

Betrayed, Mocked, Seized

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself? The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you are a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Father, we are very good at seeing specks in other people's eyes, and we are very poor at seeing logs in our own eyes. And Father, we know that you desire us to be delivered from this as much as we can until we see Jesus face to face. So we ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit would fall with gentle power upon us so that your Word and your Gospel will come home to us and come deeply to our hearts, that we, Father, are so secure in Jesus and His finished work that we can begin to see those logs in our own eyes. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated.

So for the first time in 2023, I got invited to speak on Parliament Hill to the Parliament Hill Christian Fellowship. They meet Fridays at lunch. If you happen to know somebody who works on Parliament Hill or in some ways, you should let them know there's a gathering of Christians on Friday at around lunchtime. And so the deal is, they understand that when they ask me to speak, they get a first draft or first go-through of my sermon on the following Sunday. And that's, they have to be fine with it. It might be a little bit rough and unpolished. So I began my talk on Sunday with them, or Friday, with them by saying that I was going to talk about something that nobody on Parliament Hill could relate to. And then I paused and I said, betrayal.

Which, of course, they all chuckled about because it's something that people who work in Parliament and work parties are very familiar with. But I did add two other things. Of course, nobody who's been very involved in the church will also, everybody who's been very involved in the church are also going to be very familiar with betrayal. And of course, it's a great human problem.

[3 : 18] So we're going to look at that today. So if you would get your Bibles out and turn in them to Mark chapter 14, verse 43, we're going to look at a story of Jesus that talks and touches on betrayal, and also opens the door, well, to many wonderful things. But one of them is how when the gospel grips your heart, there is a deep emotional beauty to the gospel as it becomes more real to your heart, which is hard for people on the outside to see, but is hopefully something that grows in us as the gospel becomes more real to our heart. So what's just happened before this, and I'm going to do, some of you have heard, I've done this method sometimes of teaching before, I'm going to imagine that this is maybe one of those British dramas, you know, that has eight episodes or six or ten or whatever, a series, and you go from episode to episode to see the whole story, or, you know, something on Netflix or Prime or whatever. And so we're looking at this as if we were writing a play or the episode, this one episode, and the different scenes within the episode. And what's, in a sense, if you don't press the skip recap button, what's just gone on before this is that Jesus has warned the disciples that somebody's going to betray him. He said that anybody, the person who betrays him, it would have been better if he'd never been born. Jesus institutes what we now know of as the Lord's

Supper or Holy Communion. And then immediately before that, the episode just before, Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane. And it's this profound scene of the disciples not being able to stay awake and pray with them. And Jesus just being overwhelmed with what was before him and asking the Father, if possible, that he wouldn't have to die on the cross, he wouldn't have to drink the cup. And that's immediately, that's just happened before that. And here we come, scene one. Scene one, the best and the brightest. Scene one, the best and the brightest. And it goes like this, verse 43.

And immediately, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now, they're the best and the brightest in two senses. The first one is about Judas. Notice that Judas is introduced as one of the twelve. So why is that significant? I'll tell you a story. Some of you have heard this story before.

But before Louise and I married, there was a period where I knew her for several years, and I was in love with her. But she wasn't in love with me. And there's this one season where she's with, she's dating this other fellow, and we'll just call him Bob. And by coincidence, on a Sunday night, I arrived at the same time as Louise and Bob at this thing where you'd hear folk music and eat snacks and stuff like that. And I was friends with them, and I sat with them. And we left our coats because it was cold, and we went, just Bob and I, to the little window to buy some food.

And I ordered my, whatever it was, coffee probably, and some food. And then Bob comes up, and it's his turn, and he says, he's looked at the menu, and he says, Louise would like this and this. That's what I'm going to get for her. And when he said that, it was like a dagger went into my heart because I knew that I didn't have the vaguest idea in the world what Louise would like. It was a sign of their intimacy with each other and his knowledge of her that I didn't have. So when Judas is introduced as one of the 12, what it's saying is, imagine that Lisa, Maureen, and myself, and Shannon, and I don't know, and Hudson, we're with Jesus, and we go to the market because Jesus has come to, he's going to do some speaking that night, and we've gone to the market to get some food. And we all pick out the things we like.

