



# Central Peninsula Church

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Luke 22:47-53  
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## The Kiss and the Sword

SERIES: *A Savior for All People*

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Last week I gave you some homework. Today I would like you to turn it in so I can grade it. We were looking at Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemene and I challenged you to spend one full hour in prayer this week. How did you do? How many of you actually did it?

I received some encouraging e-mails this week that confirm this was a powerful experience for some of you. One of you wrote: "For the first time in my entire life, on Monday morning I prayed for an entire hour. I was awake and on my knees (or sitting...I am getting older, you know) for the full hour. I assumed that since Jesus' prayer in the garden is recorded for us, somebody must have heard it, which implies that He was speaking out loud. This consideration is what made it work for me. I modeled my conversation with God after those that I have with my friends and family. If I can talk to them for an hour or more, why can't I talk to God that way? I was so touched and impacted by my time with the Lord that I made time to do it again on Tuesday, early in the morning on my business trip this week."

Someone else wrote, "After about 5 minutes of the same thing that I've been going over and over with Him, I remembered how you said 'Just be truthful with God and tell Him what you're thinking...' I started doing that and right away God revealed to me that I had a bad attitude problem and was very bitter about things. He showed me that until I could trust Him to take care of my finances and just lay myself open to His will I would never have peace. He showed me that I was taking my bitterness out on those closest to me and I didn't even realize it. He showed me that I've never asked Him what he wants me to do for a job because I was afraid that He would lead me into something that I really didn't want to do. For me it was like a light turned on. It's become so clear."

I'm sure that many of you could add your own story. It's amazing how prayer can steady us in some of the darkest hours of our life, and bring to light things that we need to know. Remember: prayer changes us more than it changes God.

This is important for us to understand as we look at the next scene in Luke's gospel, depicting the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemene. This is one of the darkest moments of Jesus' life. It seems like everything is out of control. Do you ever feel like that? Things are happening so fast and you can't seem to stop them. H.G. Wells once said that the world is like a great stage

production, directed and managed by God. As the curtain rises, the set is perfect and everything goes well until the leading man steps on the hem of the leading lady's dress, causing her to trip over a chair, which knocks over a lamp, which pushes a table into a wall and knocks over the scenery, which brings everything down on the actor's heads. Meanwhile, behind the scene, God, the Director, is running around, shouting orders in a panic, pulling strings, trying desperately to restore order from chaos. But he can't do it, because as Wells said, he's very limited; he can only do so much.

When you look at this scene in Gethsemene from one perspective, it almost seems like that might be the case. When you look at the various ways the main characters are acting, it kind of does seem out of control. Listen as I read Luke 22:47-53.

**"While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?' When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?' And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, 'Stop! 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 against Him, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours.'"**

### I. Treachery, fear and betrayal.

#### A. Treachery: A betrayer comes with a kiss.

There are three things I want you to see here that makes this seem like things are out of control. The first is treachery. While Jesus is still speaking to his disciples, a crowd comes led by "one called Judas, one of the Twelve." Luke uses words that isolate Judas and accentuate his betrayal. It's like the camera zooms in on him. Luke doesn't tell us that he actually kissed Jesus, but we know that he did. Mark even says in his gospel that he gave him a prolonged kiss. A kiss, of course, is a sign of

intimacy. Betrayal is bad enough, but to use as the sign of treachery something which expresses intimacy, trust and brotherly love is doubly despicable. And painful! Sometimes we think that none of this really affected Jesus; that he knew all along Judas was the betrayer, and since he never really trusted him in the first place, it didn't really hurt him when he finally betrayed him. I don't buy that. I believe Jesus was cut deeply by the double-edged knife of not just betrayal but betrayal with a kiss; betrayal by a trusted friend.

If you've been betrayed by someone you trusted; someone who all the while pretended to be your best friend, you know how this feels. I think of a child who is sexually abused by a parent, grandparent or a trusted adult like a pastor or a coach. Talk about the kiss of betrayal! That's the worst kind. Or I think of men who shower their wives with flowers and gifts while seeing another woman on the side. Or I think of a company President who honors an employee of 35 years with a gold watch and chicken dinner, while he "eases" him out of a job. This kind of deceptive betrayal happens all the time. None of us is immune to it. And because of that, one of the things we often do is try to protect ourselves by refusing to entrust ourselves to anyone. So we go through life, and we may be the nicest person in the world, but we won't let anyone get that close, because in the end that's the surest way to pain. So we have painless yet superficial relationships. A lot of us live this way and don't even know it, until we somehow begin to peel away the calluses over our heart and face the pain.

The one thing we have to keep in mind is that Jesus really knows this pain. He's been there. The One you pray to, the One you try to follow, he knows the sting of betrayal by a trusted friend, and he knows the added pain of having his betrayer shower him with affection while he stabs him in the back. You can talk to him about it because he knows and he can help you begin the healing process.

