



THE GOSPEL OF
Luke

SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 22:31-62

To understand more about the arrest of Jesus Christ at the hands of Judas and the chief priests.

Eating Crow

I love language, and more than that, the way we *use* language. Before my seminary years (and by “seminary years” I mean “*many* seminary years”), I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Arlington. During my time there I learned to love the structure and form of language as well as the colloquialisms that make language so challenging to learn. For example, if an English speaker has taken a hard stance on a particular issue and then has to later admit their failure (so humiliating), this kind of admission of failure might be called “eating crow.” The crow is a kind of bird that eats other already dead animals, and thus would be a fairly repulsive food source. In the same way that eating a crow might be hard to swallow, admitting an embarrassing failure is likewise, hard to swallow. Thus: “eating crow.”

In Luke 22:31-62, Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives with His disciples before being betrayed and arrested by Judas. But bookended on either side of this narrative is a confrontation that Jesus has with Peter wherein Peter bravely (and foolishly) declares: “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and death” (Lk. 22:33). Jesus responds: “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me” (Lk. 22:34). And wouldn’t you know, Jesus was right. While sitting in the courtyard right after Jesus’s arrest, Peter is asked by three individuals whether or not he was one of Jesus’ disciples, and all three times he replied in the negative. And then the rooster crowed. And Peter likely would have eaten crow, too, if he hadn’t “went out and wept bitterly” (Lk. 22:63).

What Is Written Must Be Fulfilled

Verses 35 through 38 include a dialogue with Jesus and His disciples concerning what Scripture must be fulfilled on His account. Below is a brief breakdown of some key details.

DIFFERENT TIMES, DIFFERENT MEANS

Jesus presents His disciples with the reality that a radical shift has taken place concerning their well-being as they go into the world once more to minister. He asks them: “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” (Lk. 22:35a), to which they responded: “Nothing” (Lk. 22:35b). This recalls His directions for mission of the seventy-two: “Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road” (Lk. 10:4). However, things are now different: “He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one” (Lk. 22:36). A few things should be clarified concerning this passage. For one, this is an admonition of preparedness, not permission or encouragement towards violence. Jesus was not a religious zealot, nor did He ever encourage the sword as a means of conversion. To assume Jesus is demanding His disciples to establish Christianity through forced and violent conversion is to not only do injustice to this text, but to miss the entirety of Jesus’ teaching elsewhere. It would also make very little sense for Him to stop them from using the sword while defending Him just prior to His arrest.

This passage is important because it marks a shift that takes place upon His arrest and subsequent death, burial, and resurrection. Prior to this, the disciples would be received and welcomed (mostly) for the ministry they provided. Now, however, as they moved outward into more and more hostile territories outside of Jerusalem, they would encounter nothing but hostility (Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2. Cor. 11:23-27). Jesus’ words here are to prepare them for this shift. They will need a sword to protect themselves from every evil threat that comes upon them, and they will need their supplies because very few people will be willing to pay the price required to care for them. Jesus quotes Isaiah 53:12, “And he was numbered with the transgressors,” and says that it was written about Him and is fulfilled in Him. Jesus, the Lord of glory, will be numbered with sinners. Anyone associated with Him, therefore, will be unwelcome.

PRAYER

From this point, Jesus departs “as was His custom” to go and pray at “the Mount of Olives” (Lk. 22:39). Jesus asks them to pray, “that you may not enter into temptation” while He “withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed” (Lk. 22:40-41). The prayer against temptation recalls the Lord’s Prayer in Luke 11:4: “And lead us not into temptation.” Jesus, now alone, prays: “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” (Lk. 22:42). His prayer is an appeal to the Father to not experience what He knows He is about to experience, and yet a yield to the Father’s will. This is an exemplary model of prayer for the believer today: an expression of a desire to not face what is certain, and yet a willingness to humbly submit to the Father’s will anyway. Luke is the only one who mentions the appearance of an angel while Jesus prays, but this is not surprising given Luke’s inclusion of angelic involvement throughout his account. He also describes the agony of Jesus with detail: “His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Lk. 22:44). This is commonly misunderstood to mean that Jesus was literally sweating blood. While this phenomenon was possible during Jesus’ day, it’s more like a metaphor. In the same way that a gash would pour out a profuse amount of blood onto the ground, Jesus was sweating profusely. After this agonizing time of prayer, Jesus returns to find the disciples asleep, and again warns them of the real threat of temptation (Lk. 22:45-46).

The Arrest

Verses 47 through 53 give account to the arrest of Jesus. Below is a brief breakdown of some of the key details in this part of the story.

