



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Last Year of the Life of Christ, Part 62”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



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Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53 and John 18:2-11

Then [Jesus] told Peter, **“Put your sword back into its sheath. Everyone who uses the sword will die by the sword. Don’t you understand that even now I could call to My Father and He would send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen like this? Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?”**

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

In our last lesson, we left Jesus as the arresting officers were coming to get Him. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed that He might be spared the ordeal of the Passion experience, including the Crucifixion, but God sent an angel to communicate to Jesus that the strength to endure the Cross would be required of Him. After praying and entreating God for mercy three times, the time that Jesus had for preparation ran out. So He told Peter, James and John, in **Matthew 26:45:**

See, the hour has come and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up and let’s go. Look, My betrayer is approaching!”

The approach of Judas and the Jewish cohort signaled, to Jesus, the completion of His preparation and the beginning of His trial. The harmony of the gospels gives us the most complete and accurate account of that which happened when Judas brought the soldiers. The combination of **Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53 and John 18:2-11** begins by saying:

A large crowd approached while [Jesus] was still speaking. The man named Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. Judas also knew the place because Jesus had often gone there with His disciples. So Judas came there, accompanied by a cohort of soldiers, officers from the chief priests, Pharisees, teachers of the law, and the elders of the people, all bearing torches and lanterns and swords and clubs.

The betrayer had given them a signal. He told them, **“It’s the One I kiss. Seize Him and lead Him safely away.”**



As soon as [Judas] arrived, he approached Jesus to kiss Him. **“My friend,”** Jesus said to him, **“why have you come?”**

“Greetings, Master!” Judas said. And [Judas] kissed [Jesus].

“Judas,” Jesus said, **“do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”**

Judas thought that he knew what he was doing. At the Last Supper, Judas found that although he had maintained secrecy about his plan to lead the Jewish authorities to Jesus, Jesus still knew all about it. Jesus warned Judas about the trouble that he was making for himself, in **Matthew 26:24**:

24 Jesus said, “The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

Woe is a word of warning. Jesus directly warned Judas that his eternal soul was in danger. But although Judas knew Jesus’ power and heard Jesus’ omniscient warning as clearly as did any of the other disciples, Jesus’ warning was completely lost on Judas. **2Corinthians 4:3-4** explains:

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

The “god of this age” spoken of in this passage of Scripture is the devil. From the Garden, the devil has been blinding us so that we will discount the blessings and warnings of God. He uses some bright lights to blind us, as **Matthew 13:22** records:

22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Judas couldn’t see the Lord’s warning because he was focused on the blinding glint of the thirty pieces of silver that the Jews offered him. I’m not sure of Judas’ plans for that silver, but silver can certainly put blinders on people; Judas and anyone else, as **1Timothy 6:10** says:

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

That was Judas’ problem. The devil convinced him, as he can convince us if we are not careful, to concentrate on commodities, cash, creature comforts and clout and to center our contemplation on commonplace occurrences rather than on focusing on that heavenly highway that runs from earth to glory with no stop signs along the way. When the mundane preoccupations of planet Earth become overly important to us, we find ourselves concerned about the trees, while missing the fact that our true reward is not in the forest of this life, but past the forest in God’s kingdom on the other side.



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The Jews wanted Judas to facilitate Jesus' arrest, but not because Jesus was hiding from the Jewish authorities. Jesus challenged the authorities daily in the Temple courts, infuriating them by rebuking them in a way that they could not refute. The Jewish leaders were no different than any other people, as they were tired of Jesus putting their sins in the spotlight. **Romans 3:23** was as true of them as it is of everyone else:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

When you are a religious leader that is trying to convince your congregation that you are holy, it is irritating and infuriating, to have someone come along constantly exposing your feet of clay. If you can't negotiate a settlement with the one that is exposing your shortcomings, you can generally at least sully their reputation as they are sullyng yours. After all, everyone has something wrong with them.

