

Malchus

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[0:00] Well, I'm going to read through and you can turn in your Bible. I decided not to make a slide for this. We're going to go to John 18.

And we're going to read the first 11 verses of John 18. And if you don't have your Bible with you, you can just pull up the pew Bible there in front of you.

John chapter 18, the first 11 verses. And I'm going to be reading from the New International Version. But whatever version, it's the same message.

Okay, I'll just read. When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley.

On the other side, there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

[1:06] So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, Who is it you want? Jesus of Nazareth, they replied.

I am he, Jesus said. And Judas, the traitor, was standing there with them. When Jesus said, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground.

Again he asked them, Who is it you want? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. I told you that I am he, Jesus answered.

If you are looking for me, then let these men go. This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled. I have not lost one of those you gave me.

[2:10] Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus commanded, Peter, put your sword away.

Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? The Lord blessed the reading of his word. Now, as I looked at this short 11 verses, I thought, Lord, what shall I preach out of this?

There's a lot of good sermons right here. In fact, the book of John probably has 10,000 good sermons in it, and we're doing about 30 or 40. You know, or we could stay forever in the book of John.

It's a marvelous book. And I looked at this and I thought, wow, here's a really good sermon. And the first time that a human person, a man, betrayed God was in the Garden of Eden.

And now the last time a man is betraying God is in the Garden of Gethsemane. And oh, to contrast Eden and Gethsemane and the meaning of those words, but I'm not going to preach on that.

[3:24] And then I thought, an interesting sermon here would be to really study Judas and his history and his character and what do we know about him and what was he thinking and how did this happen and was he predestined?

Did he have a choice? That would be a whole marvelous sermon. I'm not going to preach that one today either. And then I thought, gee, in verse 4 it says Jesus knew the future.

And in verse 6 he says this, I am and the soldiers fall to the ground. And I know a lot of y'all thought, sure, I was going to go there because that was, boy, that was a tempting one there.

Jesus is clearly proving that he's the divine son of God right there in those verses. And yet I decided, well, maybe another time.

And then in verses 8 and 9 he's so concerned about his sheep. Let them go. I'm not going to lose one of them. And isn't he the wonderful good shepherd who always loves us in every situation, puts us ahead of his own needs, dies in our place.

[4:32] So I'll say this, if you want to talk about any of those things, in two weeks at our R&R; Bible study, I'm going to put questions about those topics. You'll be able to talk about them in Bible study.

So what are we going to look at today then? I decided we're going to examine this encounter between Peter and this guy named Malchus. And first I'm going to do something totally unimportant, but I just had to do this for John's sake.

This passage, I would say, gives us about 90% reliability that Peter was probably left-handed. I mean, if you read it, he cut off Malchus's right ear.

So frankly, if I'm swinging at you and I'm right-handed and I miss, I'm probably going to cut off your left ear. If he's swinging right-handed, but he cut off his right ear, so Peter was probably left-handed. Now don't take that, you know, to the bank. And Phil's looking at me like, that's the weirdest thing. Okay. So you just never know the little thoughts you can get here and all.

[5:48] So John could... There you go. The guy could have been looking the other way. There's a lot.

Like I said, I'm about 90% sure. Okay. Oh, you heard that? I'm going to repeat that for those in the back.

John, who is blessed with being left-handed. How many other left-handers do we have in here? Oh, they've all gathered at the back back there. Okay. But anyway, the...

Pat? You have to remember, only left-handed people are in their right mind. Oh. Well, now I've opened up a can of worms here. Wow.

This is interesting. If you haven't studied the biology of the brain, you won't know what Pat's talking about. But literally, left-handed people do work from their right brain.

[6:45] So they're the only ones in their right mind. That's catchy. Oh, John said, I think he had to be left-handed because he obviously was a leader among the disciples.

Whoa. Okay. There you go. Wow. Uh-uh-uh. All right, sir. Let's get on into the sermon then. My, my. All right. So, if we'll do the next slide.

Here is a picture of what was happening that night. And you can see that probably, maybe in the dead center, that might be Malchus, a guy holding a torch.

And, of course, in the, to the, just to the right of the center there, you've got Jesus. That's very obvious. You've got Judas giving him a kiss. Look behind Jesus.

I see that must be Peter reaching for a sword. So, that's not a bad rendering of what it was probably like. Perhaps it was a little more chaotic than that scene.

[7:47] But, anyway, it was dark. And it was in a garden. And Judas is identifying Jesus with a kiss. And so, this is not a bad picture for us to be considering.

And let's consider by rereading that part about Malchus and Peter. So, if you'll give me the next slide, please. In verses 10 and 11.

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Jesus commanded Peter, put your sword away. Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? Let's look at this from Malchus' viewpoint.

