

To Seek and to Save the Lost

The Last Discourse

Luke 22:21-38

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The Last Discourse¹

Scripture

Jesus' last night on earth was spent eating a meal with his twelve apostles. In fact, Jesus celebrated the last, divinely-sanctioned Passover meal, and also instituted the first, divinely-sanctioned Lord's Supper. The meal took place over several hours, and Jesus spent his last hours teaching and interacting with his twelve apostles.

All four Gospel authors record Jesus' last meal and discourse with his disciples. John's Gospel is perhaps most detailed with the Upper Room Discourse. Nevertheless, we can also learn a great deal from Luke's description of Jesus' last discourse with his disciples.

Let's read about Jesus' last discourse in Luke 22:21-38:

²¹ “But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” ²³ And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

²⁸ “You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

³¹ “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that

¹ Material from the following author has been helpful in the develop of this message: R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 322–329.

he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” ³³ Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”

³⁵ And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.” ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ 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.” ³⁸ And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.” (Luke 22:21-38)

Introduction

Jesus and his twelve disciples, also known as the twelve apostles, were eating the last, divinely-sanctioned Passover meal in the furnished upper room, somewhere in Jerusalem. During the course of the Passover meal, when the main course of the sacrificial lamb and bread was served, followed by the third cup of wine, Jesus instituted the first, divinely-sanctioned Lord’s Supper. The bread and the wine represented the body and blood of Jesus. That is, the bread and the wine represented the sacrificial death of Jesus to pay the penalty of sin for sinners, thereby reconciling them with God the Father.

It must have been a truly special evening. Jesus earnestly desired to eat this meal with his disciples, knowing that he was about to suffer and die. He poured out his heart to them one final time. The disciples were keenly aware that Jesus had many enemies, most of whom wanted him dead. But they were having a hard time wrapping their minds around what Jesus was saying to them. Eventually, they would understand Jesus’ teaching. But that night they did not understand his teaching and showed several areas of failure.

Lesson

Jesus' last discourse in Luke 22:21-38 shows us several areas of failure in the disciples.

Let's use the following outline to show the areas of failure:

1. Deception (22:21-23)
2. Dissension (22:24-30)
3. Denial (22:31-34)
4. Dullness (22:35-38)

I. Deception (22:21-23)

The first area of failure is deception.

At the point of the institution of the cup in the Lord's Supper, Jesus said, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). And then, apparently without a pause, Jesus continued and said, "**But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!**" (22:21-22).

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper with his twelve closest friends. For three years, the twelve were with him day and night. They witnessed Jesus' preaching and miracles. They witnessed Jesus' authority over sin, nature, demons, disease, and even death itself. Jesus had poured his life into these twelve men. And yet, on that night one of the twelve disciples was guilty of deception. Judas had already met with the religious leaders and planned to betray Jesus to them.

Bishop J. C. Ryle says, "The lesson of these words is deeply important. They show us that we must not regard all communicants as true believers and sincere servants of Christ. The evil and good will be found side by side even at the Lord's Supper. No discipline can possibly prevent it."² It is possible to worship, give money, be active in

² J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, vol. 2 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1879), 399.

ministry, and even serve in leadership, and yet still be deceived. Oh, let us regularly observe the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”

Not surprisingly, the twelve **began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this**, that is, betray Jesus (22:23). As they continued to ask each other about the identity of the one who would be guilty of deception, they all fell into another failure.

II. Dissension (22:24-30)

The second area of failure is dissension.

Instead of examining their own hearts about their own proneness to deception, **a dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest** (22:24). Astonishing! Jesus had just instituted the Lord’s Supper and was spending his last night on earth with his beloved disciples. He was preparing them for his death the next day, and instead of the disciples expressing love and concern for their beloved Master, they began to argue about which one of them was the greatest.

Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” We are so prone to be jealous of someone else’s success. We are envious when we see someone else get ahead of us. We sometimes have a misunderstanding of our gifts and abilities.

Again, listen to the application from Bishop Ryle, “Let us live on our guard against this sore disease, if we make any profession of serving Christ. The harm that it has done to the Church of Christ is far beyond calculation. Let us learn to take pleasure in the prosperity of others, and to be content with the lowest place for ourselves. The rule given to the Philippians should be often before our eyes: ‘In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves’ (Philippians

2:3).³

Jesus **said to the disciples, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors”** (22:25). In Jesus’ day **the kings of the Gentiles** were ruthless, dominating dictators. People had to bow and scrape before them, and if that were not bad enough, **the kings of the Gentiles** gave themselves nice-sounding titles like **“Benefactor.”**

“But,” continued Jesus, **“not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves”** (22:26-27). Although Luke did not mention it, we know that none of the disciples performed the servant’s task of washing feet. Nowadays we just go into the bathroom to freshen ourselves up before we eat the meal. But in those days, when a traveler came into a home his feet were washed by a servant. Perhaps it was at this point that Jesus himself got up and washed the disciples’ feet. Jesus vividly illustrated servant-leadership. Three times in these verses Jesus reminded his disciples to lead **“as one who serves.”** That is how all of Jesus’ disciples should live.