Except Jesus. Not only did Jesus have a clean slate when it came to sin, but Jesus had this extraordinary power that captivated the crowds following Him. Jesus was such a righteous, powerful, charismatic leader that He made the Jewish authorities look like the fools that they were when they tried to argue with Him. And men in their positions didn't like and didn't think that they could afford looking like fools, so they decided that they had to do something about Jesus.

While it is important, to God, to interact specifically with men that lead churches, it is important for men in leadership to recognize that God's real objective is to convert those that are not in the leadership, but are in the rank and file. After all, **1Timothy 1:15** tells us:

15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Paul told Timothy that the Christ came to save sinners, not prop up prophets, priests, Pharisees or potentates. And Jesus Himself says, in **Luke 5:32**:

32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

During my evangelistic training, the leader of the organization of which I was a part made an interesting observation during a lecture. "I have become aware", he said, "based upon my own experience, of a spiritual principle that I call 'lift'. The principle is that the more involved and knowledgeable that a person becomes about Christianity, the fewer non-Christian contacts that he or she has. The principle is a reflection of the old saying, 'Birds of a feather flock together.'

"As the pastor of the church", he continued, "I am probably the one most equipped to evangelize, but I spend most of my time involved with church people and church work. I probably study the Bible more than most of you, but, other than Sunday mornings, I probably also have fewer interactions with people that need the information that I have learned than most of you. Unlike the apostles, who ministered during a time when relatively few people were saved, once we become saved, we leave the worldly environment, and lift ourselves out of the



arena of the unsaved into the life of the church, where most people really don't need to be saved, because they are saved already."

The scribes and Pharisees could agree with my teacher. Part of Jesus' problem with them is that they spent most of their time in ceremonial worship and in counsel with one another. Their focus was not on increasing the kingdom of God, but on keeping control of God's house to benefit themselves.

Jesus' ministry, on the other hand, was the opposite of that of the Jewish leadership. He labored among the laity, not among those in ecumenical positions. Jesus had the power to heal, so He ministered to the sick, not to the doctors. Jesus had the teaching that would free men's souls, so He ministered among the sinners, not in the hallowed halls of Jewish academia. In every way, Jesus' powerful ministry contrasted to the ineffectiveness of the Jewish leadership, and, rather than use the light of the lamp of Jesus' ministry to see how to improve theirs, the Jewish leadership chose to try to put the light out.

But they had a problem. Jesus lived in a state of sinless perfection. Now, understand what that means.

The Jewish leadership was trying to put Jesus to death legally. They couldn't just stab Jesus in the back; they had to find some charge of which they could accuse Him that would draw the attention of the Roman Procurator. Although the Word of God contains laws that authorize the Jewish community to execute those that exhibit antisocial behavior, the Romans stripped the Jews of that level of sovereignty. The Jewish leadership and the Roman procurator were sort of in bed with one another, as Pilate accepted the aid of the Jewish leadership to keep his dominion under control in exchange from granting the Jewish leaders some privileges, but the truce between the two sides was an uneasy one, and the Jews weren't sure that they could just march into Pilate's office and ask him to execute someone for no reason whatsoever.

But, in all of Jesus' very public teaching, and in all of the actions of Jesus' very public ministry, the Jewish leadership knew of no teaching or activity that Jesus did that would inspire Pilate to choose to execute Jesus. The Jews were incensed by the fact that Jesus healed a blind man on the Sabbath, but they knew that this charge certainly would not inspire Pilate to execute Jesus. To report that which Jesus said and did to the Roman government would draw admiration, not ire, from them.

So, how were the Jews going to get Jesus executed?

Actually, they had no idea. They just knew that Jesus was showing them up, He had to be stopped, and since Judas showed up to give them the ability to arrest Jesus, they had to take the opportunity to get Jesus off of the street. So that's where they started.

The Bible tells us that they sent a large crowd of people to arrest Jesus, which included Judas, accompanied by a cohort of soldiers which numbered 300, along with officers from the chief priests, Pharisees, teachers of the law, and the



elders of the people. After all of Jesus' demonstrations of the power of God, the men coming to arrest Jesus were a little nervous about their assignment.