This word servant in the Greek can also be translated as slave. Either way, Malchus wasn't there by choice.

[8:50] He may never have even heard of Jesus. He's just a guy who's either a slave or he works for. He's a servant to the priest.

And, you know, it's a cold night. He'd much rather be home by the fireplace. Drinking a hot tea or eating a bowl of soup with his family.

Getting ready for bed. And he's just doing a job. The boss called him up and said, You got to go help arrest a guy. And he's thinking, On a night like this, Couldn't wait till tomorrow.

We don't know what he's thinking. But he's just an ordinary guy. And he goes to do his job. And you may never have thought about it this way. But right there at work, A Christian cuts his ear off.

You say, Was he a Christian? Well, if Christian means follower of Christ, Who is more of a follower of Christ than Peter? Okay. Does that mean Peter truly understood yet what it was to be a Christian?

[9:55] No. But he was a follower of Christ as much as anyone. So, we're looking at this guy who a Christian has cut his ear off. And there's maybe even a little symbolism there.

Maybe we're saying that this is now going to interfere with his ability to hear. A little symbolism. That if a Christian cuts your ear off, Maybe you're not going to hear the voice of God very clearly in the future.

And so, where I want to go with this is to ask you, Do Christians today sometimes hurt people? Maybe even hurt non-believers?

And to make it even more personal, Next slide, please. Are you or is someone like you, Someone perhaps you know, Kind of like Malchus.

Have you ever been hurt by a Christian? By a church. And the odds are, You may have been. I've been a believer now for 50 years, And pastoring for 30.

[11:03] And I've talked to many a person, As you have. Often, The subject would come up as I'm meeting with someone, Of why they stopped going to church. And it, More times than not, It's a Malchus type story.

That they have been hurt by a Christian in the church. Sometimes they'll say, Now that's only, By the way, That's only their half of the story. I never believe it's the whole story.

Even the book of Proverbs says, When you hear somebody's case, You think they're right. But you ought to go hear the other side. And so, I'm just going to tell you, The half that they'll tell.

Sometimes they'll say something like, Well, The pastor, Very rudely, Told me I was wrong about something, Or whatever. And he did it so rudely, And I thought, Well, I'm not going to go there again.

Other things I've heard is, People who said, Well, There were members in the church, Who looked down on us. They didn't like how we were dressed. Or, There was somebody in the church, That really disapproved of my kids' behavior.

[12:07] And I was doing the best I could. And I just thought, Well, I just want to go back to church. I remember a man who told me, He quit going to church, Because some of the young women there, Were showing too much skin.

And it prevented him from being able to have, Holy and pure thoughts. That's interesting for especially, Young, Attractive women in the church, To be very careful how you dress.

That probably goes for the older women as well. Probably goes for the guys anyway. You sure don't want to be the person, Who's keeping someone from church.

Sometimes I've talked to somebody, Who's, This is sometimes an argument, From somebody who's more educated. They'll say, The minister, Said something that was so ignorant, About science or something, That I thought, These Christians are just foolish.

And so, I just quit going. Sometimes I've talked to somebody who'll say, I was in youth group, I hadn't been going much, But I started attending a youth group, 20 years ago, And some of the youth teased me about something.

[13:23] I remember one of them, One time told me, That she stopped going to church, Many years before, Because in youth group, She said something like, Well, Who were Adam and Eve?

And the other youth all said, You don't know who Adam and Eve are? Where have you been? You don't know who they are? And, That's all it took, For this person to not come back to church.

I knew a guy, Who quit going to church, Because he was accused of something, That simply other people misunderstood, What his intentions were. And I've probably heard this last one, More than any other, Somebody who says, Well, I was going through a really hard time.

It was either sickness, Or I'd lost a job, Or there was a death in the family, Or something, And I felt like my church ignored me. They didn't do anything, They didn't care, And so I quit going to church. Well, All of those are kind of a Malchus story, And has it ever happened to you? I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand, But if it hasn't, I'll bet you, I'll bet you that it probably will, At some point.

[14:40] Here's why I think it will. Look around you in here. Guess what kind of people, Look around, Look around. See those folks? They're like me and you, They're sinners.

And sinners have a way of being pretty rough on each other at times. We speak too fast, We're too harsh, We're sure we're right, We try to get our own way, And we'll step on each other's toes, And if you're a little bit of a sensitive Malchus type, You're going to be able to be offended.

So, It's a warning, That sometimes we Christians are like a bull in the china shop. Well, If that has happened to you, And it's driven you away from church, And you have felt hurt by church, Is there a way to be healed?

Well, Thank God there is. And the next slide makes it very clear, How we are to be healed. In the Luke version, But not here in John, Luke 22, 51, Jesus answered, No more of this, Peter.

