

## **“JESUS AND JUDAS: THE KISS.”**

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**February 2, 2014, 10:30AM**

**Scripture Text: Mark 14:43-52**

### **Introduction.**

If you were a betting person and you were going to bet today, which way would you bet? Would you bet that the majority of sermons preached today would have a super bowl reference or not?

Would you believe me if I told you that this afternoon while you are watching the game Christians are going to be persecuted? Not like in Rome, where Christians were killed in a stadium before big crowds, but persecuted the way Christians in America are persecuted today.

Our faith is going to be mocked and ridiculed and made fun of and denied and betrayed all afternoon. Our faith will be mocked by the immodesty of the cheerleaders and commercials and halftime entertainers. Our faith will be mocked by the in-your-face appeals to greed and lust and pleasure in the advertising. Our faith will be mocked by all the passionate attention and focus on purely worldly interests and pursuits.

So enjoy the game and the great competition, but don't be deceived, don't be drawn into the big lies that will assault all your senses and undercut your Christian values.

Speaking of betrayals and denials and even a bit of immodesty, let's turn to our text.

### **Mark 14:43-52**

#### **The Unholy Alliance of Jewish Leaders.**

The three groups of the ruling Sanhedrin are named, the chief priests, the scribes or teachers of the law, and the elders. A mixture of liberals and conservatives who generally disliked each other now agreed and united into a great crowd with swords and clubs. John's gospel says Roman soldiers were included. And all led by one of the twelve, Judas.

Here in a small garden on a Judean hill side two kingdoms collide, *the kingdom of man and the kingdom of God*.

Clearly the disciples including Judas had no concept or understanding of the nature of Jesus' kingdom. They came with a great crowd of soldiers and servants and leaders all armed to the hilt

with clubs, swords and weapons. They were expecting a fight. Surely Jesus would defend Himself and His disciples. After all remember the scene in the temple earlier in the week.

To come to Jesus with a such a large armed force clearly says Judas and the religious people had no clue about who Jesus was and what He was about.

They only had one paradigm, and that was that Jesus' kingdom would be a worldly kingdom and it would be established and sustained by worldly means. Is there any other way?

**John 18:36** "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

The kingdom of Jesus on this earth will not be advanced with the weapons of warfare. God's ways truly are not our ways.

**Zechariah 4:6** Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.

Our faith is a supernatural faith and rests on a supernatural God. The cause of truth doesn't need force to maintain it.

You know how you can tell Islam is a false religion? It doesn't have the power of truth behind it. It cannot be maintained except by fear and force, by coercion and manipulation. One of the clearest signs of a false religion or a cult is if they must resort to coercion or violence.

What about those times in history when Christianity took up the sword like in the crusades? That was Christianity at its worst. Or more accurately that wasn't Christianity at all. What has happened in Northern Ireland might have the name Christian attached, but it's not Christian. Neither was the fighting in Bosnia and Croatia.

What kind of kingdom would Christ's kingdom be if it needed swords to advance and swords to be defended? Can you imagine this church being able to exist only by the use of force?

How is the kingdom of Christ built and defended? By the proclamation of His Word and by the love of His followers and the excellence of their lives. Jesus' weapons are spiritual.

There's a place for the sword, in the hands of proper authorities and in self-defense, but not in the defense of God. He who upholds the universe by the power of His Word doesn't need swords. Could He not call twelve legions of angels?

True faith stands by the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the proclamation of the gospel. The Word is the only sword we need in the defense of the faith and of God. If you don't believe this sword is good enough, you don't know it or its power.

**Romans 1:16** I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

**I Corinthians 1:18** The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Truth and faith are the work of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts.

The two kingdoms that collided in that garden, collide all the time and all around us.

There are people living for the kingdom of this world and by the values of this world's kingdom. In this world's kingdom the things that matter are money, power, status, getting ahead, accumulating, climbing the ladder, recognition.

So whatever it takes to achieve that is fair game. If you have to lie or cheat or step on others or stab someone in the back or break your word, you do what you have to do.

But in the kingdom of God we are free from all those things. Jesus has set us free from all that drives the world. We don't put our identity in those things. We live by grace. We are made righteous by grace not by works or achievement or success. Suffering, weakness, poverty, rejection, those are nothing to us.

We can lose what the world values and realize it's not the end of the world. Like Paul:

**Philippians 4:11-13, 19-20** ... I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

***Jesus calls out their cowardly behavior.*** They could have arrested Him any time. He was right there in the temple courts and on the streets of Jerusalem every day. "Where were you on Monday or Tuesday when I was there? What is this business coming out here in the middle of the night, in total darkness with swords and clubs?"

He exposes their cowardice, their lack of spine and their fear of the people. Jesus shames them for treating Him like a revolutionary. "Look at you, think about everything that's wrong about what you are doing? Think about the injustice and hypocrisy of all of this?"

While condemning their cowardice, Jesus also commands restraint on the part of His disciples and forbids them to defend Him with a sword. Matthew records Jesus saying:

**Matthew 26:52-54** Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”

Jesus deliberately walks into their trap. He could have easily escaped. His enemies have a plan, but it’s Jesus who is in complete control of the situation.

