

Mark 14:43-52

⁴³ And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴ Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely." ⁴⁵ As soon as He had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁴⁶ Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. ⁴⁷ And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? ⁴⁹ I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." ⁵⁰ Then they all forsook Him and fled. ⁵¹ Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his naked body*. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵² and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

After reading all four gospels I concluded that the best way to capture what was really happening was to read John MacArthur's one perfect life. In that book Mr. MacArthur pulls together all of the gospels in one narrative. He sometimes has to guess at the order in which things happened, but the book is extremely useful. I recommend it to anyone who wants to study one of the gospels. Here is how Mr MacArthur compiles all the gospel accounts.

Matt. 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:2–12

^{MK} And immediately, while He was still speaking, ^{LK} behold, ^{MT} a great multitude with swords and clubs, came ^{LK} and he who was called ^bJudas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus. ^{JN} [For] Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas, having received ^ca detachment of troops, and officers from the ^dchief priests ^{MK} and the scribes ^{JN} and Pharisees ^{MT} and elders of the people, ^{JN} came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

^{MK} Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, “Whomever I ^ekiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely.” As soon as he had come, ^{MT} immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, ‘Rabbi!’” and ^gkissed Him. But Jesus said to him, “^hFriend, why have you come? ^{LK} Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

^{JN} Jesus therefore, ⁱknowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, ^j“Whom are you seeking?” They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me ^kI have lost none.” ^{MT} Then they came and laid ^{MK} their hands ^{MT} on Jesus and [seized] Him.

^{LK} When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” ^{JN} Then ^lSimon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the ^mhigh priest’s servant, and ⁿcut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. ^{LK} Jesus answered and said, “^oPermit even this.” And He ^ptouched his ear and healed him.

^{JN} Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath, ^{MT} for all who take the sword will ^qperish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with ^rmore than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus? ^{JN} Shall I not ^sdrink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

^{MT} In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes—^{LK} the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, ^{MT} “Have you come out, ^tas against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the ^utemple, and you did not ^{LK} try to seize Me. But ^vthis is your hour, and the power of darkness. ^{MT} All this was done that the ^wScriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” ^{JN} Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. ^{MT} Then all the disciples ^xforsook Him and fled.

^{MK} Now a ^ycertain young man followed Him, having ^za linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, and he left the linen cloth and ^{aa}fled from them naked.

So that is the full story. Now back to our text, but we will pull in the full story as we go.

Mark 14:43-52

⁴³ And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

Jesus had just told his disciples it was time to go. In the process of telling them this Judas shows up with a great multitude.

We find out later that the language used describes a Roman cohort that numbers between 200 and 600 soldiers. The soldiers would have been armed with swords. The clubs were more than likely carried by the Jewish temple police. Rome would have had more soldiers in this area than usual due to it being the Passover. The Jewish leaders did not have authority to kill someone, so the Jewish leadership had either gotten special permission to do what they were doing, or they were using a procedure that was already in place for handling special situations where there was no time to get permission.

Whatever the case, we know the leaders were afraid of the crowds. They probably assumed that the disciples would view the world just like the leaders would view it. Since the leaders were not dependent upon God themselves, they probably expected the disciples to be prepared to defend Christ by the strength of their own might and by political maneuvering. Obviously this is not something the disciples or Christ had prepared for. And we see why. Christ knew this would happen and was prepared to face it rather than avoid it.

Our narrative tells us that Christ could have called 12 legions of angels. A legion consisted of up to 6000 soldiers so Christ is talking about more than 72,000 angels. In 2 Kings 19:35 a single angel killed 185,000 men in a single night. $72,000 \times 185,000 = 13 \text{ billion } 104 \text{ million}$.

I think that is adequate proof that Christ was not taken against His will.

Whenever you get the idea that this life is a battle between good and evil, think again. There is no struggle on God's part. Our enemy is struggling. And we must struggle against his attacks and his plans. But God is not struggling nor will He ever do so. The moment when God wants evil to end, it will. The day when the reason that Christ is allowing this world to continue comes to completion, the day when the last person comes to Christ who is going to come to Christ, on that day God will stop evil in its tracks. And it won't be hard for Him. He already has the forces of will to accomplish such a thing. It just waits for Him to be ready to do it. That is all.