And he touched the man's ear, And healed him. There's your answer. You don't look at the sinners around you, And what they did, You look to Jesus.

[15 : 53] You turn to Jesus, Like every other hurt in your life. You turn to him, And you say, Lord, Heal me in this. I don't want to be forever angry at that person. I don't want to be forever angry at your church.

I don't want to ever be hurt, And resentful, And God, Jesus, Help me. Touch me. And he will. And he will help you to begin to forgive Those who have hurt you, Harmed you.

He'll begin to even help you to be a blessing To people who have persecuted you, Because that is the nature of Jesus. He will help you to even love your enemies, As impossible as that is, If you will turn to him and ask, Then he will help you.

But perhaps, Next slide, Maybe you or somebody you know Is a little more likely to be on Peter's end of that sword Than on Malchus' end of that sword.

And in every church, We've got both temperaments, Both types of people, Those who are more easily hurt, And those who are more likely to inflict the damage.

[16 : 58] We've got different personalities, You know. By the way, This very awkward picture Shows one way you can make Peter be right-handed. Somehow, I'm not quite sure that I would grab somebody, And reach over my other shoulder To try to slice at them.

And I can just sort of hear Malchus saying, You cut my ear off. And Peter's saying, I'm so sorry, I meant to split your head. Anyway, Back to the sermon map.

Okay. So, Sometimes there are those of us in church Who are very ready To correct other people Much too quickly.

We're very ready to point out That we don't like the way they do something, Or their understanding of scripture is wrong, Or they're just something. We, you know, We just rush right in there To set them straight.

That can happen, Kathy. And some of us, All of us have some of that tendency. Some more than others. And so, If we're that way, Here's what our excuse will usually be.

[18 : 09] I was simply defending the faith. Well, Were you really? I mean, Were you really in the position That Jesus would have wanted you to be in?

Maybe you were more likely Defending a political position. A popular position. A favorite thought of yours. And so, Let's look at what Jesus told Peter.

Next slide, please. In John 18, 11, Jesus commanded Peter, Put your sword away. Shall I not drink the cup The Father has given me?

And in Matthew 26, 52, That version of the gospel, He said, Put your sword back in its place. For all who draw the sword Will die by the sword.

Or the other translation often than King James, All who live by the sword Will die by the sword. So, In an extreme case, I think this would clearly speak to the person who thinks that because God loves babies, And is obviously displeased with abortion, That then Christ would want them to bomb the abortion clinic.

[19 : 25] Or because God made us male and female, That God, Jesus, would want them to kill, To murder a transgendered person or something.

Well, in those cases, It just seems so clear that Jesus would say, Put your sword away. Put your sword away.

If you live by that sword, You will die by that sword. But we're less likely, Those of us who are Emotionally well balanced, Which is most, Thank God.

We're less likely to pull a gun on somebody. But we are maybe quick to attack verbally. Or quick to just give the cold shoulder.

I'll just ignore that person from now on. And so, You know, God help us with all of these things.

Now, Here in the South, And this has come up, Those of you that were in our R&R; group, I'm not sure why, But it's come up.

[20 : 33] It's this verse right here about, If you live by the sword, You'll die by the sword. This has come up three or four times in our R&R; discussion. And, Without fail, Somebody in the group will say, Yes, but, If somebody broke into your home, And they're about to attack your wife, Or your children, Are you going to say you shouldn't defend them?

Are you going to say, Matt Garrett, That you wouldn't take your gun out, And put an end to them?

And I say, Okay, I'm not going to argue that case with you.

Let's just say that self-defense might be a category, That you can make a case from the Bible. But if you go on the attack, It's really hard to make that case from the scripture, From the New Testament,

From the words of Jesus, If you are the one on the offensive, Jumping in there.

So, Jesus did say, Put the sword away, Drink the cup. Now, These can be really difficult things to apply, In real life situations.

So, Let me just, Kind of begin to summarize then, To say, We're looking at two groups of people here. If you tend to be more like Peter, Then pray that God will help you, To Think a little more, Pray before you speak, Sleep on a thing, Take time to make sure, Is that really how the Lord would want me to deal with that?

[22 : 10] Because, Trust me, I know from personal experience, Recent experience, The proverb that says, A brother offended, Is harder to be one, Than a fortified city.

We're doing great on our time. I'm going to take a rabbit trail here. I haven't shared this with all of you, But, My brother that we buried yesterday, He was only two and a half years older than me, The oldest first born, I was second born, Four boys all together, We did everything together.

