheek where your lips don't even touch anywhere. This was a big fat wet man kiss. But it was a kiss full of love and affection, because kisses are about intimacy. Kisses are about love.

In fact, the word in Greek that means to kiss is the same word, φιλεω (fil-eh'-o) that means to love. Literally it says, to love on. To kiss is to love, to show loving affection with a kiss.

English poet Robert Herrick wrote that a kiss is the sure sweet cement, glue and lime of love.

Kisses are about intimacy and love. But Judas defiles that intimacy. He spoils that love, using it, instead, of affection to betray the Savior. And, in fact, it is that intimacy that enables Judas to betray. Judas only knew where to find Jesus because he had spent so many hours with Jesus in that garden at that very place. It was that intimacy that led to Judas to use a kiss, the very tangible of intimacy to betray Jesus.

And we have all given the Judas kiss at some time or other in our lives.

I think that despair can be intense for the betrayer.

Mel Gibson in his movie about the crucifixion of Christ takes a number of liberties. But I think he may be right on when it comes to Judas. After the betrayal Judas runs back into the temple and he says, "Release that innocent man. I was wrong." And he throws the money down and says, "Take it back. Take back your silver."

He runs out and he is hiding in this alley and these children come to him start to taunt him and say how he looks so bad. "Look at your lips. What is wrong with you?"

And finally in frustration Judas says, "Go away you Satans."

They say, "Satans?"

He is cursing. You must be cursed. Are you cursed? The curse is in you.

And Mel Gibson has their faces distort and they chase him out into the desert. They haunt him.

And betrayal can be just like that. You can be haunted by the pain that we have on our friends, wounded by the own wounds that we have given, unable to escape our pain because of what we have done with our own hands.

In Luke's gospel Luke doesn't tell us what happens to Judas. He doesn't tell us that he is haunted, doesn't tell us that he runs and hangs himself as we learn in other gospels. I think that is on purpose. Throughout the gospel of Luke, Luke regularly does not tell us what happens to the characters because he wants us to place ourselves in the story. That is us giving the kiss. That is us betraying our Savior.

If you are a Judas, if you have ever been a Judas, how will you respond to the Savior. Will you continue to run haunted by the bitterness, haunted by the pain that you have inflicted? Or will you run to Jesus, let him bear your betrayal and let him give you rest?

Judas isn't the only person in the narrative that Luke uses to point us to Jesus. The next group we see here in our passage is Peter and the disciples. Here comes Judas and the crowd to arrest Jesus and the disciples ask the first words out of their mouth are, "Jesus, should we strike them down? Should we slay them?" is what the Greek says.

And then Peter doesn't wait for an answer. He pulls the sword. He attacks and even cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest.

Why would the disciples of the Prince of Peace react like this, react with such anger and such violence?

First, I think they were responding to their own guilt, their own feelings that they had betrayed their Savior.

The passage right before ours, if you look our passage begins with, "While he was still speaking..."²

Jesus had been rebuking his disciples because they had fallen asleep when he asked them to watch and pray.

Jesus in his hour of need had gone to the garden to pray to his Father and he says to his closest friends, "Stay, watch, pray." And they fall asleep. And Jesus comes back and he shakes them awake and says, "Friends, can't you stay awake even for a few hours? Pray. Watch."

And if as Jesus is rebuking his disciples that they seek this crowd come up, this crowd that maybe they could have seen if they had just stayed awake and watched as Jesus has asked his best friends, couldn't stay awake when he needed them most.

Not only are they frustrated, discouraged, perhaps embarrassed at their own failures, their own betrayal of the Lord, look who leads this little army. It is one of their own.

Remember, Judas had not just eaten with the Savior. He had eaten with the disciples. He was one of the 12. They had laughed together, eat, drink, sleep together, hugged, kissed. They were friends. He was their treasurer and here he was betraying not only Jesus but them. Judas was betraying the other disciples as well.

You see, betrayal, like most sin, has these lasting ripple effects that affect everyone around us.

² Luke 22:47.

And these disciples, bitter at their own guilt, angry at Judas' betrayal of them, they rise up to defend their Jesus.

Think of the questions that must be going through their minds. Why didn't we see it before? They start to remember all of the things that Judas had said or done that they should have recognized as signs of his wickedness. They should have known that this is what was going to happen. They could have prevented this sooner. This was their fault. If only we had stayed awake we could have seen this coming. We could have warned Jesus. We could have at least ran.

In their self blame, their self accusation and think about what those next few days were like, watching as Jesus suffered and then died, those horribly long three days while he lay in the tomb, the thoughts that went through their minds, the despair, the blame. If only we had stopped Judas. If only we had stayed awake that night. If we had chased him when he ran out from the supper... Jesus told us who was going to betray him. Why didn't we listen? We could have stopped it.

