

EXPOSITION

I. **THE MOB'S APPROACH – v.47**

- While still speaking to His disciples, urging them to watch and pray so that they don't enter into temptation, there is the appearance of a multitude. The disciples suddenly realize that they are surrounded by a mob.
- I have purposefully chosen the word "mob." The word is typically used to describe a large disorderly crowd. In one sense, this is not a proper word. This is because they were orderly. They were organized and unity in hatred for Jesus, and had a single purpose: to destroy Him.
- In another sense, this word is very appropriate. We use the word "mob" as a descriptive term for a band of people bound together for criminal purposes. That is what they are doing, pursuing the most unlawful pursuit ever man had pursued: to put the sinless Son of God, who had in their presence taught truth and worked miracles, to an unjust death.
- We are told that this multitude included the chief priests (the religious leaders) captains of the temple (state leaders) and the elders (civil leaders). Some were more or less responsible, but they were all united in this goal.
- At the head of the pack is Judas, one of the twelve. With these words we are painfully reminded that this was one of Jesus' own. How I wish we could read this for the first time and get the impact of it. This is one who, for three years, been the constant companion of this privileged group of men. He was a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Judas had made an agreement with the enemies of the Lord to betray Him, to lead them to Him at a time in which He would not be among of the crowds of Jerusalem, in an isolated place. It was there they would unlawfully seize Him, and begin the process of a false trail to condemn Him to death. Judas was to go before the crowd, go into the group of the disciples (in mostly darkness), and find the Master. Then, to clearly identify which of them they should seize, kiss Him.

II. **THE BETRAYER'S KISS – v.48**

- Jesus does not address the crowd, but His betrayer himself. He calls Him by name...Judas. In Scripture, names frequently have important meanings, and parents would give their children names for very specific reasons. Judas' name was the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Judah, one of the sons of Jacob and 12 tribes of Israel. It is likely then that Judas was a descendent as well, and if so he was a co-descendent with Jesus of that noble tribe.
- It is a marvel that such a sign would be chosen. A kiss was for the purpose of the display of affection and friendship. It was also used to display respect or reverence. Matthew and Mark tell us that not only did Judas kiss Jesus, but also addressed him as Master Teacher. In this context, the kiss was to be a pledge of allegiance to one's teacher.
- Jesus asks a very close question: are you betraying Me, the Son of Man, with a kiss? Is that going to be your last interaction with Me? It would have been more appropriate for Judas to come right out and point, or grab, or use some other sign. But his guilt is multiplied that, even in the end, he didn't give up a pretended show of respect.
- It was in that moment that the disciples realized who it was that was betraying the Lord. Their companion, with whom they had traveled, preached, witnessed miracles beyond explanation, who they had not suspected, who has now appeared as the "inside man." Who knows what waves of pain or anger these brothers felt when that flood came over them.
- This was such an enormous act of betrayal that his name has become a term to describe one who has betrayed another while pretending to be a friend. A "Judas' kiss" is a synonym for an act of falsehood or deception. This was the final act of unthinkable falsehood. We remember that it was essentially a love of money and greed that festered like a foul disease in Judas' soul that brought to this moment. This, in the bright shining love of Jesus' ministry.
- For reasons unknown to us, this is the last time that Judas is mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. The other Gospels tell us that after the arrest, Judas felt great remorse over his actions (Mt27:3). He takes his filthy blood money back to the leaders and confessed "I have betrayed innocent blood." They reject his attempt to return the silver, he throws it down on the ground then goes out and hangs himself in hopelessness.
- If he had at some time been attached to Jesus with real hope, I believe it likely that he would have repented and returned to His first love, like Peter. But for Judas there was only darkness, only despair.

Hell triumphs over him, heaven forsakes him, and the hollow thunder of that question still rolls over the head of Judas. – Krummacher

- Lest we forget, we too are capable of imitating this act of treason:

If only that the traitor's kiss had remained the only act of its kind! But, in a spiritual sense, Jesus has still to endure it a thousand fold to this hour. For, hypocritically to confess Him with the mouth, while the conduct belies [misrepresents] Him...to sing enthusiastic hymns...to Him, while trampling His Gospel by word and deed under foot-what is all this but a Judas-kiss with which men have the audacity to pollute His face? – Krummacher

III. **THE UNNECESSARY QUESTION – v.49**

- In response to this unfolding event, the disciples (who are surprised!) ask Jesus "shall we strike with the sword?" It is clear they still don't understand, though Jesus had spoken so clearly. This question did not even need to be asked. This is what Jesus has been living for and the way in which He will lay down His life for sinners.