Jesus exposes what they are doing to show how they are *fulfilling Scripture*.

**Isaiah 53:8** By oppression and judgment he was taken away;  
**Isaiah 53:12** and [he] was numbered with the transgressors.

Everything that happened to Jesus had been prophesied hundreds of years before and predicted again by Jesus Himself several times.

God has had a plan from before the foundations of the earth to provide for the atonement and forgiveness of the sins of the world. God has been purposefully unfolding that plan all through history. That’s why we call history, redemption history. That’s what it’s all about.

The course of this world is ordered and overruled by God’s almighty hand and wisdom. The wickedness of worldly men and the cowardice of inconsistent Christians are all in God’s hands.

Everything Satan does he does in chains, restrained and under God’s control. He couldn’t touch Jesus until the appointed time. And he was powerless to keep Jesus in the grave.

Nothing takes place by chance. There is no such thing as fate or luck. Every year, every day, every minute the Scriptures are being fulfilled until the time of the appointed end which God knows and has set. Let your confidence be in your God. Everything is working for His glory and our benefit. The day of Christ is coming.

### **The Unholy Kiss of the Betrayer.**

The unholy kiss of the betrayer was to fulfill the Scriptures that said:

**Psalms 41:9** Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

What heart would conceive of a plan that involved betrayal with something as innocent as a kiss? Sometimes some of the most evil things are done under the guise of feigned love.

Under the pretense of respect and affection toward a well-beloved teacher, Judas delivered Jesus over to His enemies and to death with a kiss, an act of love with a purpose of hate.

### **The Unholy Desertion of the Disciples.**

The unholy betrayal of Judas is multiplied eleven more times by the unholy desertion of the disciples. The disciples made a brief, quick show of support, but it was a short-lived zeal. Like the seed that takes root among the rocks or among the thorns, it's soon exhausted or choked out.

They said they would stand and fight and die if necessary, but their fight quickly turns to flight. There are few who are willing to suffer and die for Jesus. We would rather be crusaders than martyrs. To suffer and bear the cross takes great courage and great grace.

It's easier to stand up in front of you and preach. It's easier do public things. What's hard is to silently serve, to silently suffer, to silently and patiently endure pain.

The greatest test of our faith and of the grace we have received is patient suffering of hardship or heartache or physical pain.

### ***All the disciples left Jesus and fled into the night.***

They all betrayed Jesus. Even His three closest disciples, Peter, James and John. All of them. They all drank the cup, they all pledged to die with Him and they all deserted Him.

Their faith and courage failed them, as it does us all. Fear can get the better of our faith in crisis times.

We would do well to study this incident and learn from it. Learn from the disciples to ***distrust your own heart*** and to distrust your own boasting about your strength. None of us know what we would do if put to the severest test. Let us learn humility.

Let us also learn to ***be careful about judging*** someone else who wavers under pressure or persecution. Jesus' own disciples abandoned Him in His time of need. And Jesus raised them up to repentance and they became humble and godly and courageous leaders in His church. Don't be too quick to judge or criticize a weak brother.

Remember also not only did Jesus suffer physical pain, He suffered the pain of being disappointed by those He loved, of being betrayed and deserted by His friends, the pain of being left utterly alone.

It's a bitter cup most of us have had to drink from at some point in our life, someone near and dear to us fails us, lets us down, leaves us out in the cold, is careless or insensitive. At some point in life we will be failed by a family member, a friend, a church member, a pastor, someone.

Take comfort in knowing Jesus understands, and furthermore, Jesus is the one friend who will never leave us or forsake us, who will never abandon us or desert us, even if we do that to Him. You can trust Him with your heart. His compassions never fail (Lamentations 3:22).

***Ran away naked.***

Only Mark tells this interesting little aside, of a young man who followed Jesus from a distance until someone tried to grab him and he ran away naked. It's believed this young man wasn't one of the disciples since all of them had already deserted Jesus in verse 50. Some commenters on this passage believe Mark inserted this personal note about himself.

The Holy Spirit doesn't think it is useful or fruitful for us to know. Whoever it was, one thing was clear. He would rather suffer the shame of being naked than to be taken as one of the followers of Jesus. He was so intent on saving his skin, that that's all he left with.

The point is Jesus was alone, completely alone, deserted by all his friends. Nobody wanted to be associated with Him in any way, even if it meant the shame and embarrassment of streaking into the night.

**I Corinthians 10:12** Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

We come to a table now where a betrayer dipped bread in the same bowl as the Son of Man.

We don't come to this table strong, we come weak. We don't come wise in our eyes but confessing our folly. We don't come needing nothing, we come needing everything. We come as sinners saved by grace, forgiven of our betrayals and denials and unholy alliances with the world. We come to receive His food and drink His cup that we might be renewed with spiritual food and strength.

**Prayer:** Jesus, it's with the deepest gratitude that we thank you for your willingness to be kissed by a betrayer, to be arrested by sinners and deserted by your disciples and most of all to be punished and die for our sins. Come Holy Spirit, quicken our hearts and minds now as we prepare to come to the table of our Lord, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Amen.