Arresting men that had the power to work miracles did not work out so well when the King of Israel tried to arrest Elijah, as **2Kings 1:9-15** records:

9 Then the king sent to [Elijah] a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So [the captain] went up to [Elijah]; and there [Elijah] was, sitting on the top of a hill. And [the captain] spoke to [Elijah]: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!' "

10 So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

11 Then [the king] sent to [Elijah] another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And [the captain] answered and said to [Elijah]: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!' "

12 So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

13 Again, [the king] sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight.

14 Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight."

15 And the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king.

So the possibility that Jesus would do something miraculous to avoid arrest was, to the Jews, a real one. But Jesus wasn't trying to avoid arrest. The lection of Jesus' arrest, **Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53** and **John 18:2-11** continues:

Jesus knew everything that was about to happen to Him. He stepped forward and said to them, "Who do you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth!" they answered.

Jesus replied, "I AM."

Judas, the man betraying Him, was standing with them. When Jesus said, "I AM," they all drew back and fell to the ground.

Jesus identified Himself as "I AM", which is the name that God spoke to Moses during their conversation at the burning bush, as **Exodus 3:13-15** says:

13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall



say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' ”

15 Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’”

When Jesus, whom the Jews knew had called Himself the Son of God, identified Himself using the name of God, the arresting crowd fell to the ground in an attempt to avoid the fire that they anticipated might fall from heaven. Jesus wasn't threatening them, but was negotiating with them, as the lection continues:

Again [Jesus] asked, “Who do you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.

“I told you I AM,” Jesus said. “If you're after Me, then let these others go away.” (He said this so the words He spoke might be fulfilled: “I lost none of those You gave Me.”)

Jesus was negotiating for the release of the disciples in order to spare them from having to participate in His ordeal. Jesus knew that there was nothing that the disciples could do to help Him during His trial; their usefulness in spreading the Kingdom of God was not to come until after the ascension of the Risen Savior and the descending of the Holy Spirit. The lection continues:

Then they came and gruffly seized Jesus. When those who were standing around saw what was about to happen, they said to Him, “Lord, should we strike them with the sword?”

The devil wanted to turn the arrest of Jesus into a bloodbath. He hoped to facilitate the killing of not only Jesus, but also the eleven men that Jesus trained to spread the Gospel. If the arrest deteriorated into a fight, the devil had pretty good odds to bump off the disciples; three hundred trained soldiers armed to the teeth had pretty good odds against eleven disciples armed with two swords. Jesus was specifically concerned about Peter, whom He knew that the devil was trying to sift. But the devil had control of Peter's emotions and circumstances, and was effective in his efforts to get Peter to act, as the lection continues:

Simon Peter drew his sword and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

Think of what would have happened if Peter's stroke had just been a few inches to the left. The high priest's servant would have had a sword in the brain, which would have changed this situation completely. If Peter killed an officer of the court making a lawful arrest, he would have given the Jews exactly what they wanted to convict not only Jesus, but His disciples as well. A charge of murder against Peter and conspiracy to commit murder against Jesus and the rest of the disciples would have played right into the Jewish leadership's hands.

So Jesus intervened to control the situation, as the lection continues:

But Jesus said, “Enough of this!” He touched the man's ear and healed him.



Then [Jesus] told Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Everyone who uses the sword will die by the sword. Don’t you understand that even now I could call to My Father and He would send Me more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen like this? Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?”

The gospel can never be spread by violent means. When Jesus sent the disciples out to spread the gospel, He told them, in **Matthew 10:11-16**:

11 “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.

12 And when you go into a household, greet it.

13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

The key to spreading the gospel is to be wise and harmless. We can invite people into the Kingdom of Heaven, but none of us, including Jesus, have any way to force anyone to go in. If Jesus could have done so, He would certainly have converted Judas, but the fact of the matter is that anyone becoming a Christian has to do so by their own decision. So Peter, put up your sword. After all, you can’t win with a sword anyway. It’s three hundred against two. Not only that, but remember the lesson that I read about Elijah? If Jesus wanted to save Himself from the Jews, He would have no problem in doing so. There are a thousand men in a legion, so Jesus has the capacity to call twelve thousand angels to His defense. What could twelve thousand angels do? I’m not exactly sure, but I do know that just two angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah as though they were never there, so what twelve legions of angels could do is unexplained, unimaginable and unknown.