Jesus’ disciples should not be guilty of dissension. Instead, they should desire to live **“as one who serves.”** Bishop Ryle says this:

The hero in Christ’s army is not the man who has rank, and title, and dignity, and chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. It is the man who looks not on his own things, but the things of others. It is the man who is kind to all, tender to all, thoughtful for all, with a hand to help all, and a heart to feel for all. It is the man who spends and is spent to make the vice and misery of the world less, to bind up the broken-hearted, to befriend the friendless, to cheer the sorrowful, to enlighten the ignorant, and to raise the poor. This is the truly great man in the eyes of God. The world may ridicule his labors and deny the sincerity of his motives. But while the world is sneering, God is pleased. This is the man who is walking most closely in the steps

³ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, vol. 2, 403.

of Christ.⁴

Commentator Kent Hughes says, “Actually, Jesus was far gentler than you and I would have been with such boneheads, because he ended the discussion by reminding them of the authority that awaited them in the kingdom.”⁵ Listen to what Jesus said in verses 28-30, **“You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”** The eleven apostles, plus the one that replaced Judas, would have leadership responsibilities in the future kingdom. But even then they, and all of Jesus’ disciples, are to live **“as one who serves.”**

III. Denial (22:31-34)

The third area of failure is denial.

Jesus said to Peter, **“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat”** (22:31). We don’t know where, when, or how **Satan demanded to have** Peter. We are reminded of Satan going before God and demanding that Job be put to the test. Job was put through the most vicious test, but remained steadfast. Peter was about to be tested in a most severe way too.

We should never forget that we have an “adversary the devil (who) prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). So, let us be on our guard against his temptations.

Jesus continued and said to Peter, **“. . . but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail”** (22:32a). We should note that Peter really did have genuine **faith**, because Jesus said so. Peter really did trust fully and completely in Jesus. But the reason Peter did not fail is not primarily because of his faith but because of Jesus’ intercession for Peter. It is because Jesus **prayed for** Peter that his faith did

⁴ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, vol. 2, 404.

⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, 325.

not fail.

Listen to Bishop Ryle's application, "If we are true Christians, we shall find it essential to . . . to have clear views of Christ's priestly office and intercession. Christ lives, and therefore our faith shall not fail. Let us beware of regarding Jesus only as one who died for us. Let us never forget that he is alive for evermore."⁶ Jesus is alive and is presently seated at the right hand of God, where he intercedes continually for every believer. In a sense, Jesus' work for his disciples is not yet finished. He is doing for you and me what he did for Peter almost 2,000 years ago. He is praying that our faith may not fail.

Jesus assured Peter that his failure would not be permanent by telling him in verse 32b, "**And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.**"

With his typical bravado, **Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death"** (22:33). When there is no danger, it is easy to say how bold we will be for Jesus. But, as we shall learn later in Luke's Gospel, Peter's bold statement was just a statement. When it counted, he did not follow through. And so **Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me"** (22:34). Here Jesus clearly warned Peter that he will **deny** knowing Jesus.

And while Jesus said that Peter would deny knowing him before the rooster crowed, we should remember that the other ten disciples fled the scene. Although they may not have denied knowing Jesus with words, they certainly denied knowing Jesus by their actions.

Let us not deny knowing Jesus. We may not deny him with our words, but let us neither deny knowing him by our actions either. Let us worship and serve Jesus with our lips *and* our actions.

IV. Dullness (22:35-38)

And the fourth area of failure is dullness.

⁶ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, vol. 2, 412.

Jesus turned his focus from Peter back on to the eleven. **And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?”** On two previous occasions Jesus sent out his apostles to go on a preaching mission. They were not to take anything with them (see Luke 9:3 and 10:4). The eleven responded to Jesus’ question and **said, “Nothing.”** And so Jesus **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. 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”** (22:34-37).