JUDAS' KISS

In Matthew's account we learn that Judas' kiss is a signal to the mob for who they are to arrest (Matt. 24:48), but Luke omits this detail. We simply see Judas give the signal, and immediately Jesus acknowledges to Judas that He knows what he has done: "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Lk. 22:48). This is where the colloquialism "a Judas kiss" (meaning, "an act of betrayal") comes from.

MALCHUS

Luke also omits some of the details concerning "the servant of the high priest" and one of the disciples cutting off his right ear. However, John's account provides some clarity: "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.)" (Jn. 18:10).

HYPOCRISY AND DARKNESS

Jesus' response to this mob of individuals is piercing because He rightly calls out their hypocrisy: "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me" (Lk. 22:52b-53a). In other words, they had no issues with Jesus in the daylight when everyone else was watching, but now at night, under the cover of darkness and discretion, they acted differently. This was not only an act of hypocrisy, but more than that, it was Satanic influence: "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Lk. 22:53b).

Denial

This whole portion of the story begins and ends with Peter, his insistence to follow Jesus to death, Jesus' rebuke, and Peter's denial of Jesus before the rooster crows. The third person to accuse Peter is not specified in Luke's account, but John's account tells us that it was none other than a relative of poor Malchus, the servant of the high priest whose ear was cut off by Peter himself (Jn. 18:26). Just as Peter was denying Jesus for the third and final time (Luke omits the swearing that Mark and Matthew both record), "the rooster crowed" (Lk. 22:60). This realization of denial leads Peter to leave the presence of those he was talking to and weep bitterly (Lk. 22:62). His confidence in his commitment to Christ was shattered, leaving him in despair.

What About Now?

There are several takeaways from this passage. For one, we ought to never have confidence in our own strength to stand for what is right. Peter learned this the hard way. Any commitment we have to Christ and His kingdom comes through the Holy Spirit. Secondly, we ought to understand that ministry in a post-resurrection but pre-Second Coming world will be difficult. Christians should be prepared for hostility and plan accordingly. Third, just because we are prepared with the sword, doesn't mean we ought to resort to using it immediately. Peter is rebuked for such actions. Last, the Lord can empathize with those who have been betrayed because He Himself was betrayed by one of His own. Christians can find comfort in pressing into Christ in moments of hardship because He has suffered all that we have, "yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Luke 22:31-34. Who does Jesus say wants to “sift” Simon Peter? What has Jesus done to protect him? How does Peter respond? What does Jesus say Peter will do before the rooster crows?
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2. Read Luke 22:35-38. What does Jesus now tell His disciples they will need as they out as witnesses? Read Isaiah 53:12. How did Jesus fulfill this Scripture?
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Day Two

1. Read Luke 22:39-42. Where did Jesus go and what was He doing? For what did He tell His disciples to pray? Where did Jesus go and what did He pray?
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2. Read Luke 22:43-46. What appeared to Jesus during His prayer, and what happened as a result of this appearance? What was His sweat like? What does this mean? (Hint: See above notes) How did Jesus find His disciples after He was done praying? What did He say to them?
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Day Three

1. Read Luke 22:47-51. Who came leading a crowd to Jesus? What did Judas do to Jesus, and how did Jesus respond? What did the disciples say, and what did one of them do with a sword? What was Jesus’ response to these actions?
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2. Read Luke 22:52-53. What did Jesus say to the chief priests and others?
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Day Four

1. Read Luke 22:54-58. Who seized Jesus and where did they bring Him? Where was Peter during this time? Who all approached Peter, and what did they ask him?
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2. Read Luke 22:59-62. How much time passed before another person approached Peter? What did they ask him? What happened while Peter was responding? What did Peter do after this?
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Week 81 Discussion: Hypocrisy

In Luke 22:52-53, Jesus castigates His accusers as hypocrites for behaving in one manner during the day while in public and behaving a different way at night away from the public eye. He also insinuates their hypocrisy is at least partially motivated by Satanic influence. Talk as a group about the damage hypocrisy has done in your own life, whether through your actions or the actions of others.

1. Icebreaker: Is hypocrisy ever a good thing? Why or why not?
2. How have you been personally harmed by the hypocritical nature of other people?
3. How has your own hypocrisy harmed others in your life?
4. What's the best way to mend the damage done by hypocrisy?
5. Are any Christians immune from hypocrisy?
6. How can the church better address hypocrisy when it causes harm to relationships.

Takeaways:

1. Jesus tells Peter that he will betray Him before the rooster crows 3 times, and it happens.
2. Jesus prays on the Mount of Olives for the Father to remove the cup of wrath from Him, while submitting the Father's will.
3. Jesus is betrayed by Judas and arrested by the chief priests and a mob of people.