I don't know what you are facing in your life. Some things are pretty tough. But never get the idea that God is powerless to help you. If He is not removing the difficulty, it is never because he can't. It is always because God has a purpose that

we cannot always see. But in the end, He will completely deliver us using His omnipotence to do so. We can trust in that.

Also, look at Christ here. If you had the power to make your trials go away, **even though you knew they were God's will for your life**, would you? Christ clearly could have. But He did not. And He didn't because He loved **us** more than **He loved Himself**. Really, if Christ would not choose to escape His God given trials, do we really expect God to always remove ours?

Now look how Judas was referred to- "one of the twelve". Think about this. If you were writing scripture, how would **you** have referred to Judas? What Judas is about to do is so despicable it is the worst betrayal in history. From God's perspective it could be argued that all of **us deserve** to be betrayed due to our treatment of God. But Jesus was the one human who **did not** deserve betrayal. And yet He got it anyway.

Judas was portrayed by all four gospel writers in this account as one of the twelve. It is likely this description was used to emphasize just how awful what he did really was. Judas had no excuse. He knew Christ. He had no reason to turn on Him. He didn't do it out of ignorance. He did it fully knowing that Christ did not deserve such treatment.

Now before we get too hard on Judas, who of us has ever committed a sin we full well knew was a sin since we were a believer in Christ? Is that not, in some degree, a betrayal of Christ? Is that not trampling on that which we know is precious? Is it not treating Christ in a way He should never be treated? Aren't we one of the inside followers? Have we not tasted of the good things of Christ? We have no reason, in any way, to treat Christ with such disregard. So let's not. We need to notice too that the **chief priests and the scribes and the elders** were all in on this. There was an unholy alliance in this conspiracy to kill Christ. All three of these parties were members of the Sanhedrin. They were the rulers of Jewish people under Rome.

⁴⁴ **Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely."** ⁴⁵ **As soon as He had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.**

Judas had given the arresting party a signal. Not all of them would have known Christ. And certainly, in the dark it may have been difficult to know which person was Christ. So Judas arranged this sign.

A kiss.

In their culture, a kiss was a sign of homage, of reverence, of respect. A kiss on the cheek was reserved for those who have a close intimate relationship. Judas walks up to Christ and says "Greetings Rabbi" and kisses Christ. The verb for kisses means Judas kissed Christ for an extended time. Every other place this

word was used in the New Testament it refers to someone sincerely expressing their emotion of gratitude or worship or love. Essentially Judas was working hard for the money. He wanted to make sure no one missed his cue. It looks like Judas was play acting with Christ but he was deadly serious with the ones he was leading to arrest Christ. Judas said Rabbi Rabbi in Mark and "Greetings Rabbi" in another Gospel. Judas, it appears, was acting like he was truly glad to see His teacher. Maybe Judas thought that if he acted so loving toward Christ, Christ **wouldn't figure out** that Judas was betraying Christ. Maybe Judas had planned to look surprised when the soldiers grabbed Christ. But it fooled no one.

Jesus said in Matthew "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" And in Luke he said, Friend why have you come?

The word used for **friend** means more like our word "comrade". Christ was appealing to their sharing of a common cause. He appeals to Judas's sense of loyalty and comradeship in the struggle. But the words found nothing to take hold of in Judas. Christ asked Judas why Judas had come. They both **knew** why. But Christ was giving Judas a chance to come clean, to confess his treachery. But Judas never did.

When Christ, through His servants, asks you why you are doing something, it is good to know why and to be able to confess the truth, whether good or bad. Just because something we do **looks loving**, that does not mean that is why we are doing it. Judas may have fooled **Judas** with His display of affection, but he did not fool those in the know.

At this point Mark skips a few things in the course of events.

John tells us that Jesus stepped forward to meet the arresting mob. John tells us He knew all the things that would come upon Him. Essentially, Christ knew exactly what was going on. He always does. So He approached those pretending to have authority and asked what may have been a very legal question. It may have been a technicality. **Whom are you seeking?**

Essentially that would be the same question as "**what is the name on the arrest warrant?**" "Who do you have the legal right under Roman law to take?"

They answered "Jesus of Nazareth".