Jesus was teaching his disciples that early in his ministry his disciples were well received, and everything that they needed was provided by the people to whom they were ministering. However, Jesus also prepared his disciples to understand that after his arrest, crucifixion, and death, things would change. Because Jesus would be **numbered with the transgressors**, his disciples would also be regarded as transgressors and outlaws. Therefore, the disciples would need to plan and make provisions for their continued ministry.

But instead of focusing on Jesus’ emphasis of making provisions for their ministry, **they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords”** (22:38a). They thought that Jesus wanted them to arm themselves, perhaps to set up a political and military kingdom. They were so dull! After all this time they still did not understand Jesus’ ministry. **And he said to them, “It is enough”** (22:38b). Some people think that Jesus meant that two swords would be sufficient for the task that lay ahead. But that is not what he meant. As Marvin Pate explains, “. . . so complete was the disciples’ misunderstanding of his saying about the need to buy a sword, that he refused to explain it any more. We might colloquially render Jesus’ words thus, ‘I give up!’ ”⁷

On Thursday, Nisan 14, 30 AD Jesus earnestly desired to eat the Passover meal with his disciples. Peter and John had gone on ahead

⁷ C. Marvin Pate, *Luke* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 432.

to prepare the meal for Jesus and the rest of the disciples in a furnished upper room, somewhere in Jerusalem. The hour finally arrived. Jesus and the disciples celebrated the last Passover meal and first Lord's Supper. During the course of the meal Jesus had a final discourse with his beloved disciples. He knew that he was about to die in order to pay the penalty for sin. It was a significant time for Jesus.

But then came Judas' deception, the disciples' dissension, Peter's denial, and, finally, the disciples' dullness. Jesus exclaimed, perhaps with exasperation, "Enough!" And then they left to go into the night to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Judas would betray Jesus.

The twelve apostles were with Jesus for three whole years. They had a front-row seat to his preaching and miracles. They observed all that Jesus did to seek and to save the lost. They saw Jesus' authority over disease, demons, nature, death, and sin. And, yet, after all that time they still made such a glorious mess of things. And if that is true for the apostles, who were with Jesus for three years, we ask ourselves, "What hope is there for us? Can we do any better?"

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Jesus' last discourse in Luke 22:21-38, we should trust in God's provision of the gospel to deal with our failures.

Kent Hughes suggests that the answer to our hope is found in Luke 22:37, where Jesus referenced Isaiah 53:12, "And he was numbered with the transgressors." Isaiah 53 is one of four Servant Songs in the book of Isaiah that describes the sacrificial death of the Messiah. Interestingly, verse 12 is the only verse from Isaiah 53 that Jesus is recorded as quoting. Moreover, verse 12 is the final verse of Isaiah 53, and it gives us a summary of the work of the Messiah.

The phrase "and was numbered with the transgressors" in Isaiah 53:12 is followed by two other phrases: "yet he bore the sin of many" and "and makes intercession for the transgressors." Together

these three phrases give us the foundation for all our hope.

First, the phrase “and was numbered with the transgressors” speaks of identification. Jesus completely identified with fallen humanity. He took on our flesh, lived among us, and ultimately died between two thieves. As Hughes said, “Here the joyful reality is that we too are transgressors/outlaws – and that on the cross he fully identified with us. On the cross the sinless Son of God became a transgressor, though he himself had broken no law.”⁸

Second, the phrase “yet he bore the sin of many” speaks of atonement. Earlier in the Servant Song, in Isaiah 53:4–6, we read of Jesus, “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Jesus died to pay the penalty for all our sin.

And third, the phrase “and makes intercession for the transgressors” speaks of intercession. Jesus identifies with us, makes atonement for us, and also intercedes for us. That is why Peter eventually repented and returned to follow wholeheartedly after Jesus. And that is the reason any person ever continues to follow Jesus. It is because Jesus identifies with us, atones for our sin, and then intercedes for us.

We are all prone to deception, dissension, denial, and dullness. But thanks be to God who gave us Jesus. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Jesus did so by identifying with us, making atonement for us, and presently intercedes for us.

Let us thank God and keep looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Amen.

⁸ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, 327–328.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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PRAYER:

Our Father, thank you for Jesus' last discourse with his twelve apostles in the furnished upper room in Jerusalem. We saw several areas of failure: deception, dissension, denial, and dullness. And we see that far too often in ourselves too.

And so we thank you for the remedy that you gave us in your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you that he identified with us, made atone for us, and now intercedes for us. What a Savior! How we thank you for all that Jesus has done to seek and to save the lost such as ourselves. Help each one of us to run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And for this I pray in Jesus' name.

BENEDICTION:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

CHARGE:

Now, brothers and sisters, go and serve God wholeheartedly!