**B. Fear: A friend comes with a sword:** So the first sign that things are out of control here is treachery. The second thing we see here is in the rest of the disciples. It's fear. We move from the kiss to the sword. The disciples are frightened, so they ask Jesus if they should draw their swords. We know from an earlier conversation that they had two of them. So they're thinking, "Let's go for it!" And I love how they ask Jesus, "Shall we do this?" but then before he can even answer, one of them draws a sword and with great determination yet poor aim whacks off the right ear of one of the high priest's servants. We know, of course, that it was Peter. Good thing for this poor servant that Peter's sport was fishing rather than fencing! I mean, he was aiming for the guy's head.

We laugh at Peter now but at the time his

impulsivity was dangerously stupid. He was playing perfectly into the hands of the chief priests who had come to arrest Jesus. Now they could claim Jesus and his friends were resisting arrest and planning some kind of guerrilla action. He validates the actions of those who are trying to bring him in.

Fear manifests itself in various ways in our lives. Sometimes we retreat, but sometimes we lash out like Peter. We take matters into our own hands. We panic and think that if we don't do something to defend ourselves or fix the situation, we'll lose. The worst examples of this are when God's people try to get God's work done using the weapons of violence. Whenever God's people have taken up the sword to accomplish God's purposes, damage is done to God's plan; someone's ear gets lopped off in the name of Jesus and we're standing there with blood on one hand and a Bible in the other.

I can't help but think that if Peter had just done what Jesus had told him to do in the Garden. Jesus said, "*Pray that you don't enter into temptation,*" but Peter had taken a nap instead. He wasn't ready. Human nature, unprepared by prayer, will get us into a ton of trouble.

**C. Hatred: The enemy comes in the darkness:** The third thing we see in this passage as an indication that things are out of control is hatred. The chief priests, the officers of the temple and the elders come with swords and clubs to arrest him as if he were some kind of criminal. They could have just arrested him in the daytime while he taught in the temple day after day the past week, but they feared the people. And the fact that they would only come and get him in the dark of night indicates how outside the realm of justice they really were.

When I was a kid we used to spend part of our summers up in the Sierras fishing on the north fork of the Yuba River. My dad would often send my brother and I out to find Hellgrammites that we could use for live bait. Hellgrammites were usually found hiding under rocks. We would carry our jars along the shore and lift up rocks, exposing the underside to the light of day. Immediately, those little bugs would scramble for cover, looking for safety in darkness. They hated the light.

That's how people are. On one occasion early in his ministry, Jesus said, "**This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed**" (Jn.3:19,20).

One of the most powerful memories I have of becoming a Christian was the feeling that I no longer had to hide. For so long I had lived with things that I kept hidden in the dark, and there was always the fear that I would get caught; my deeds would be exposed to the light. But now, there was nothing in my life that could be exposed that hadn't already been exposed to God. There is

such freedom in that.

Sometimes the ones who look the best on the outside are the ones who are hiding the most. Here these respected members of the clergy pretend to be serving the purposes of God, but the fact that they work under the cover of darkness betrays their true motives.

So we've seen treachery, fear and betrayal. This is how people act when it seems things are out of control. The question is, what about God? Is he like a panicked director whose set has fallen apart? Well, look again at Jesus in this scene. There is no panic here! You see someone who is calm and deliberate and in control.

## II. When things seem out of control, Jesus maintains control.

**A. He exposes the power of darkness:** How could he be that way? I believe the key to all of this for Jesus lay in what he said to the religious leaders in v.53: **“this hour and the power (domain) of darkness are yours.”** Jesus understood that there was more going on than just treachery, fear and hatred on a human level. The power of darkness lay behind this human activity. It's like he's saying that this is Hell's hour. The battle is of cosmic proportions. It's not a human battle and so you don't fight it with human weapons.

When things seem out of control, remember that we're dealing with the powers of darkness. Paul speaks of this twice. To the Ephesians he wrote, **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”** (Eph.6:12). Jesus understood that. If we're going to respond like him, we'll have to understand that too. And then to the Colossians Paul wrote, **“For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”** (Col.1:13). That's the good news. We're no longer ruled by these dark powers.

And why is that? Because Hell's hour actually became Heaven's hour. Remember back in v.14 as Jesus was about to eat the Passover with his disciples, Luke wrote, **“When the hour had come, he reclined at the table, and the disciples with him.”** What hour? The hour destined for him to suffer and die. We know that it was the Father's plan for him to die on the cross, because it was through the cross that we could be delivered from the domain of darkness and have redemption and forgiveness. So Jesus could remain calm because he knew that the powers of darkness were actually being used by God to bring salvation to the world. Hell's hour was really Heaven's hour! Without knowing it, Satan was God's stage manager and everything he choreographed for Christ was actually a step towards our salvation.

