**Text**: Luke 22:47-62
**Title**: Lessons from Gethsemane
**Truth**: The failures of the men in Gethsemane were either fixed by Jesus, or they were not fixed at all. He can fix your sins too.
**Date/Location**: Sunday May 18, 2025 at FBC

## Introduction

If you did not attend the Lord's Table service on May 4, I would like to ask you to listen to the message. It continued our series in Luke and was very fitting for the table of the Lord. Briefly, I focused on the disciples' defeat to temptation when they failed to pray; and the Lord's prayer and submission to the will of the Father. The physical suffering of the Lord came into clear focus with the fact that His sweat became as great drops of blood, where sweat was mixed with actual blood. His suffering was for you and me.

## I. Some Parts of the Narrative Explained

A. The kiss by Judas was actually a slap in the face, opposite what it normally means. Judas used it as a signal to the arresting force so they would make sure to get the right man and not permit him to escape (Mark 14:44, Matt. 26:48). But it was unnecessary to identify Jesus, for Jesus would not have permitted his disciples to be taken "in his place." In addition, John 18:4 says that he stepped forward and asked them who they were seeking. He identified Himself. Whether this happened just before or just after the kiss is not that important, for He self-identified as "the Son of Man" and "I AM" (John 18:5-6).

B. "Son of Man" and "I AM" serve to heighten Judas's guilt, for he is not betraying someone who is merely a man. He is betraying the Messiah, peer with the Father.

C. Some of the disciples asked if they should defend him. This was good in one sense—at least they asked first—but it was out of place in another and more important sense. They were not going to keep Him from His hour of suffering.

D. One of the disciples had the philosophy of chop first, ask questions later. John identified the disciple as Peter. He ended up cutting off the ear of a servant of the high priest. This messed up the entire situation, because you can imagine the news report: "Jesus leads violent band of men in attack on temple officers." The implication would be that He was guilty of violent resistance, and His later statement to Pilate would be falsified: "If my kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight" (John

18:36). As it happened, Jesus corrected the chopped-off ear so that the situation would go away. In the end, probably some pain for the servant who was injured, but moments later it was done. I cannot help but wonder if Malchus (John 18:10) ended up believing in Jesus after all.

E. The temple officers, chief priests, and others had come to him, evidently to make sure that the deed was done. Notice that this all was done at night. "Those who get drunk are drunk at night" (often, 1 Thess. 5:7). These guys were so evil and so afraid of the crowds that they came out and did their work under the cover of darkness. Darkness hides them from others and maybe soothes the criminal conscience because other people cannot see what they are doing. They love the darkness (John 3:19). This is the condition, more or less, of everyone who is a sinner.

F. The Lord rebukes them for coming out against him as if He were an armed-and-dangerous criminal. They did not need swords and clubs—as if they would work against the Son of Man anyway. Why not do this out in the open? The implication is that they knew they were wrong. At least some of them could see how ridiculous it was to come out against a peace-loving rabbi with swords and clubs to take Him into custody.

G. The final comment explains why they could do what they were doing. The Lord's time had come. His hour was here, so their hour was there by God's sovereign decree. Furthermore, there is a demonic aspect to this: the power of darkness refers to Satan. He was working to bring Jesus down, to kill Him, to humiliate Him. And he did do that, but it was all under a mistaken impression on his side because *God* permitted it, and *Jesus* voluntarily did so. (The Gethsemane prayer time shows us that Jesus volunteered for the job).

## II. Lessons from Gethsemane

Consider all the different people in the situation and how, except for the Lord, they each failed. You might find you have characteristics or situations like one or more of these people.

A. Failure of Judas. He was never recovered. He betrayed a friend, and worse than that, the Lord, the Messiah. He *used* Jesus for gain instead of trusting in him to be saved.

Do not call everyone who stops being your friend "a Judas"—that is the flesh speaking in *you*. And you most certainly want to prevent yourself from being a person who "lifts up his heel" against your brother.