We, Roamed the woods together, We rode our bikes together, We, We played together, We, He even, I told this one at the funeral, He was the, Better looking of the two, I know that's hard to believe, But, This guy was astonishing, You know, So anyway, He was two, Two and a half years older than me, And, He would get phone calls, When he was about 17, From girls in his class, Because they just loved him, And they would call him, And he would get tired of it, And he and I sounded just alike, Even yesterday, People I've never met, Were coming up to me saying, You sound just like your brother, And so, He would, He would get a phone call, And he'd get tired, And I might be walking by, And he'd go, Come here, Matt, Come here, Her name is Susie, And hand me the phone, I liked it, I mean, You know, I was 14, Got a babe on the phone, Who's 17, You know, This was good, I'm like, Yeah, Susie, Yeah, Is that right? Wow, Well, I look forward to seeing you tomorrow too, Wow, Out by the school bus, Why not?

And just, I just, I had fun, Right? After I hung up, I don't know what happened next, But, So, My brother and I were close, We had a lot of fun together, Through the years, Many adventures, Good and bad, We were often partners in crime, Sneaking in the woods, We used to meet these other two brothers, That lived up the road, About a half a mile, And their parents smoked, And ours didn't, And they would, As they were getting off the bus, They'd say, Meet you at five o'clock, Or whatever, That meant, There was a place in the woods, Between us, They were going to go home, And steal cigarettes, From their parents, And meet us there, And we were all going to smoke together, And crazy, Sit there, And like, Trying to smoke up a whole pack of cigarettes, In ten minutes, You know, So, Praise God, We got set free, From that nasty habit, Before we got very old, But, So, My brother and I, We were really close,

[25 : 08] Years went by, I was the best man, In his wedding, Years went by, And we began to drift apart, Just, I lived five hours away, He had his career, His hobbies, His family, I had mine, He was in Virginia, I was in North Carolina, Twenty years went by, Thirty years, Forty, We just drifted apart, And then for things, For reasons, I will never understand, I never will, Because he's gone, At my father's death, Something happened, And he got really angry, And he quit talking to me, And I called him, And he wouldn't answer the phone, And I wrote him letters, And cards, And I'm so sorry, Can we get together and talk, What's the problem, Let's work it out, No reply, And if we showed up, For a family event, If Becky and I,

Walked in the room, They, He and his wife, Literally, Would get up, And leave, I mean, It was just terrible, And I felt like, Malchus, My ear was cut off, You know, And that's how I know, That a brother offended, Is harder to win, Than a fortified city, Is to conquer, So it's a whole lot better, To do everything in your power, To keep that from happening, In the first place, But the blessing of God, That I was able to also share, At the funeral, After talking about, How much fun we'd had, And I, And all I said to them was, You know, It wasn't time to put, The dirty laundry out, All I said to them was, A few years ago, There was a little rift, Between my brother and me, But the last week of his life, God permitted me, To be in the hospital, With him every night, And we laughed, And we cried, And we prayed, And we discussed the Bible, And we just, Ended up with a great love, Between us, And it was, We were restored, And that's how I was able, To be holding his hand, When he passed away, And so, The end of the story, Is beautiful, God is good, But those among us, Who are Peters, By nature, I hope I'm not one, But sometimes I am, We need to take, Care with our words, And then those among us, Who tend to be more like Malchus, And sometimes I'm that way, We need to not be, Nursing our wounds forever, We need to not go on forever, Thinking about how we were offended, And what they did, And we need to go to Jesus, And say, Lord heal this in

me, I'm going to leave it at the cross, Help me to forgive, Help me to get over this,
And it probably doesn't take, A one trip prayer, When it comes up again, You got to pray it again,
And then when it comes up again, You got to pray it again, And Malchus, Can get over, This
situation, I don't care how old you are, I'm one of the, Oldest rats in this barn, The rest of you aren't
rats, You're lovely little mice, Okay, So, It's a shame, When somebody starts getting older, And they
start feeling like, Well it's too late for me to change, I'm just who I am, Others need to live with it,
Come on, We're followers of Jesus, We're going to strive to be like him, Up to the very end, And
we're going to keep on saying, Lord, Change my heart, Give me a fresh touch from heaven, Make
me more like you,

Jesus, Help me to learn, To live this life more like Jesus, And friends, Let's don't ever stop that
pursuit, Let's don't ever stop it, Let's pray together, Musicians come, Lord, We've got a challenging
sermon here, All of us have a little Peter in us, And a little bit of Malchus in us, We're quick to
attack, And easy to say that we've been hurt, Help us in both directions, To come to you, And let
you tell us, How to put the sword away, And let you fight your fights, And then also, How to come to
you, And let you heal, Whatever's been hurt, Bless your people, Oh God, Help us to be like Jesus,
This is our prayer, Amen, Amen, Amen, If the Lord is speaking, To your heart in any way, And you'd
like for me, Or John to pray with you,

[30 : 13] Just come down front, As we sing, And we'll be glad, To pray with you, Let's stand, Thank
you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32 : 48] Thank you.