

Title: The point of no return
Text: Luke 22.35-38
Theme: the point of no return
Series: Luke
Aim: I aim to help my people understand that following Christ means to burn all other ships.

Around 100,000 books have been written about W.W.II just in English. More has been written about this war than any other because this war was fought on every continent but Antarctica. It truly was a world war. There are so many stories to tell. So many details to learn. So many outcomes and consequences. It is inexhaustible. But there is a greater war. It is the war of all wars that affects every human being who has ever lived or will live as well as every principality and power in the angelic armies and demonic forces. This epic battle reverberates around the globe and into heaven and hell. The death and resurrection of Christ is the single greatest event in human history. In our study of Luke's gospel we are in the final week, the final day and now the final night of the life of Christ before his death. Every verse takes us closer and deeper. These words are only recorded by Luke.

Read Text:

When Cortez landed on the beach of Mexico, he ordered his ships to be scuttled so that his men knew that there was no going back. It was victory or death. That is the sense of this text. Only what the disciples and the first-time reader does not fully grasp is that the victory of Christ comes through death. Humility and rejection leads to glory and exaltation. Jesus came as the King of what seems to us to be an upside-down kingdom. How difficult is it for us to really get this? Very! Many of us are tempted to be a bit frustrated with the disciples and how often they were tone-deaf and oblivious to what Jesus was saying or to what was going on around them as evidenced by the texts of the last 2 Sundays. But in their defense, these guys were hearing a lot in the course of a few very intense hours. We get to take our time and think carefully about these things, ask questions and try to absorb this. Consider what they experienced. 1) They had just eaten a large meal together in which Jesus told them that the cup of wine that he shared with them symbolized his blood and the New Covenant. 2) Then he told them that one of them was betraying him and that the fate of the betrayer would be disastrous. 3) It appears that their questioning of who could it be leads to them arguing over who was the greatest in their group and a rebuke from Christ followed by 4) a warning to Peter on how fragile his faith really is and yet a promise that he will not share the same fate as the betrayer. John's gospel includes larger teaching sections and the incredible prayer of Jesus in John 17. So, there is a lot that is going on. These disciples are overwhelmed and there is something else we need to consider. Jesus teaches in a way that demands you and I to think. This is what he did with his disciples. He would tell them things they did not understand and could not understand until later. Those things were clues that led them into discoveries that would deepen their grasp of God. Jesus gave them the clues but he would not do their thinking for them. When someone thinks for you, you don't get it and you don't own it. It is not yours.

It's like getting the answers to the test ahead of time. You may get a perfect score but you haven't learned. So much of Christianity completely misses the point. They dazzle with their art and artifacts, but the followers only have to repeat mantras and nod to the prescribed formulas. Followers are assured that there is salvation in the church, in the system, because really smart guys up at the top have it all figured it out and have distilled it down into tiny formulas for the untrained laity. Just repeat after me. Rinse and repeat and don't ask questions.

Genuine Christianity demands that you think. You question. You poke, prod, investigate until you get it. And Jesus teaches that way. It can be frustrating to us at times like in this text. Why is Jesus asking these guys about a moneybag, knapsack and sandals? Then what's this bit about selling your cloak for a sword? To add to our confusion, in a short bit, when they try to use the swords, Jesus tells them to put them away. How does this fit together? We need to wrestle with it until we get it, meaning until our minds and hearts are captured by it so that we love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls and minds. Genuine Christianity demands all of you: affections, intellect, will and body. Jesus deserves nothing less.

Jesus asks his disciples a question so they will track with him. (35) *When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?* The way that Jesus asked this question could be translated as: *you didn't lack anything did you?* Jesus is referring to the short-term mission trips that he sent the disciples on back in chapter 9 and again in chapter 10. In both of those cases they were told not to take these things. They remembered this happened and they agreed that they were provided for. Now look at v. 36. *He said to them, But now...* What is Jesus saying?

1. **This Time is Different.** (35-36)

In chapter 9 Jesus sent the 12 out as his representatives to do what he had been doing. Go into the villages and towns in the area to preach, cast out demons, cure diseases and heal. They did that. In chapter 10, Jesus sent them out again along with 60 other men. These 36 teams of two were sent into villages and towns to see if they would be receptive to Jesus coming to minister there. In both cases, they were told not to pack stuff, but simply to go. The Lord would provide for them. And they were all provided for. But now, this time is different. How is it different? What are they supposed to grasp?

