

A Study of Luke's Gospel
Week Thirty-One
Luke 22:34-71

Day One

35 Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" "Nothing," they answered. 36 He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. 37 It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment." 38 The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." "That is enough," he replied.

vs. 35&36 – Jesus then asked a curious question and made an intriguing comment. The Lord had sent out His disciples with the following instructions:

Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep (Matthew 10:9-10).

And indeed He had been true to His word, for their own admission, the disciples had lacked for nothing as they went. But now Jesus urged them to make provisions for their travel and to attend to their needs.

Since the disciples never carried a sword as they went after Jesus ascension, we must understand that Jesus wasn't issuing a call to arms. What was he referring to? It seems to me that there was a season change coming for the disciples. What had simply been verbal opposition was about to turn violent. And it would be worse as the apostles went to non-Jewish people and territories.

The Lord never required the disciples to take foolish risks with their lives. If they could flee danger, they should. And when they were required to give their lives as a testimony for Him, they would do so without resistance. So He was obviously making a comment about the change would take place after His departure. Do you agree? Do you have any other insight into what this might mean?

v. 37 – Jesus was entering His last days on earth. The apostles had many days ahead of fruitful but difficult ministry. Jesus took them one last time to the Scripture to explain what was about to happen to Him. Jesus was about to suffer and be treated like a common criminal, and this would cause all manner of anguish and grief on their part.

v. 38 – It is hard to know just what the Lord meant here, but I think He had said all that He could say at this point. As had happened on other occasions, the disciples misunderstood what He was talking about. Peter reaffirmed his willingness to fight and die for Jesus, and we know from John's gospel that Peter did indeed use one of the swords he referenced. Of course, Jesus did not want him to use that sword. The disciples

could not fathom what was about to happen and Jesus had to now trust the Holy Spirit to bring the things He had said back to their remembrance after He was gone. Thus, He proclaimed, "It is enough. No more instruction."

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come" (John 16:12-13).

Day Two

39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

v. 39 – The Mount of Olives was a regular prayer and retreat area for Jesus. The disciples followed as was their custom. Are you willing to follow Jesus where He is going, even if it is to a place of solitude and prayer? Am I? The disciples were about to learn a lot about themselves. They weren't following Jesus to any ordinary prayer meeting. You never know when you make a decision to stick close to Jesus where He will take you or what you will learn when you get there.

v. 40 – Jesus was warning the disciples concerning what was to come, but they did not or could not heed His warning. What was about to take place was inconceivable, for their Messiah was about to be killed. This was inconsistent with their theology and expectations. Has anything ever happened to you that was counter to your theology? There were times when I thought I had God all figured out. But then God did something to remind me that He is God and not some system to be analyzed to know how He operates.

v. 41 – Notice that Jesus didn't ask them to go with Him to prayer, nor did they attempt to do so. I would imagine this was His custom to go talk to His Father alone. Why is this? Perhaps we find out in Hebrews:

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission (Hebrews 5:7).

I think Jesus withdrew when He prayed because He made so much noise when He prayed. Jesus was real when He prayed; He was honest with the Father. And Jesus didn't end His prayers by saying "in Jesus' name." He spoke what was on His heart and poured out His anguish and grief to the Father. How do you pray? Do you cry out with a

loud voice? Do you weep? Don't try to impress God when you pray. He already knows where you are, so go ahead and tell Him. It's not for His benefit; it's for yours.

v. 42 – Jesus didn't pray to change God's mind or get God to do something that Jesus wanted Him to do. Jesus prayed honestly that He preferred not to go through His impending suffering and death. But He also reiterated that He would endure God's will, whatever that was. That's a good prayer model to follow, don't you think?

v. 43 – Wow! An angel appeared from heaven to minister to Jesus! Jesus in His humanity needed help and the Father sent an angel to perform the task. I would imagine the disciples saw this if they weren't already asleep. I wonder how the angel strengthened Him? All I know that as I have traveled and ministered, I have encountered supernatural energy and strength from time to time. How this happens, I have no idea. I don't understand how an angel can come and minister to my body, but I am glad that it does happen!

v. 44 – It seems that Jesus' earnest prayer produced a level of anguish that caused Him to sweat blood. I have never heard of anyone doing this, have you? So Jesus must have been in a state of being that few humans have ever encountered. There is one other theory here, and that is that somehow the angel's involvement caused this blood to flow. I have no idea how that could happen, so we will leave this verse and say that Jesus must have agonized over His coming separation from the Father and was traumatized by the very thought.

Day Three

45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." 47 While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

v. 45 – Keep in mind the cups that were passed around at the Passover dinner were filled with wine. Do you think that perhaps this, coupled with the lateness of the hour, contributed to the disciples' drowsiness? But then Luke gave us another important fact: they were exhausted from sorrow! I can remember crying myself to sleep when I was a child. What was the source of their sorrow? What did they understand at this point that caused them to be so sorrowful? I am not sure, but we do know that their sorrow was so profound that it exhausted them.

v. 46 – Jesus raised this prayer theme on more than one occasion. When he taught His disciples to pray, He urged them to request:

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13).