And then the anger. If only we could get our hands on that weasel.

And perhaps there was that anger and that thirst to get even, that longing for revenge that rose up in Peter and drove him to attack. He cut off the ear.

For others the betrayal was so deep they were hurt and bitter. Maybe they thought Jesus' dying was a kind of betrayal. Why didn't Jesus do something? How come the Savior never defends himself? How can we ever trust again?

It just isn't worth the pain.

Vin knew about betrayals. In a fictional book series by Brandon Sanderson Vin is a young girl who grows up on the streets. She is poor, alone and abused. After her mother killed Vin's sisters, her brother took her and ran living on the streets, trying to stay alive by begging or stealing and [?] her brother worked hard to make sure that Vin never trusted anyone. He would say to her, "Everyone will eventually betray you."

And just to make sure she got the point, he would beat her regularly to remind her that one day even I your brother will betray you.

And one day he did. She woke up and he was gone. And now she was alone on the streets trying to find a way to survive. Oh, she would never forget his lessons. His voice keeps whispering in the back of her mind. Don't trust anyone. They will all eventually betray you.

And one day she meets [?]. [?] becomes like a father to Vin. He takes her in, makes her feel welcome. Now she belongs. She has food and clothes and family. But Vin still hears that voice in the back of her head, her brother reminding her, "Don't trust anyone. They will all eventually betray you, even [?]."

Vin learns about [?] wife Mare. And it turned out for Mare somehow betrayed [?] and Vin can't understand because [?] still seems to love her. He still defends her. He still talks about her with praise. Wouldn't it be better to have never had trusted and then it wouldn't hurt so bad.

[?] says this.

“Do you stop loving someone just because they betray you? I don't think so. That is what makes the betrayal hurt so much. Pain, frustration, anger and I still loved her. I still do.”

“How?” Vin asked. “How can you and how can you possibly trust people. Didn't you learn from what she did to you?”

Have you ever felt like Vin? Have you ever felt that it would be better to just never trust at all than to feel that immeasurable pain, that soul tearing pain of betrayal?

Have you ever heard yourself say to someone, “See? That is what happens when you trust”?

You let someone get too close.

I think the disciples were right there. They wanted to do something. They wanted to make that pain go away. They just wanted to stop hurting. They had betrayed their Savior earlier that night. Now they were being betrayed even as they had been betrayed and I think when they saw Judas they saw a little bit of themselves. And they hated what they saw.

And Luke again intentionally leaves out the details in this passage so that we can put ourselves in the story.

Can you see yourself here? Maybe you are the one giving that kiss or maybe you are the one receiving it. Maybe you are the one cutting somebody else, or maybe it was you who was stabbed in the back.

This passage is one of pain. Every character feels some sort of pain from the many betrayals.

And now I think Luke has us right where he wants us. He wants to show us that there is someone who makes that pain go away, somebody who can heal us and give us rest. Luke leads us to Jesus who bears for us our betrayal.

When we look at the passage, we can see how Jesus handled betrayal first by looking at how Jesus handles Judas. Here comes this man that Jesus trusted, the man that Jesus had a close relationship with. And Judas comes with a kiss, not some pansy peck on the cheek

or that European social kiss. In Mark the Greek word has an intensifier on it. It says it is passionate and intense and Jesus lets Judas kiss him.

Do you know how absurd that is? I mean, Jesus knew this man. Jesus had already said this is the man who will betray me. He knew Judas was coming to betray him and he still trusted him, let him handle the money, let him kiss him.

Jesus knew Judas would betray him and he still laughed with him, led him into his inner circle of friends, ate with him, slept next to him, Jesus even washed Judas' feet hour before Judas betrayed him.

He knew Judas would betray him and he still loves him.

And now that Judas is about to betray him, Jesus doesn't push him away. He doesn't say, "Get out of here." And lets him kiss him. And then Jesus pleads with him. Look at our text. Look at the very first words that Jesus says.

Jesus says to his betrayer, "Judas..."

Jesus calls Judas by his name. Can you imagine? Imagine the master calling your name in the midst of your sin, while you are sinning Jesus says, "Kris."

As you are in the act Jesus says, as only he can with love, rebuke and pleading all mixed together, he says, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"³

I think Jesus is pleading with Judas. I think it is one final warning. How many times did Judas hear Jesus teach about the dangers of money, the dangers of self seeking gain? How often had he heard the Savior's warnings, watched him in his rebukes, seeing Jesus' miracles?