Understanding Christ's question is very important for understanding what comes a little later in the story. But it is easily missed due to what comes immediately after that answer.

Next we see that Christ said "**I am He**". John tells us at this point that this arrest mob drew back and fell to the ground. I wish scripture told us at this point whether this was an act of supernatural power or human superstition or cowardice. It does not. I tend to think it was a display of supernatural power. I think it was, again, proof that Christ went willingly. At this point it looks like

Christ didn't even need legions of angels. He could have arranged His escape Himself. I can't prove that, but that is my opinion.

Then Christ asked them again, "Who are you seeking?" I am wondering if they answered this time from the ground where they had just been knocked.

They say the same thing again.

Now what Christ says next makes perfect sense. If I were Christ, and the warrant is for Jesus of Nazareth, and I have told you that is who I am, you have no reason to arrest any of the rest of my party. In fact, it isn't even legal. So Christ asks the arresting mob to let the disciples go their way. And scripture tells us that this is directly related to Christ saying in an earlier prayer that "Of those you gave me I have lost none." This is just astounding amazing love. Who of us in those trials that have us scared to death, or have our senses overloaded, ever think of those who are around us, those we have said that we love. No, in these situations we are mostly self absorbed. But we need to look to Christ as our example to handling those situations. Look who He was concerned with. His 11. He, while experiencing the weight of all the sin of all believers of all times, while being betrayed by the closest of friends, while being arrested so he can be taken to a place and crucified, one of the most painful of deaths, is thinking of what is best for His disciples. Who can be that good? Christ was. And we are called to follow Him.

Now, Christ has essentially won release for His followers. But not all will take advantage of this legal technicality.

⁴⁶ **Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him.**

This kind of laying on of hands is never a good thing. We have run into this type of things several times before. They are laying on hands to take Christ to judgement.

⁴⁷ **And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.**

We find elsewhere that a question was asked by the disciples. The question was, Lord should we strike with the sword? In other Gospels we find out that the person with the sword in Mark is Peter and the servant of the high priest is Malchus. Peter didn't wait for Christ's answer. We can rest assured that Peter was attempting to remove Malchus's head, not his ear. Malchus was probably a slave of the high priest, just doing what he was told. He may not have had any dog in this fight. He was probably just going to report his eye witness report back to his owner. But he made the mistake of standing too close to Peter.

Now we need to consider what Peter did here. He has just put his life on the line for Christ. This was no game. By this one action Peter has basically taken on the Roman government. Had he continued he would have been on a cross next to Christ. What Peter did was courageous. It was loyal. It was brave. Peter had to

understand the consequences. Humanly it was an amazing thing to do. And it was wrong.

There is a very important lesson to learn here. Not all of our inclinations of what will best serve the Lord can be trusted. It was not Christ's will on this day that the servants of the devil be physically overcome. We need to consider this. There are many who would say that we need to use all the power that we can muster to change the political powers that be. They say we must bring righteousness into our legal system. They point to that as our job based on Isaiah. There is a sense that Peter was looking to defend righteousness. And what did **Christ** do?

Jesus steps in at this point. ¹¹ **So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"**

Since Christ had gotten all the disciples off of any charges, what Peter did was not helpful. He was trying to be loyal. He was trying to crusade for righteousness. He was trying to protect the interests of God. But he chose the wrong time and place and means of doing it. Christians are not called to use physical or political forces to achieve the ends that God will accomplish. Now, it is good for Christians to walk justly and holy. But we cannot make our fellow citizens do the same. And that is not the mission that Christ has given us to do. We are certainly to call them to repentance. We are to tell the truth about what sin is and what God requires. We are to tell people about how to be right with God. But it is no longer our job to see that our courts rule justly, unless we happen to be a judge. It is not our job to make sure our politicians rule correctly unless we happen to be a politician. We are to be voices in the night calling out with clarity what God says. And God will use that to accomplish his ends.

In Peter's case, he was trying to accomplish something directly opposed to God's will. Christ had to suffer and die on the cross. And until Christ did just that His mission would not be accomplished. Peter's sword would only be an obstacle.

Christ also said "Permit even this" in Luke. It is mostly assumed He is talking to His disciples. He is telling them to permit his capture.