It occurs to me that, since I don't pray the Lord's Prayer as often as I once did, that I should include this petition in my regular prayer life. Do you pray that you may avoid temptation? I don't, but I think I will begin to do so. If Jesus suggested and commanded that we do this, it would be wise to listen.

v. 47 – The people did not want Jesus to be killed. That is why the leaders had to look for a secret way to seize, try and crucify Him. They came at night, and Judas led them. I think that Judas wanted to be a leader and now he had his chance. But he made a mistake in judgment that caused him to be remembered for all history as the one who betrayed Jesus. I want to be remembered after I'm gone, but for the right reasons. If you want to leave a godly legacy, you must do godly things.

Author Stephen Covey urges his readers to write their own funeral eulogy today. He says that you must be doing whatever you want to be remembered for. With that in mind, how do you want to be remembered? Are you willing to pay the price today to be remembered for that tomorrow?

v. 48 – Jesus must have been a common looking man. There was nothing to distinguish Him from the others, nor did He have any special dress or other distinguishing identification. So Judas had to tell his followers that he would kiss the one they should arrest! Jesus allowed His followers to get close to Him. He didn't lead from a distance. Many leaders are told not to let their followers get too close or let followers see them vulnerable. I reject this advice.

Even though Jesus knew what Judas was doing, He let Him to do it. He had to let this scenario "play out" so that Scripture would be fulfilled. Jesus had a passion to see God's word upheld and followed. Do you have that same passion, even if it means personal betrayal, discomfort or even death?

Day Four

49 When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? 53 Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour-when darkness reigns."

vs. 49&50 – In verse 38 of this chapter, we see that the disciples had two swords. So now they jumped to conclusions that they were to use them. It is interesting that Luke didn't identify Peter as one of the culprits here. I wonder why. My own theory is that he was protecting Peter's reputation among the Gentiles, to whom Luke primarily addressed

his gospel. I think that is commendable. It is similar to what Joseph did when he found out that Mary was pregnant:

Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly (Matthew 1:19).

Do you seek to cover other's wrongs? We are commanded to do so in both the Old and New Testaments:

Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs (Proverbs 10:12).

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:7-8).

So we know that Peter took a sword, swung for someone's head, missed, and cut off the man's ear instead. This wasn't exactly the scenario that Jesus wanted.

v. 51 – So what did Jesus do? He healed the man's ear. Peter was making good on his promise that he would die with or for Jesus. He thought he was doing the correct thing. You always have to admire Peter's courage and ability to act. But Jesus healed the man's ear. Picture this. The man's ear is lying on the ground somewhere after Peter cut it off. Jesus touches the man's head and another ear appears, while his original ear is on the ground. So now the man has three ears—two on his head and one on the ground! In the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, this man who was healed is absolutely dumbfounded by what took place. And well he should have been. I am also dumbfounded by the love and compassion of Jesus.

v. 52 – The leaders had taken up arms against God! They thought their clubs and swords could capture and do away with the purpose of God. But they were able to do this only because Jesus allowed them to do so. But as they took Jesus captive, He asked them a question: Why are you doing this? It was ludicrous to come against the Prince of Peace with a sword, led by a traitor. He knew why they were doing this, but they couldn't see it. Even when He healed the man's ear, they just couldn't see what was going on.

v. 53 – Jesus had not done things behind closed doors. He taught and preached in public areas and no one ever arrested Him. But now darkness reigned on the earth, but it did so with the Father's permission, according to His predetermined plan. Jesus did not respond to the Father, the disciples or the crowd. In this hour, He responded to the Father. There is a lesson there for us. No matter what is going on, keep your focus on the Lord. Don't react to the circumstances; rather respond to God. That is so difficult, but Jesus had just finished an agonizing time of prayer and that undoubtedly helped Him focus on the Father's will. We must learn to do the same.

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a

blessing. For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech" (1 Peter 3:8-10).

Day Five

54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55 But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." 57 But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

v. 54 – When in Israel, they take you to a home that was in all probability like the house of the high priest. It is a nice home and it has a hole in the ground with a basement of sorts. When they brought Jesus to the high priest's home, they would have lowered him into that hole for "safe keeping," since he was a prisoner. The basement is just a hole in the ground, cut out of the rock or dug from the dirt. Thus began Jesus' mistreatment on the night He was taken captive. For all His good deeds, this is how His own people treated Him.

v. 55 – But the scene shifts back to Peter. He had followed Jesus and His captors from a distance and now he was warming himself by the fire that had been kindled in the courtyard of the high priest's home. This was a mob that had been gathered for the occasion, so many probably did not know one another. I am not sure why no one recognized Peter who had taken up a sword against them, but no one did.