But the most important part of Jesus’ lecture to Peter is the last part.

But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen like this? Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?”

As I mentioned in our last lesson, the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross was part of the initial plan that God made before He created the world. Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross is a great benefit to us, as it allows us sinful men to have a relationship with a Holy God.

Peter couldn’t see the plan, because he was looking at the death of Jesus Christ as the death of his personal leader and friend, one that would leave him back on his own. That was the temporal result of Jesus’ crucifixion, but not the



permanent one. Peter wanted to stop the crucifixion because he didn't understand about the resurrection.

The Passion of the Christ was necessary. In order for Jesus Christ to rise from the dead, He first had to die. In order for Jesus Christ to serve as the sacrifice for our sins, as our Passover Lamb, He first had to die. Jesus was a great healer and teacher, but Jesus was not unique in that role. Moses, Elijah and the prophets healed sicknesses, raised people from the dead, and taught the Word of God. But Moses died on a mountain in Moab and was buried by God, and no one knows where his tomb is, even now. Elijah was taken up to heaven physically in a chariot of fire, and His remains are not available. But God's plan was that Jesus die, not go directly to heaven as did Elijah, or die in isolation as did Moses, but die from being executed, as would a sacrificial lamb, ceremonially sacrificed for the sin of the world, publically, in full view of both His contemporaries and the history of mankind. **Exodus 12:3, 6, 11-13** reads:

3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

11 And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.

12 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

The Blood of the Passover Lamb on the doorposts of the Israelites' houses kept the Death Angel from destroying the Israelites along with the Egyptians. Both the Israelites and the Egyptians were all sinners, but God chose to have mercy on Israel.

In the same way, all of us are sinners, and we all have earned eternal suffering for our sins in Hell. But just as God made a way for the Israelites in Egypt, God has made a way for us. But God's plan for us is different that it was for Israel. You see, the Passover Lamb was just a symbol and the sacrifice of the Lamb was just a ceremony. The Jews were not really changed; the only one affected was the Death Angel, as he had fewer first born to destroy after the lambs were sacrifices as he did before. But the sacrifice of the lamb did not affect the Jews, and God knew it, because He commanded the Jews, in **Exodus 12:14:**

14 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast



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to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Every year, the Jews sacrificed a lamb to atone for their sins. If the sacrifice of the Lamb actually atoned for sin in the lives of the Jews, it would not have been necessary to repeat the sacrifice every year. As **Hebrews 9:11-15, 24-28** tells us:

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,

14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—

26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

So the most important part of Jesus' lecture to Peter is the last part.

But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen like this? Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?"

In order for God's plan to come to fruition, Jesus Christ could die in a fight, or by being executed for cause. To be the once, for all, Passover sacrifice spoken of in Hebrews, Jesus Christ had to die physically, but not because of any sin. Jesus had to be a pure lamb without spot or blemish. And Jesus told that to the ones that have come to arrest Him, as the lection continues:



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At that same time Jesus said to the crowds and to the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders, who had come out to arrest Him, **“Have you come out to seize Me with swords and clubs as if I were a robber? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, yet you didn’t arrest Me or stretch out your hands against Me. But this has all happened to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets. This is your hour and the power of darkness.”**

Then all the disciples abandoned Him and ran away.

Then the cohort of soldiers and the chief captain and the officers of the Jews took and bound Jesus.

Jesus is in the hands of His enemies, on His way to the Cross, because, as **John 3:16-17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus submitted to the Passion, sacrificing Himself, giving Himself voluntarily and taking our sins upon Himself, so that rather than a symbol of death, the Cross might be a symbol of life, salvation and redemption. As we go down from this place, let us remember and emulate the selflessness of Jesus’ sacrifice, by loving one another as He has loved us.

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