[7 : 24] And then Judas says, I'm going to get those olives because those are the type that Jesus likes. And I'm going to get that cut of meat, that cut of meat, because that's the type of meat that Jesus really likes. And the four of us just are looking. Like, we don't have the vaguest idea what olive or what cut of meat that Jesus would like, but Judas does. He's intimate with Jesus.

And the others, they, Mark doesn't write their title, but what he does is he breaks it down to who they are. And so how we are to understand that is that they are the best and the brightest. You imagine Canada, you've heard this before, imagine you get the true elite, like the best of the best of the best in law, the best of the best of the best in culture, the best of the best of the best in society, in education, in government, in education, in business, and even in the land. You get the best of the first nations people who love the land. And you bring all of them together as a group. And they're the best of the best of the best in Canada. They're the people who most Canadians, we just, if we needed really good insight or advice about this, that's where we go. They have the training, they have the knowledge, they have the experience, they have the commitments, they have the social, these are where we go for that, for these types of just the smartest, wisest, best way forward. And that's who he has just listed. So in other words, he's just listed the best and the brightest. But you look, and look at verse 43, they're coming with swords and clubs. Now, one of the things I tell people when I'm trying to help them to learn how to preach, is that when you come to a narrative, never assume that the next step of the narrative is necessary. Like, look at what happens next. You see, what happens is, you know, if you're preparing the talk, you've read the story 20, 30, 40 times, like it's very obvious to you. And for Christians who've heard this story many times, it's obvious to you. And on one level, from the point of view of how the gospel describes human sin and power and how the gospel is described, on one hand, you look at it and there's an internal logic as to why the next thing is going to happen.

But on the outside, it's not obvious that that's the next step. I mean, you know, those of us who watch certain types of movies and read certain types of books, it could very well be that Judas has been warned that, in fact, the story where Jesus says that whoever betrays me, it'd be better if they had never lived, that it's very possible, if there was a modern filmmaker making this story, that that cuts them to the heart, that they get convicted. And so what they're doing is they're doing some type of double cross with the chief priests and the scribes. Or maybe that they've now, he's convicted

them of the errors of their ways and they've come to protect Jesus. It's not obvious what's going to happen next. Like, not really obvious. So what does happen next? Well, let's look.

The next scene, scene two. The mask begins to slip. The mask begins to slip. Verse 44. Let's look. Now, the betrayer had given them a sign. Actually, more literally would be a signal. The betrayer had given them a signal, saying, the one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.

Now, here's a, what the thing which is very interesting about this is that Judas has now had a second introduction. He's introduced first as one of the 12. The guy, as I said, that if, you know, we were going to the market, he'd know the olives that Jesus would like better than other olives.

[11:19] By the way, Jesus would have had favorite types of olives. He would have probably said that his mom made the best pita bread. I mean, he was human. That's just how it works, right? And so, but so first he's introduced as one of the intimate ones who knows Jesus really well. And now he's introduced as the betrayer, as the betrayer. And he gives a signal about how they're going to seize Jesus.

Now, here's the thing which is very interesting. Probably every single one of us has been betrayed. And many of us have probably been betrayed many times.

And in fact, if I was just to say, this was maybe a retreat, we're going to take a couple of minutes. I'd just like you to write down on a piece of paper, I know it might be hard, write down a time that involves you in betrayal.

So something is happening here to Jesus, which is deeply, deeply human. But there's also something happening here in the story, which if we're attentive, is going to pierce our hearts. What is that? My guess is that if I was to ask you to write down, that had that exercise, write down betrayal, something involving your life and betrayal, 98% of us would put down a time that we'd been betrayed.

[12:48] But the fact of the matter is that almost definitely everyone here is also betrayed. We have betrayed others, betrayed the truth, betrayed a confidence.