**B. He reaches out to his betrayer:** You see that in

the way he deals with those around him. Look at how he deals with Judas. Despite the worst kind of betrayal, he reaches out to Judas. Some people think Jesus had just written Judas off, as we would have, but to the end Jesus invited him to repent. When he asks, **“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss,”** he's saying, “Judas, why would you choose such a sign to betray me? Are you so cold, so beyond feeling, that you would use a kiss?” With great calmness, he sets before Judas the hideousness of his act so as to keep him from ruin.

How can we reach out like that to those who betray us with a kiss? It helps to remember that people are often operating under the domain of darkness, but the Lord is still reaching out to them, and so can you. Just like he reached out to you when you were in the same condition. God is at work in the lives of those who betray us. A friend of mine likes to say that God is always working on both sides of the fence.

In his book *Unexpected Blessings*, Cameron Lee includes a story told by a friend: “During the third month of my sister's life, she became very ill with pneumonia.... My parents took her to the hospital and had her placed inside an incubator. The doctor...monitored her for several hours and then sent her home with a prescription. The next morning my father was suddenly awakened by the uncomfortable realization that he had slept through the entire night without any interruptions from my sister. He jumped out of the bed and ran to check on the baby. The only thing he could remember of that horrific morning was lifting the tiny, limp body and shaking it in order to feel it move. But it laid in his arms, motionless and dead. The medication prescribed to my sister was too strong for her, which caused her to lose all control of her muscles. Several of our relatives suggested that my parents sue the doctor. However, after much consideration, prayer, and advice from my grandparents, they decided not to take legal action. Rather, they received the conviction from God that they needed to forgive the doctor and express that to her in letter form. According to my mother, this was the most difficult thing for her to do, yet after obeying the Lord she felt an overwhelming sense of freedom and peace within her heart.

“Four months following the death of my sister, I became incredibly ill with pneumonia.... The doctor who had been in charge of my sister...asked my father if he would allow her to take on my case. Everyone was completely flabbergasted. He said he needed some time to think it over. As my parents went to the Lord in prayer, they were convicted that this was an ultimate test of their forgiveness. They felt an overwhelming sense of peace that God was in control and that this would eventually become a powerful testimony. They

agreed to let the doctor take on my case. The next few days were incredibly tense and filled with many moments of uncertainty. However, by the fifth day, I had come out of intensive care and was on my way to a full recovery. On the day of my discharge, the doctor pulled my father and mother aside, and with tears running down her face, she expressed sincere gratitude for the forgiveness and grace they had extended to her.”

That story shows us that reaching out to someone we feel has betrayed us can be done as an act of obedience. We do it not because we feel like it but because God tells us to, but what he tells us to do he also gives us the grace to perform. That’s what those parents displayed, and that’s what Jesus displayed here. Having surrendered in prayer, and knowing that Hell’s hour would become Heaven’s hour, he was able to reach out to Judas.

**c. He heals his enemy:** This also allowed him to deal redemptively with Peter’s stupidity. With blood flowing from the side of this servant’s head, and swords beginning to ring on both sides, Jesus’ words freeze the action: **“Stop! No more of this!”** Then he reached toward the gushing wound and touched his ear and healed him. John tells us his name was Malchus. Imagine Malchus gingerly feeling for his ear with his bloody hand. It’s all there. I wonder if it was a new ear or the old ear made new?

Jesus doesn’t just reach out to one of his enemies, but he heals him! You have to wonder what kind of impact this had on Malchus. Some believe that the fact that John identified him as Malchus tells us that the early church knew him because he had become a Christian. It wouldn’t surprise me. That’s what happens when we become instruments of healing instead of revenge.

When things seem so out of control, Jesus maintains control. He can reach out and heal even an enemy because he knows that Hell’s hour will soon become Heaven’s hour.

## CONCLUSION

Genuine Christ-followers have been doing the same thing ever since for the same reason.

*Beyond the Gates of Splendor* is a documentary film that tells the true story of five American missionaries who in January 1956 were speared to death in the jungles of Ecuador by the Auca Indians, an isolated tribe known as the Waodani. At first, the five missionaries found acceptance among the Auca, but eventually they experienced their fierce hostility. In a testament to God’s transforming love, family members of the slain missionaries returned to live among the tribe, ministering to the very people who had killed their loved ones. Years later, Kathy and Steve Saint, the children of Nate Saint, who was killed by the Aucas, were baptized by the very Aucas who killed their father. This pattern of not just reaching out, but bringing healing and new life to those who are trying to kill you, started right here as Jesus reaches out to Judas and heals Malchus. People don’t act that way unless they believe that Hell’s hour can become Heaven’s hour through the power of the cross.