IV. THE IMPETUOUS STRIKE – v.50

- Jesus has not even responded, and Peter moves without waiting for Jesus' response (Jn18:10). Perhaps the words of Jesus' prediction are still ringing in his head, as well as his response that he is willing to die with Him. He assumed he knew the will of Christ, and doesn't wait for the answer (a mistake most of us have made).
- Among the multitude was a man named Malchus (Jn18:10), who was a servant of the Annas the high priest. Peter draws his short sword and rushes this man and with a single blow cuts off his right ear. The word indicates not a mere cut, but complete detachment.
- The multitude surely became alert, adrenaline rushing through their veins with the thought that Jesus' followers were all armed and ready for a fight. This sacred garden which hosted the prayers of a Savior ready to be offered up was quickly turning into a battlefield.

V. THE DISPLAY OF LOVE – v.51

- Before things turn into bloody chaos, Jesus says "permit even this." In the original, this is a 2nd person plural which means that he wasn't just speaking to Peter. The question is, was he saying this to his disciples (as an indication that they were to allow His arrest) or to everyone present? I tend to think that this was a sovereign word of our Lord in which He was exercising power over them all. The scene seems hard to understand otherwise. I suggest that in saying these words He stayed the hand of everyone present to keep the conflict from continuing.
- Jesus walks over to the servant, picks his ear off of the ground, places it back on the side of his head, and instantly heals him. This is the final miracle recorded in the ministry of Jesus, and it is a supreme demonstration of His command to love our enemies, and do good to those who abuse us.
- There, in the sight of all, Jesus demonstrates that He is not going to fight, that that is not His agenda. He proves again His innocence, and that His Kingdom is not of this world.
- There has sadly been many individuals and "churches" in history who have claimed to be disciples of Christ who have made the same mistake as Peter. Jesus did not need Peter's defense by violence, nor ours. This wasn't an issue of unavoidable circumstances. He says in Matthew 26:53 that He could in that moment call down 12 legions of angels to His defense (a legion for each of them 6,000*12=72,000; think about one angel did to the Egyptians; LOTR "Army of the Dead").

[We must not] overlook the wise forethought with which the Lord, by this charitable act, defends His kingdom for the future from all misunderstanding as to its real nature. – Krummacher

VI. THE REVEALING QUESTION – v.52-53a

- With all around seeing this act of mercy, Jesus asks the leaders a question. Is their being armed to the teeth with clubs and swords necessary? Has He committed any crime that they can point to? He was daily with them in the temple, and they found nothing in Him that was an act of treason against the law that would justify their taking Him into custody. Jesus is declaring their guilt, their treason against an innocent man.

VII. THE SOBERING STATEMENT – v.53b

- Here Jesus states the reality of the situation. Here, in the darkness of night, His hour has come. Several times through His ministry we are told that He escaped the attempts on His life because it was not yet His hour. But now, the Divine clock arrived at that dark hour.
- It is an hour which is "theirs." Now is their time to fulfill their desires, to act out their wicked plot. But it isn't only theirs, it is also the power of darkness. Jesus is voluntarily handing Himself over to them to do with Him as they wish. He is the innocent Lamb who is to be slaughtered, but He is the one who places the rope into their hand to lead Him there.

APPLICATION

- As His disciples, let us gaze on this sight of our Savior. Never has there been One such as this, who has suffered so deeply, who has loved so completely.

Behold, Christ bears your [chains]; and nothing more is required of you than to love Him with all your heart, and embrace Him more and more closely who took your entire curse upon himself, that you might be able to eternally rejoice and exclaim – The Lord our Righteousness – Krummacher

- If you aren't a Christ-follower, this is what salvation cost. I urge you to consider Him who bore such wrath for sinners. Ask yourself if there has ever been a greater love than this towards sinners.
- Is not one who has loved in this way towards those who have turned from Him worthy of your whole-hearted love?