

Luke 22

John Karmelich

Title: How God works in the most difficult times of our lives!

When I wrote this lesson not too long ago, I went through a crisis unlike anything I ever experienced in my life. After all that, I figured God used it for His glory! All that made me relate to this lesson, as this was the most difficult time Jesus went through leading up to His arrest! I realize most of you know the Gospel stories well. The challenge is how do we relate to these Bible stories? We all know life requires lots of moment-by-moment decisions. We pray for God to guide us and help us make decisions so that we can glorify Him with our lives. What I'm asking to consider here is how is Jesus dealing with all the situations we read here in this text? I desire each of us draw closer to Him and remind ourselves God is still guiding us; despite all life's difficulties. With that said, I'll begin this long chapter and hopefully it leads to us learning things to help us deal with the tough moments in life.

We are at the point in the Gospels when all the negatives come into play. The text says Satan goes into Judas to do his famous act of betrayal. Even though God knew this would happen, the text states Judas is accountable for His actions. Even though Judas saw lots of great miracles, he desired wealth! When he realized that wasn't going to happen, he went to the Jewish religious leaders for money, so he'd have something to make up for the last three years of his life, that he thought he wasted! The Jewish leaders ran things to make great profits at the temple wanted Jesus dead as His popularity threatened what they were doing. Then we got the Pharisee's (a religious group some of which were part of that leadership), they believed salvation required being a devoutly religious person. Jesus was a threat to their influence. The Romans feared an uprising as they were far outnumbered. Jesus being popular, was a threat to the power they had ruling Israel. Bottom line, Jesus was ticking off those in power, and all this comes to a head in this text.

OK time for specifics. Luke opens by stating it was time for the Jewish holiday of Passover, which is a week-long set of holidays where Jewish people then were required to go to Jerusalem to celebrate. For those don't know the Passover is to remember the day God killed the first-born Egyptians and Israelites were spared by trusting in the blood on their doorposts. In a similar way, accepting Jesus' payment for our sins is on the same date. Jesus knew all this was going to happen, and He realized those wanted to kill Him were part of God's plan! Keep that in mind the next time we deal with horrible things, and we ponder how it will work out for His glory!

Anyway, Luke wants to give us the time (Passover) and location to tie it to the significant of the events of this section. We read of Satan literally entering Judas. Satan cannot enter a person who's committed to be a follower of Jesus. Since Judas believed Jesus was powerful but not God, he fell victim. This is also proof that Satan can be lots of places but not everywhere at once. Once Satan did that, we read of Judas going to the high priest to plan to arrest Jesus. Remember that Jesus was popular, so a time must be arranged for this event when Jesus was away from the crowds. Jesus as God, knew all this and Jesus didn't want Judas to arrest Him during the "last supper", so He had two disciples do all the preparations before that event, so Judas didn't know the where's and when's for an ambush. Another reminder God's aware of all our situations and we must trust He's guiding us for His glory!

That leads to the events of the Last Supper. John's Gospel has four chapters covering that. Luke gives a few key details: Jesus took regular bread and some wine to perform the rituals. Note that Jesus didn't

rip skin off His body which is an argument against the Catholic view that when we do communion it is the literally body of Jesus! Besides explaining the purpose for communion, Jesus also used the moment to explain to Judas what he's about to do. A simple reminder that God knows all things and despite the fact we are forgiven, behavior matters as far as being a witness for Him. While the other pondered who the traitor was, an argument erupted over who's the greatest disciple! Jesus said to be great will require being the lowest of servants. Their rewards for being a witness for Jesus come in the next life: They get to judge the 12 tribes of Israel. As I joke, Jesus won't elbow them, to ask if they want to see this or that guy in hell! This is about judging the works of the saved and the rewards given as a witness for God!

Remember at the last supper Jesus said He won't drink wine again until heaven. I wonder at times how the digestive system works in heaven? Best guess is we can still taste food, but there's no stomach, so I would argue food and drink just disappears after tasting it! (See 1st Corinthians 6:13). Anyway, Jesus said there will be at least one big meal in heaven!

Meanwhile I said this chapter is negative. Jesus tells Peter that Satan desired to have all the apostles. It makes sense that Satan wants to stop Christian growth. Jesus tells Peter that He prayed for Him. I will argue that Jesus prays for all believers in our times of weakness such as the three denials! I noticed that Jesus asked the disciples to pray for strength, and three times Peter denied Jesus out of fear of death! It is hard to deal with intense trials even when God and our friends telling us it is going to be okay! We'll go through an emotional roller coaster during such times and realizing God's guiding us gives us ability to make it through such times even when we mess up like Peter!

Jesus reminds the disciples they never lacked anything as a witness for Him! (A reminder He provides all we need to be a witness for Him!) Then Jesus tells the disciples for now on to have supplies as well as weapons for defense purposes. The last miracle before the resurrection was Jesus healing an ear that Peter cut off while trying to kill a man during the arrest scene. (John's Gospel says it was Peter). That's an argument against using weapons to help Jesus! On the other hand, God has no problem to prevent a robbery of our home and defending ourselves that way!

All that leads to the famous three denial scene while Jesus had one of his trials. Everything about all of His trials was illegal under the Jewish court system, but this was the hour of darkness. When we face a trial of our own and it's not going well, we must remember God's still in control. Realize millions have been martyred for Jesus and He preaches at the moment we must defend our faith, God will guide us as to what to say! At Jesus moment of this illegal trial He stated the fact He's the Son of God and that was the evidence the Jewish ruling council used to convict Jesus!

I realize I've skipped a lot of details about Jesus' arrest and trials here. I wanted to focus on how we're to handle our own trials. A sad reality is if we use our lives as a witness for Jesus, trials come. All we can do is make the best decisions we can and use our lives as a witness for Him!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on the link for the detailed study. It's still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for everyone who reads this.