What does it say about our heart that when we think of betrayal, we think of ourselves as victims and not as sinners?

We think of ourselves as victims, passive, and not our active acts of betrayal. Now I said 98%, several of us, I mean partly that's why there's counseling, are struggling, maybe we've come here this morning, just struggling because it's been so hard for us to get over the fact that we've betrayed something or someone deeply and it's caused lots of trouble and it's hurt us.

But this story, you see, you know, there's a verse in the Bible, it's not going to be on your screen, I'm just going to say it by memory, it's Psalm 36, 2. And, you know, you can take all of the depth psychology that's been developed over the last hundreds of years.

And obviously there's insights in that. I'm not anti-reading, I'm not anti-knowledge, but very few of them can surpass Psalm 36, verse 2, that says, we flatter ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin.

[14:15] We flatter ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin. That is a profound insight about human nature.

So if you could put up the first point, the event that just happened before this, which you can listen to last week's sermon, I'm not going to rehearse the whole thing, is Jesus overcome with anguish and sorrow, and so overcome that he collapses on the ground, calling out to God.

And I didn't go into it, and it's a topic for some other day. This is a prayer that Jesus prays where the Father says no to him. And Jesus says, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you.

If possible, may this cup be taken from me. And he's talking about the fact that on the cross, he's going to bear the sin and the shame of all of humanity, every human being that's ever lived.

He's going to have that be on him. He's going to taste that. He's going to drink it down into himself. And the Father says no.

[15:29] I mean, it's just obvious it says no. And Jesus, it's obvious as the story goes on, is fine with the Father's no. But here's the first point.

It is because Jesus did not betray love and justice that betrayers and the betrayed can be made right with the triune God.

See, in a sense, if Jesus has said, You know what? The heck with this. You know, the betrayers and the betrayed sucks to be you.

I'm not going to go through this. If he had betrayed, in a sense, who he was, his whole mission, his whole purpose, and his whole mission and purpose is a mission of love and a mission of justice. It is because Jesus did not betray love and justice that betrayers and the betrayed can be made right with the triune God.

[16 : 30] Now, I talked about the fact that once you're inside the gospel, you start to understand its deep emotional power. And I'm going to get to that in a moment. So first of all, you see that this story, we see Jesus is betrayed by an intimate friend, and he's betrayed by the best and the brightest.

And that would be a deep wound for every single one of us. But there's also another deep wound that comes from his intimate friend and ultimately from the best and the brightest.

Let's look and see what it is. It's scene three. Scene three, and it's entitled, Mocked and Seized. Scene three, verses 45 and 46. Here's how it goes.

And when Judas came, he went up to him at once and said, Rabbi! And Judas kissed Jesus, and they laid hands on him and seized him.

Now, the first thing here is just a bit of a, I have to bring this up as an aside. You know, basically what this is showing, it's really showing us something about Jesus, is that the normal way he was greeted was by somebody coming up and putting their hands on his shoulders, and he puts his hands on theirs, and they do a kiss.

[17 : 43] Jesus isn't sort of an austere, an austere, patrician, aristocratic person who just needs to be, you know, don't touch me. He hugged.

I'm not a hugger. It's a bit of a challenge to me. But Jesus is a personable guy. He's with people. He's with you. If you were with him back then, you could have done that with him.

That's who Jesus was. But what's going on, it's not obvious in the English. It's obvious in the original language. And that is that in the rabbi is said in a way which is lavish and showy.

So what he's really doing is mocking. It would be as if on Saturday Night Live, they wanted to bring out somebody dressed like Trump, and they'd say, the next president of the United States of America!

And if they did that, everybody would laugh and howl because they're mocking Trump. Just to be politically neutral, it would be as if just over a year ago with the trucker's convoy, Trudeau decided he would actually go out to see them.

[18 : 57] And the organizers said, Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada! And he'd be mocking him, wouldn't they? They'd be mocking him.

