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Friendly Fire and the Father's Will; Matt 26:47-56
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Introduction – Ch 26 moves at a rapid pace. As Jesus nears the cross, the events leading up to His death unfold rather quickly. So ch26 is filled with scene after scene, setting after setting, moves us quickly and closer to the cross. The reason why each of these scenes, these snapshot events, are included is because each of them are so vitally important. It allows us to understand just how monumental was the cross. We step into these scenes and watch how the Savior spent His final hours before His death. The significance of being able to be a fly on the wall, so to speak, simply cannot be overstated.

In the first scene, Jesus is in the home of Simon the Leper, and is anointed with precious oil by a woman, preparing Him for His burial. In the following scene, Jesus is in the Upper Room with His disciples, and by instituting the Lord's Supper, He prepares His disciples for His approaching death. He also reveals the betrayer in a discreet, covert way. The next scene Jesus is at the Mount of Olives with His disciples and has a confrontation with Peter, not only revealing that His disciples will flee from Him that very night but Peter will actually deny Him 3 times. So He's preparing His disciples for their coming failure. Then we find Jesus within the Garden of Gethsemane, having realized in His humanity what was before Him, pours out His soul to the Father in agonizing prayer, humbly surrendering to the Father's will. In essence preparing Himself through prayer for the suffering that lies ahead.

In the text before us, once again the scene changes. Now it is not just Jesus and His disciples in Gethsemane, but a mob bearing swords and clubs, led by the religious leaders, who are led by Judas arrive. All that Jesus has warned His disciples was to occur is now being set in motion. As darkness descends upon the garden, the light of grace and truth continues to shine.

- I. Friendly Fire is a Whole Other Pain (vv47-50)
 - a. I want us to take note that the passion of Christ did not begin with the crown of thorns or the lashing of the cat of 9 tails. Christ suffered more than brutal, physical torture. And even though His deepest pain

was spiritual as He bore our sin on the cross, He also endured tremendous emotional pain.

- b. One of His own, as Matthew puts it here, one of the 12, came to Him for the sole purpose of betrayal. Friendly fire. And that's a whole other level of pain. The pain Christ endured in His body was unimaginable, but before His body was torn, His heart was broken.
- c. Judas says "the one I will kiss is the man; seize Him." He could have simply pointed Him out. He could have stood beside Him or even spoken to Him. But he chose to betray with a kiss. A kiss. A kiss is a very simple act but it carries a profound meaning. To kiss someone means that you express a great affection for them. Many cultures exchange a kiss as a greeting of friendship. Sometimes you kiss a loved one who is grieving or distraught to express comfort. Most often we think of a kiss to express devotion and love. Of all the ways Judas could have betrayed Christ, he did so with an act that is meant to express love.
 - i. So it wasn't just who betrayed Him, one of His own.
 - ii. It wasn't just that he betrayed Him and turned his back on Christ while placing the knife of betrayal in Christ's back.
 - iii. It was how He betrayed Him, by taking a beautiful token of love and turning it into an ugly act of treachery.
- d. And the significance of that cruel sign of betrayal was not lost by Christ. He felt every ounce of the sting from Judas' dagger that was cloaked in a kiss. And He turned to Judas and said, "Friend – friend, do what you came to do." Friendly fire.
- e. Church there is not a temptation you have faced that Jesus didn't face. There is not a struggle that you encounter that Jesus didn't encounter. And there is not an emotional pain that you have experienced that Jesus didn't experience.
- f. Friend, do what you came to do. Over in Matt 11 Jesus tells the crowds, "You know what people say about Me because I hang out with unbelievers. They call me a glutton and a drunkard, a friend to tax collectors and sinners. You see right up to the last minute, Jesus held the door open for Judas. It was Judas that slammed it shut.
- g. He told him, "do what you came to do", which was betray the Son of God because you see in the garden Jesus had determined to do what He had come to do – save unworthy, undeserving sinners. Sinners

like Judas. Sinners like Simon Peter. And sinners like you and me. Don't close the door on your only hope. Embrace Christ and find life and salvation!

- II. Never Surrender the Scripture (vv51-54)
 - a. Simon Peter is the disciple who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. You could tell here he was a fisherman and not a soldier. He knew how to cast a net but wasn't quite as sharp wielding a sword.
 - i. From Peter's perspective, you almost want to cheer for him don't you? I mean he is at least initially trying to live up to those daring claims he made earlier to never fall away and to stand with Jesus even if it cost him his life. He's trying to fight back – he's just fighting the wrong fight. This was the Father's will as revealed in Scripture.
 - b. So Jesus says put your sword back in its place. This is not your fight. You won't win against the Father's will. "For all who take the sword will perish by the sword." I take that to mean Jesus saying, "Peter, you're going to get yourself killed and this is not your time."
 - c. V53 – if all we need right now is a display of power, I've got that. I could call 12 legions of angels right now, one for me and each of you, to wipe out this mob. But this is not the time to fight against men. This is the time to follow the Father's will.
 - d. This is how the Scriptures will be fulfilled, and they must be fulfilled.
 - e. So in one sense there was nothing that could be done at this point. The Scripture must be fulfilled. The Suffering Servant must be taken and crucified. This is God's plan for the redemption of sinners. This is the only plan for the redemption of sinners. This must happen. Don't fight it.
 - f. But in another sense, Jesus was the Son of God. All heaven was at His disposal. Hell had gathered in the garden, and heaven could wipe them out, but as it is, Hell was doing heaven's bidding. So you see, there was another option for Christ, but that option wasn't the Father's will. If Christ would have taken that option, He would have disobeyed the Father and there would be no Savior. So no matter how heavy the trial that lay before Him, no matter how eager His disciples were to see Him escape, and no matter the fury of the evil mob before Him, Christ would never surrender the Scripture.

- g. Dear friends, that must be our north star as we navigate through the pressures and trials of this life. We must hold true to the anchor of Scripture. Oh how we will be pressed at times to compromise Scripture or to ignore it. The world will press upon us to give up scriptural conviction. We will be emotionally swayed by friends and loved ones. We will be tempted to take the easy way out. To loosen our grip on truth. But we must follow Christ, no matter the pressure, no matter the consequence, and we must never surrender Scripture. For Scripture is the truth, and only the truth will set people free, and only the truth will save, and only the truth will prevail!
 - h. As believers in Christ, we will be called on to give up a lot in this life – but never, never surrender Scripture!
- III. There is Always a Higher Plan Than the Plans of Men (vv55-56)
- a. Jesus first of all exposes their cowardice. They showed up in the middle of the night in a secluded garden with a vast show of power. If they were so bold and their cause so just, why didn't they come for Him in the open?
 - b. You see no matter if they tried to keep this false arrest secret, there was One who knew their plans all along. No matter how steep their defiance of Christ, they were merely escorting Christ according to His plan. They were there for His blood, not realizing He was there to give it.
 - c. There is always a higher plan than the plans of men. However dark the days or horrific the trial, we can take comfort and peace in knowing when the world does the worst it can do to us, all of their fierce wrath will give way to the Father's will for our good and His glory! From their perspective, if they could just silence Christ, that would be the end to His blasphemous nonsense about being the Messiah. But here we are 2000 years later and there's only one High Priest who remains, and His name is Jesus!

Conclusion – The disciples realize at this point Jesus is going to surrender Himself to this mob and everyone then leave Him, just as He said they would. But you see when Jesus said the Scriptures must be fulfilled, the Scriptures not only spoke of His death, they spoke of His resurrection, and of His return. Those fleeing disciples will soon be a band of fearless disciples because Jesus will win in the end!