What was Peter hoping to accomplish? Was he still following through on his vow to never leave the Lord, to even die with Him? As I said earlier, you have to admire Peter's bravery. He was there by himself, perhaps hoping to affect the Lord's escape.

v. 56 – Now a servant girl began to study Peter's face in the firelight. Was this servant girl with the crowd when they seized Jesus? Had she seen Jesus in public and remembered that Peter was with Him? But now she uttered a statement of fact: "This man was with him." Peter was hoping to remain anonymous for obvious reasons, yet still hoping to help Jesus or at least watch what would happen. Now his cover was blown, so to speak.

v. 57 – So what was Peter's first response? He lied. The girl's comments "squeezed" him and out came a lie. I would imagine he was hoping that she would go away and not say anything else. Here was a man who had just cut off a man's ear, but now a simple servant girl was to be his undoing. If someone had challenged Peter to fight, he probably would have fought. But here was a insignificant woman whom Satan was going to use to ensnare Peter in his own words, revealing his inability to follow through with his promise of loyalty.

The simple situation is often what God uses to reveal the reality of my heart. It is the little comment that someone makes to which I respond with anger. It is the person I don't know who triggers some response that is ungodly and which causes me anguish and grief.

The Lord knows exactly how to reveal the reality of my heart, when I am not willing to see or not paying attention to the signs. What is the Lord showing you now that you are ignoring? Ask Him to show you.

Day Six

58 A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. 59 About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." 60 Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.

v. 58 – Now another person recognized Peter. I am sure at one time that Peter had enjoyed his fame of being associated with Jesus, but not now. A second person recognized him. Peter's denied it once again. Even though Jesus had predicted and even told Peter of these events, he did not recognize the moment for what it was.

vs. 59&60 – Again to Peter's credit, he stuck around, even though he was in some danger. About an hour later, a third person publicly revealed Peter's identify. Peter must have been talking to someone and this person recognized his Galilean accent. His response was to deny the Lord a third time. As he did the rooster crowed, fulfilling the prophesy that the Lord had given him

v. 61 – You may ask how the Lord could look at Peter, if He was in the prison hole I described. The rooster had now crowed three times and I assume that dawn was approaching. The proceedings against Jesus were about to begin and keep in mind that it was now the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. The officials had to move quickly to eliminate Jesus and still be able to keep the Feast. What hypocrisy!

So Jesus could have been brought out now to begin the interrogation and proceedings against Him. It was this that would have allowed Him to be present for Peter's third denial. It was only then that Peter remembered the word the Lord had given him. But alas, it was too late. We must work to keep before us what the Lord has shown us in the past, for we will certainly need it at some point. I have often thought of what David wrote:

You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you (Psalm 50:17).

v. 62 – When you don't keep the Lord's warnings before you, you will probably pay a price someplace along the line. I try to keep a folder of significant insights and words

that I have received, trying to keep them fresh in my memory. Do you cast the Lord's words behind you or do you have a system to keep them fresh and in your conscious world? Because Peter didn't humble himself, God humiliated him. Yet this bitter failure played an important part in Peter's life and ministry. How could this be? It is possible because of one important truth:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28-29).

Peter saw this as a failure, which it was. But God saw it and used it as part of his preparation for leadership. I have often thought that my failures disqualified me from leadership, when they only prepared me for leadership. How do you view failure? Are you allowing it to stop you? If God doesn't disqualify you, don't disqualify yourself.

Day Seven

63 The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. 64 They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" 65 And they said many other insulting things to him. 66 At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 67 "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, 68 and if I asked you, you would not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." 70 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am." 71 Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

vs. 63-65 – I had someone say once, "If you want to know how God feels about sin, look what happened to Jesus." I didn't quite understand what he meant until I read:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The beginning of this so-called trial was the beginning of terribly cruel treatment that Jesus received at the hands of people to whom He had done only good things. I find it interesting that they attacked His prophetic role first, wanting to pervert it and cheapen it for personal amusement. If you have a prophetic gift, dear reader, please don't cheapen it by putting on a show for others. Use it to benefit others for the glory of God!

v. 66 – What bogus judge and jury this was! A group of sinners passing judgment on God! They were self-important men who thought that this trial would preserve their authority. Instead, it only served to undo the whole system that they were trying to preserve, with them at the top, of course.

v. 67 – What more proof could they want than the works that Jesus did. But these men already had their minds made up. They were not looking for the truth; they were only searching for a way to condemn Jesus by the rules of their so-called “law.”

v. 68 - - Jesus was accurate in His response. If He told them whether He was the Christ, they would not believe Him. But the evidence was overwhelming that He was, but the evidence could not condemn Him because the evidence simply spoke of righteousness and goodness.

vs. 69-71 - So Jesus gave them what they needed. He admitted that He was the Son of God. Those religions that maintain that Jesus was a prophet have a dilemma here. If He was speaking the truth, He was more than a prophet. He was God. If He wasn't speaking the truth, then how could He be a prophet? How could anyone be sure that He wasn't also lying about other things He had said and statements He had made about the Father?

Of course, Jesus was speaking the truth. And it blows my mind that He was condemned to death for this. The council was so intent on protecting the system that God gave them that they condemned God to death to protect the system that God now wanted to change.

So now the leaders had what they needed—a statement that they considered blasphemy. They then set in motion a series of events that fulfilled Scripture and changed the course of history. For yours and my sake, we should thank God that they did and we should thank God that Jesus was willing to do this for us!