And that's what Judas does to Jesus. Judas mocks Jesus. And if you watch any of those coming-of-age movies where the kids are bullied, and somebody makes fun of the kid, and the kid has their one or two weak, wimpy, skinny, nerdy friends, and the mocker is surrounded by the football team, the basketball team, the rugby team, and every other team, or all the mean girls, they're not only mocked, but they're mocked in the presence of people who can overwhelm them and also don't like them.

And that's what happens to Jesus. And being mocked is deeply wounding. There is not a single one of us here who has not been mocked.

And it is deeply wounding. And there's also no one here who has not mocked others. And we have flattered ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin.

But you see, here is where we start to have a bit of a glimpse of the deep emotional power and beauty of those for whom the gospel becomes real.

[20 : 31] And the gospel is the good news of who Jesus is and what he's done for you. And how he desires you to be his child, his friend, his disciple, and he will never abandon you or forsake you.

And that when you put your trust in him, he is the one who does everything that needs to have been done to make you right with the creator and sustainer and the completer of the entire universe.

And he has done it all for you in your place. And you put your faith and trust in him and you become his child forever as the Holy Spirit indwells you.

You're given the gift of new life. But what flows out of that is this potential for deep emotional connection and blessing.

You see, if you think about it for a second, in a sense, in our culture, there's three primary rivals to the gospel. And one of them, of course, is Buddhism. Buddhism. But what is the primary image of Buddha?

[21 : 35] What is the image of Buddha you see in gardens? You see a well-fed man with a look of, in a sense, peace and indifference to the world who has transcended desire.

Islam. And when you think of Islam, the heart of Islam is that everything has been decided in advance.

And you just need to accept your fate. And in the type of basically the soft agnosticism of secularism, when you've been mocked and betrayed and if you have no friends because you've been mocked and betrayed by your friends, where do you go for solace?

Where do you go for comfort? But for a Christian, when you are struggling with betrayal or with mockery, you can pour out your heart to Jesus who has been betrayed and mocked.

If you could put up the second point, Claire, when you are betrayed and mocked, you can pour out your sorrows and your fears to the one who knows the full sting of being mocked and betrayed, Jesus.

[23 : 02] That is part of the deep emotional beauty and power once the gospel becomes more real to your heart. Now, the next part is surprisingly relevant.

We live in a weaponized country. Now, I am not talking about our military, which seems to have procurement problems and has for many decades, but we all know that there are certain topics. I was just talking to a fellow, a non-Christian fellow on Saturday, and he knows that if he wants, he's now discovered there are certain things he can discuss with me and I won't get mad at him and call him names.

And when he talks about them, he looks around and he whispers. He talks very quietly. And we all know that there are certain types of truths, cultural truths in our country right now that if you challenge them, you will be canceled.

That, in a sense, is that certain opinions have been weaponized. And interestingly enough, these next two scenes deal with weaponizing statements.

[24 : 24] Let's look at the first one. It's scene number four. It's verse 47, weaponizing Jesus with a question mark. Hopefully, you can see it up there. Weaponizing Jesus with a question mark.

Let's look and see what the Bible says. Verse 47. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Now, those of you who are really familiar with the Bible, you're probably wondering, why doesn't it talk about Peter? Why doesn't it talk about the name of the servant? Why doesn't it talk about what Jesus does? And all of that.

And just the way that Mark chose to write his gospel, often what Mark does, the way he writes, is he's less, in a sense, preachy. He's more the type that just puts two things together.

And those who really are seeking the truth will see the contrast of the two things. He doesn't sort of draw all sorts of arrows to it and frowny faces or something, thumbs up emojis, you know, and the other ones with smiley faces and all on the next one.

[25 : 32] He just sort of puts the two of them together and in a sense, if we're seeking the truth, if we put the two stories, we can just see what he's doing. And so he doesn't go into all of this stuff.

He just has this one incident of this guy taking out the sword to defend Jesus and his mission. And then we see the second story, how Jesus reacts and what Jesus does.