Is Jesus simply telling them that we are leaving the upper room and you need to take all of your stuff with you because we are not coming back? That is certainly true. But I think this is more. What happened before? Jesus sent them out. That is going to happen again. But in the first two trips, while the disciples certainly experienced some pushback, there were enough people who provided hospitality that they were taken care of. But this time it's different and the disciples need to be ready. In those trips, the disciples were able to go out for a few days maybe a couple of weeks and then return to Jesus to debrief, rest and learn

some more. This time is it s different. Something urgent is about to happen that makes it different and in fact so different that things will never be the same. There is no going back to normal. They are about to be sent out on a mission from which there is no return. And this mission is war. So, you better get a sword. If you don t have one, then sell your cloak (super important) in order to buy one. Having a sword is even more important than having a cloak. You will be going into war.

This is what happened to the disciples, didn t it? Following the resurrection, Jesus commissioned them to go into all the world to make disciples by preaching the gospel, baptizing those who professed faith in him and teach them what Jesus had taught. There s no going back to normal. There s no going back to what life was like before Christ. These guys had a message and a mission and were changed by that message and charged with making that message known, everywhere. The mission they were sent on, was like going into war and they needed to be ready for it. They would need provisions and money. They would need to be ready for battle and to defend themselves. The rhythm of the past 3 years was over. He was going to be gone. They were now standing on their own, yet not alone.

This is what following Jesus looks like. Conversion to Christ means to understand the guilt of our sin and the forgiveness that is ours in Christ. But conversion is more than knowing the facts of the gospel and how it works. It means to surrender. To be all in. We do not follow Jesus for comfort or convenience and when people try to water Christianity down to make it sound comfortable or convenient, it is no longer genuine Christianity. Following Jesus is an invitation to come and die. You die to yourself. You die to your claim on your life. You die to you calling the shots. You die to being your own master and making the rules. You die to being your own Lord and surrender yourself to him. But why? Why would anyone do that?

Jesus explains that in v.37. What is the first word of v.37? It is the preposition “for” which indicates what? Purpose or Cause. This time is different because what is about to happen and what is about to happen is the entire point!

2. **This is the Point!** (37)

Jesus is linking what he just said to this statement in v.37. There is so much going on in this moment. Let s think about his carefully. Jesus makes it 100% clear that he is the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. He is the suffering servant and victorious Messiah. The urgency of this moment is connected to the fulfillment of Isaiah 53 (specifically v.12) by Christ. Follow the logic. Christ is the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 points to the suffering servant of God who brings salvation and victory for all of God s people. Go back to Isaiah 53. Let s walk through this incredible prophecy about Jesus. It breaks down into 4 sections (52.13-53.3; 53.4-6; 53.7-9; 53.10-12). Let s pick it up partway through the first section in v.1)

V. 1-3 – It is difficult to believe because this servant (52.13) does not look like much. He is not the king we expected. He looks common, weak, and in fact will be despised and rejected. He will be a man of sorrows and people will turn their faces away from him.

Vs. 4-6 – But guess what? Those griefs, those sorrows that he bore? Those were ours! We thought that he was cursed, and so we rejected him. He was cursed, but he was cursed because he bore our sins upon himself. He was punished by God and we thought that it was because he was toxic, but he was toxic because he carried our sin. Our sin made him the recipient of punishment and rejection. He was not rejected for his sins. He had none. It was us! And it was so unfair!

And yet, (vs. 7-9) he did not defend himself. He accepted the punishment as if it was the right thing to do. He was like a lamb led to slaughter. And he died. They made his grave (v.9) with the wicked and with the rich. He would die between two criminals and would be buried in the tomb of a rich man. But there s more.