B. Failure of Peter (part 1). Peter was foolishly zealous for the Lord. He stepped in to seemingly put into effect his earlier statement, "Far be it from you, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" (Matthew 16:22). This was undoubtedly an embarrassment to him after the fact. His zeal was without knowledge, sophomoric.[1] I think back to some witnessing situations where I did not evangelize well. I was trying, but I needed more wisdom, more patience, more gentleness, more kindness. Perhaps you can think of some situations where you have been like Peter, full of zeal but lacking wisdom or godly character in some way.

Jesus stepped in and corrected his violent act to keep the whole "team" in the right. Peter had some apologizing to do, but in the main things were made right with the healing of Malchus's ear.

C. Failure of the other disciples. They were scattered, except for John, and Peter also who followed at a distance. They ultimately recovered and served the Lord very well in the ensuing decades. Understand again when I say that they recovered that it would be better to say they "were" recovered—by the Lord. He graciously forgave and restored them; they came back and walked with God again. This failure prepared them for the difficult lives they would have after the ascension.

D. Failure of the San Hedrin. They experienced no recovery and their guilt abides. There were only a couple of members we know of who did not participate in their evil decision—Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:51, John 19:39). The chief priests and officers hated Jesus and did whatever they could against Him. They misunderstood Him completely because they were not of God. There was no love in their hearts; only greed and lust for power.

In contrast to the chief priests doing their evil under the cover of darkness,[2] God would have us operate in the light. Light is a figure of truth and holiness. God sees in the dark just as well as in the light. Christ delivers us from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13). Slinking around doing bad stuff should bother your conscience. I will not apologize if what I am reporting here from Scripture gives you some guilt. You need guilt that is informed from the Bible. It is a gift from God to keep you from death.

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[1] "Conceited and overconfident of knowledge but poorly informed and immature." Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed.

[2] The priests did evil during the daytime as well, like devouring widows houses and saying long prayers to be recognized by others (Luke 20:47). But this night-time arrest is perfectly emblematic of their evil.

E. Failure of Peter (part 2). Peter swings the other way from his zeal, and instead denies the Lord. He failed under the weight of temptation. He succumbed to fear when the servant girl asserted he was with Jesus, as well as two other times. By the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established: he denied that he knew Jesus *three* times. Momentarily, the rooster crowed. This probably was 1am or later.

The really poignant part of it was that when the rooster crowed, Jesus looked at Peter. Peter saw Him at that moment. The deep thoughts and emotions that must have passed through both of their minds are impossible to fully grasp. This reminds me of a portrayal in film where Jesus looked at an abusive Roman soldier and just kept looking. It was as if His holiness burned through the outer shell of the soldier and reached into the man's conscience. He was compelled to stop the wrong he was doing in the presence of Jesus.

Have you succumbed to fear of people? Have you been overtaken with the doubting kind of unbelief, or the fearful kind of unbelief?

Jesus recovered Peter after he repented and wept (Luke 24:34). A quick read of Acts 1-5 and 8-12 will confirm this.

## Conclusion

On the success side of Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus shows us how to submit to the Father's will, even if it is very difficult or scary. He did not succumb to the heavy temptation of fear or distress. He prayed earnestly during the lead-up to His arrest and sacrifice. This is the way to avoid denying the Lord like Peter did. Jesus will help you to be bold and not shrink in fear. But we must "pray that you may not enter into temptation" (22:40).

Jesus is a *model* of sacrificial giving which is good for us to practice. But more importantly, we look to Him as *Savior* because He offered Himself in our place. He was the perfect sacrifice, completely sufficient to take on your debt and discharge it. He asks you to know and acknowledge what He did and to personally trust Him for salvation. If you turn away from your selfish pleasures and trust in Him, you will be saved. See Acts 26:18—you want to get out of darkness and into the light of life so you can receive forgiveness now and the inheritance as a child of God later.

Although there may be some "things to do" from this message, my real goal is to help you **believe** in Him or **keep believing** in Him. We do not want to fail like Peter! But thank the Lord for His love when we do.

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