It was at this point that Christ healed the ear of Malchus. This is the only time Christ healed an injury. It might be the only time He did it without being asked. There were no hearts changed. There was no message given. And life went on, pretty much as usual. It is quite possible this miracle was simply done to keep Peter out of prison. If there is no crime, there can be no punishment. If Malchus's ear had not been healed, Peter would have been guilty of a crime. Once Christ healed Malchus's ear, he could no longer be charged since there was no evidence.

Now think about Malchus. How do you think he felt here? I bet this had an emotional impact on him. But we aren't told what ever happened to him.

⁴⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? ⁴⁹ I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." ⁵⁰ Then they all forsook Him and fled.

In other passages we are told that Christ said "this is your hour and the power of darkness". Jesus is basically accusing his accusers of needing the darkness to carry out their schemes. They are wicked. They are children of darkness.

Jesus, at this point, looks at the religious leaders and points out the obvious. They are treating Jesus like a common criminal who would flee from justice because he has committed a crime. A robber was usually an armed bandit who would violently resist arrest and try to escape justice. A robber would keep his deeds hidden. But the facts about Christ would convey something different.

What Jesus did He did not hide. He did it in the open on a regular basis. He did it unashamed with a good conscience. But his accusers would not attack what He was doing in the light of day. They had to wait until darkness to seize Him. What does that prove? It proves that their cause was not sincere. It was not righteous. It could not stand the light of day. They were duplicitous. They were evil. They were political. They essentially accused Him without cause.

There was nothing more open than what was being done in the temple. There is little that was more concealed than Christ being arrested in the Garden. Anyone listening who thought about what Christ was saying should have seen the truth in it. But truth is rare in the enemies of God.

There were many prophecies being fulfilled in Christ being taken without cause and betrayed by his own disciple. Christ basically was in the mindset that He had to fulfill those prophecies. And it didn't matter that His being taken under arrest was probably **the most unjust action** that has ever happened in the history of the world.

We are told that all the disciples forsook Christ. Personally I pity them. What were they to do? Christ got them off the hook legally of any charges. Peter tried to defend Christ and was rebuked for it. They saw that they were up against the powers that be and they could not stand. I too would have left. I frankly would not have known what else to do.

⁵¹ Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his naked body*. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵² and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

This is one of the most unusual scriptures in the Bible. I don't know why it is there. I don't know what point to make. This guy could have been a disciple. It could have been someone who lived nearby who was awoken in the commotion. He was a follower of Christ in some way. He had a linen cloth thrown around his body. It could have been a sheet he threw on before he left his bed. It could have

been a tunic. We don't know. All we know is that he left without any clothes, and he was probably glad to get out of there however he could.

What we have seen this morning is the great betrayal by Judas who was one of the twelve, an insider, a comrade of Christ. We have seen the so called spiritual leaders displaying who they really worked for, the father of darkness, the father of lies. We have seen Peter try to help Christ with his fleshly instincts and the best of human attributes.

Christ is experiencing a failure of friendship by Judas, a failure of leadership by the Jewish leaders, and a failure of Peter to understand Christ's mission. This was a night where nothing functioned as it should. The forces of darkness appear to be sweeping the field. The devil appears to be winning. It would look like there is no way that Christ can stand up to this wicked plan.

Have you ever felt you were in that kind of a situation? Well we need to watch the drama unfold in Mark and we will see that God accomplishes good things beyond our imagination in the darkest places. God has a plan in the darkness. And His ends will never be thwarted by wickedness. It is Friday, but Sunday's coming.

Sing Great is thy faithfulness

John 18:1-14

¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ² And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³ Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and

officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. ⁴ Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" ⁵ They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am *He*." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. ⁶ Now when He said to them, "I am *He*," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸ Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," ⁹ that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none." ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. ¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" ¹² Then the detachment of *troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. ¹³ And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. ¹⁴ Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Luke 22:47-53

⁴⁷ And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. ⁴⁸ But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" ⁴⁹ When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹ But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him. ⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? ⁵³ When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Matthew 26:47-56

⁴⁷ And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." ⁴⁹ Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. ⁵¹ And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. ⁵² But Jesus said to him, "Put your

sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?⁵⁴ How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"⁵⁵ In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me."⁵⁶ But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.