Vs. 10-12. This incredible injustice was the will of the LORD. It was God s will that this innocent servant be crushed because it was in the death of Christ, the perfect offering would be made for our sin. The anguish of the Son would provide satisfaction to God for us. His death would be so complete for our sin that the suffering servant would in his death accomplish the ultimate victory. This victory would break the power of sin and death and Satan. The curse of sin would no longer have a hold on me. The death of Christ would be the death of death. We (v.12) would share in the spoils of victory because our Savior, our suffering Savior, our suffering servant, Messiah, Son of God, Savior would be numbered with the transgressors. This servant would be counted as, considered as being one of the transgressors.

Now, go back to Luke 22.37. For” (because) I tell you that this prophecy in Isaiah 53 is about me. I am the suffering servant. I am the one who fulfills this prophecy. I am the one who must (has to), there is no one else who can, be numbered with the transgressors. And we are at the very point where this is taking place. Jesus then repeats this (37b) and makes it clear that this is happening now! I am the one who is doing this and I am doing this now. This is big. This is the entire point of the Scriptures. This is the point of history. This is the point of life. This is the point of God s Word. This is the epic moment of everything. This changes everything.

In a couple of hours, Judas Iscariot would come with a band of soldiers and Jesus would be arrested and accused of being a lawbreaker. It was a kangaroo court. A kangaroo court is not a court in Australia. It means a sham court that jumps to conclusions based on a predetermined outcome. Jesus would be treated as if he was the worst criminal and would be sentenced to die the worst death humanly imaginable at its time. But there is more. Even though the trial of Jesus was a travesty of justice, there is a sense in which Jesus was guilty of sin. We will look at this in more detail next week, but Jesus, who knew no sin, never sinned, would be credited with our sin. Jesus would bear our sin. Jesus would be treated by

the Father as if he had committed all of the sins that we had committed. Jesus would be numbered with the transgressors and WE are the transgressors. We are the ones that Jesus willingly identified himself with so that our sin, our guilt, our punishment and our wrath would be taken by him so that he could pay for it in full. Our sin has to be incredibly evil if it takes the sinless Son of God to pay for it. And he did.

This is happening, right now. Jesus is telling the disciples what is going on. Jesus is about to lead the disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus would accept the cup. Again, more on that incredible event next week.

This is the heart of the gospel. This is what Romans describes as justification. When Jesus was numbered with the transgressors, he went to the cross bearing our sins and guilt. Therefore, he suffered and died for us, that is in our place. He was sentenced to death in our place and for us. And his death on the cross paid for our sins, not simply because he suffered but because he offered up his perfectly righteous, innocent, holy and pleasing life to the Father for our sins. God happily accepted the life and death of his Son for us. When you trust in what Christ has done for you, as your salvation, the payment that Christ made is happily applied to your account. Your sin is paid for and the perfect life of Christ is credited to you. You are declared righteous with his righteousness. You are forgiven and declared righteous because Jesus was numbered with the transgressors.

The benefits are eternal and immediate. You are forever forgiven. You are eternally secure. Hell is no threat to you because you are now saved from the penalty of sin and the justice of God. Right now, you are free from sin's penalty. One day you will be free from sin's presence. But the benefits are also immediate.

Every one of us struggles with insecurity. We fear that we don't belong and that we will be rejected. Therefore, we look to all sorts of things in attempts to justify or validate us, but they don't. Some of you look to your health to impress others. You seek validation in your fitness and appearance. Some of you look to your marriage to validate you. Some of you look to your children and their success to validate you. You fear failure as a mom or dad or as a spouse, or athlete, or musician because you think that you are validated, made much of by them or that your happiness is in them. Some of you look to your career or retirement accounts for your validation. But, whatever you think justifies you, you have to defend. And that is exhausting. Mom's you will never be mom enough. And you will always be threatened by a mom who does it better. Dad's will never be dad enough. There is always someone younger, stronger, prettier, more talented, more capable, who feels like a threat to you if you think that any of those things validate you. But they don't! They can't! You are not good enough! But Jesus is! Jesus is good enough. Jesus is infinitely good enough and He is good enough for you, in your place. He was numbered with the transgressors so that could take your place and be your payment. By faith alone in him and only in him are you declared good enough with his goodness, which is good enough, now and forevermore.

3. Don't miss the Point! (38)

The disciples produced two swords. That wasn't the point. They had a lot yet to learn, but they would. Later it would make sense and they would write it down for us, so we wouldn't miss the point. Jesus is the point!