It's scene number five, verses 48 to 49, and its title is The Patient Speaking of the Truth. Right?

Scene four is weaponizing Jesus in quotation marks.

Scene five is the patient speaking of the truth. Verses 48 and 49, look what happens in the Bible. And Jesus said to them, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me?

Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching and you did not seize me, but let the scriptures be fulfilled. Now, some of your translations say different words.

[26 : 38] They might have revolutionary, they might have some other word than robber, and basically in English there's no really good word to translate it.

what links all of them is that this is a person of violence. So it's not the people trying to get you to give them your password and your information by scamming you with messages or emails or something like that.

This is the heart of the image, whether you use robber or brigand or revolutionary, it's a person of violence. A person of violence. So once again, hear what Jesus says, verse 48, and Jesus said to them, have you come out as against a person of violence, with swords and clubs to capture me?

Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me, but let the scriptures be fulfilled. So in a sense, what we see here is that in a sense, Jesus is looking at Judas and says, Judas, like, was I taking you out into the desert to show you how to fight with a sword, and how to use a bow and arrow, and how to use shields, and how to use spears?

Like, were we robbing Romans, and have I been setting up like a place in a cave somewhere where we've been stockpiling weapons? Do you think that when you come to me that I have a sword and a dagger and a shield and who knows what else, ninja things to throw at people?

[28 : 12] people? And he's saying the same thing to the chief priests and the scribes, and all those other people. He said, listen, you know I'm not a man of violence, and you know that I haven't been just lurking out in the wilderness trying to hide from people while I stir up rebellion and revolution.

I sit at the teacher, my teaching is public. It's open to everybody. It's an open secret. I just tell people my heart. I just speak what the scriptures say.

The scriptures that you, the best and the brightest, you're supposed to know these scriptures. You're supposed to be expert in them. You're supposed to, your whole vow of your life is that you will study them and that you will put them into practice and that you will guide us and you're supposed to know those things and all I've done is all I've done, all I've done is say time and time again, let the scriptures be fulfilled.

Here are the scriptures, let them be fulfilled, let them be lived, let them be for us now. That's all I've done. See, what's going on here is Jesus just speaks the truth patiently.

But Judas and the best and the brightest have believed lies. They have believed lies.

[29 : 48] And everything about this story shows the very nature of the lie. You see, people of the lie love darkness, not light.

People of the lie know that because there's nothing underneath a lie that you need to control the narrative. You need to have force. You need to weaponize lies.

You need to have no witnesses. You need to control the narrative. You need to multiply lies. You need to set inquiries which just boldly, bold-facedly lie.

You need to scream your lies. The truth can be whispered. Lies must shout you down, must badger you, harass you, frighten you into agreeing or being silent.

If you could put up the third point, Claire. When you put your trust in Jesus to be your Savior and Lord, he saves you from the people of the lie and makes you a citizen of the realm of truth.

[31 : 08] When you put your trust in Jesus to be your Savior and your Lord, he saves you from the people of the lie and makes you a citizen of the realm of truth. This is all the Old Testament teaching.

This is going right back to Genesis chapter 3. Did God really say? Did God really say? And even Adam said, yeah, you know, did God really say?

I think that looks like a, he just doesn't want me to be like a God. That's a good path to go. And no, I didn't eat.

And no, I didn't do that. And it's not my fault. It's their fault. I'm not being imperialistic with this because in fact the message of the gospel is that every human being is born as a citizen of the people of the lie.

Every human being. It's not that I'm only a person of the truth. I was born a citizen of the people of the lie. Part of God's common grace to humanity is that the lie doesn't overwhelm you.

[32 : 26] I think that probably for those of you who are Christians and you know that the unforgivable sin, I think what the unforgivable sin is describing is a person who so consistently closes their mind and their heart and their affections to the truth and so completely and utterly believes the lie and multiplies the lie that a time comes when they can no longer know the truth.