And if that wasn't enough, Jesus warned Judas personally many times. He warned about it being better for him not to be born. He warned him at that supper only hours earlier and at that moment at dinner it is hard for me not to imagine. Judas should have fallen down, cried out, "Lord, forgive me, what a wretched man that I am."

Maybe even in the garden in those hours as Jesus is praying to the Father, maybe Jesus says, "Lord, not Judas, not him."

And now Jesus gives him one more opportunity, "Please, Judas, don't do this. Don't."

You hear the pain in the Savior's voice. Remember, yes, Jesus was God, but Jesus was also 100 percent human. The Father was making Jesus into that perfect high priest who in every way sympathizes with our weakness. Jesus knew what it was like to have one of his friends die and he wept. He knew what it was like to have his best friends fail him in his

³ Luke 22:48.

time of need and Jesus now knew what it was like to have one of his friends betray him and it hurt deeply.

But Jesus had to be betrayed so he could understand our pain when we are betrayed.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus' work on our behalf was not on the cross, but in life also. That is why you hear when I pray I love to say, "Father, thank you for Jesus for his life, his death and his resurrection because we need all three, his life in which he sympathizes with our weakness, his death when he pays for his sins, his resurrection which gives us hope of resurrection."

Jesus knows what it is to hurt. He bore our pains in his life. He knows what it is to be weighed down with sorrow, to ache in the very deepest parts of your soul. He has been there. Jesus knows that pain. He knows how to walk through it. And Jesus is able to hold your hand and lead you through it, too. Come to Jesus all you who have been betrayed and he will give you rest.

But Luke isn't done leading us to Jesus. Jesus also bears the weight of the betrayer, too. We know that it is Peter who cuts off the ear of Malchus the high priest's personal servant.

Imagine this scene as Peter in his anger, you know, and impetuous Peter we see him throughout the gospels and he pulls out the sword and he attacks the disciple and Jesus immediately stops the violent act. And what does Jesus do next? He reaches down. He picks up the ear, this ear, this gory ear with blood and he puts it back in place heals it as though it had never been cut off.

Can you imagine the reaction of Malchus? Here he was coming to betray Jesus, to arrest him, beat him and put him to death and Jesus shows him mercy. Can you imagine?

Malchus would forever bear on his own body a reminder of who Jesus was. Any time he caught his reflection in a piece of silver, any time he looks into a bowl of water, he goes into the temple to wash himself and he sees there that ear and he remembers the time his ear was cut off and that man who put it back on.

Jesus shows even his betrayers mercy, because Jesus came to forgive the betrayer.

What happens to Malchus? We don't know. Luke again doesn't tell us. He wants us to in this story.

To all the Malchuses here, to all of those who have betrayed, Jesus has come to bare your sin that you might have real peace, not the despair of Judas, not that haunting torture that betrayers feel, but real forgiveness, real peace, real rest.

That same night that I learned about Sarah and my best friend was a very difficult night. A little while later we were playing basketball in the gym and any of you who have, well,

played any game or a sport or anything with me know how competitive I am. I don't like to lose. I am a very intense person. And Jesse was on the other team. That was a very violent game of basketball.

But later that night as I knew Jesse was alone in his tent and I went to him and unzipped his tent and I walked in and Jesse he cowered in the corner of the tent and he said, "Kris, please don't hit me," because he knew the pain of somebody who had betrayed his friend who was embarrassed. He hurt and he was even afraid. And he knew what I must be feeling. He expected me to be anger, to thirst for revenge, to get even, to hurt him somehow.

But Jesse and I both professed Christ and we sat down. We talked. We even confessed to one another. We hugged and we spent that next weekend together. We were reconciled as a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You see, Luke shows us in this passage Jesus came to bear our betrayal.

For those of you who have betrayed, come to Jesus. There you will find forgiveness, peace, rest an end to despair and pain. To those of you who have been betrayed, don't give up hope. Don't surrender to your pain and anger. Jesus has been there. Jesus has watched that valley and he can lead you safely through it.

Hear the words of Jesus. "Come to me all you betrayers and all you who have been betrayed and I will give you rest."

Father, we pray that you would help us to know these truths of your Word that if we come to you, you will give us rest, that you have borne our pain, that you have borne our betrayal. How many times have we betrayed our friends and our loved ones, betrayed even you. We have been Judases and Malchuses and the disciples. And, God, many of us hurt from betrayal, friends, loved ones who have broken our hearts, stabbed us in the back, seared our sores. God, we run to you. Give us forgiveness and give us that peace and rest as only you can because you have carried our burdens. We rest in you our Savior. Amen.

Let's respond to God's Word. Our hymn this morning is 400.