They just can't. It is lost to them. But most of us and those of you watching are not in that place and God in his common grace keeps us that we both believe lies but also seek the truths and wrestle with them.

And it's not saying that Christians are all now perfectly virtuous and only seek the truth because the fact of the matter is that we don't. We Christians live in what's called the already and not yet.

On one hand when I give my life to Christ the Holy Spirit indwells me. Jesus makes me born again but I'm still a sinner. I still have a big part of me which is part of the people of the lie.

But here's the thing. Here's the thing. That the gospel forms me to be a person of the truth.

[33 : 49] And that doesn't just mean knowing the truth of the scriptures. It means knowing the truth of the world. It means knowing the truth of how economics works. It means knowing the truth of how science works. It means in a sense that we should not just use evidence-based science which by and large in the media means they're about to lie to us.

Generally speaking in the media if you see evidence-based policy or science it usually means they're going to lie. Sorry. Maybe we're going to get banned from YouTube. But really believe it. That you want evidence. Like the truth is your friend. Jesus is your friend. He's the truth. Clarity is your friend. And we want to know the truth about things that are going on in our neighbors, in our own life, our own heart.

It's emotional truth. It's aesthetic truth. It's moral truth. It's scientific truth. It's economic truth. It's administrative truth. It's philosophical truth.

It's religious truth. It's truth. And the gospel forms us to be people of the truth. How does the story end?

[34 : 56] I have to wrap up. Well, it ends with a cliffhanger. Scene six is a cliffhanger. Look at what it is. Scene six is carried, verses 50 to 52, carried off by his enemies, carried off by his enemies.

Look, it happens in verses 50 to 52. And they all left him and fled. And a young man followed Jesus with nothing but a linen cloth about his body, and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

They flee to the point of nakedness. To bring it to a close, if you could put up my fourth point. What is the gospel?

I have already said that one way to understand the gospel is that because Jesus did not betray love and justice, he is the one who can make betrayers and betrayed right with the triune God.

It's also to understand that when Jesus died, it was the humble one dying for the proud. It was the faithful one dying for the betrayers. And it was truth himself dying for the followers of the lie.

[36 : 03] That is the gospel. The truth himself dies for those of us who love lies. The humble one dies for those of us who are proud.

The faithful one dies for those of us who are betrayers. That gripped by who he is and what he's done, we might begin that walk towards humility.

That we might begin that walk towards being people who are known by our faithfulness. to being ones who are known by our pursuit of truth, are willing to be corrected, are looking for information, our willingness to change our minds as we hear arguments, not weaponized threats.

In the face of weaponized threats, we might be silent, but we say that is a lie. four things are going to be very brief, but you can take pictures of them if you want.

If you put up number A or letter A, ask the Lord to make the gospel so real to your heart that in every facet of your life, you will recognize and reject lies.

[37 : 14] ask the Lord. Could you put up B? Ask the Lord to make the gospel so real to your heart that in every facet of your life, you will humbly seek to know the truth, believe the truth, and speak the truth.

Ask the Lord for this. C. Ask the Lord to make the gospel so real to your heart that you will stop flattering yourself too much to detect or hate your own sin.

Ask the Lord for this. First, the gospel becomes real, and then in the security of the gospel, you can look at the state of your own heart.

And finally, D. Ask the Lord to make the gospel so real to your heart that you will not be so quick to condemn the weakness and failure of others.

the disciples all fled. And it's easy for us to condemn them. But we don't know what we would do in that own case. It doesn't mean that what they did, I'm not saying it wasn't wrong, but there's a very powerful part of us to condemn others when we see weakness in their lives.

[38 : 32] So ask the Lord to make the gospel so real to your heart that you will not be so quick to condemn the weakness and failure of others. and please pray for me that these four truths would be real in my life.

Invite you to stand at this time. Please stand. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, we ask that the gospel would become more real to our hearts.

Father, if there are there, those here or those watching for whom they have not yet come to a point of putting their trust in Jesus and knowing him as their Savior and Lord, Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would help them to turn them to you.

