Title: Are you sure you want to do this?
Text: Luke 22.47-53
Theme: The mercy of God
Series: Luke
Aim: I aim to show how the mercy of Christ motivates us to trust him, and model him.

Read Text:

If you have an Instant Pot, you know that it is basically a pressure cooker. Because it cooks things under pressure, it reduces the amount of time for certain foods to be ready. Pressure cookers are wonderful, unless you happen to be the food. Pressure literally reveals what is on the inside for food, and pressure reveals the character of a person as well. This is why kiss and tell stories and books are so popular. What is that person really like? We know what they are like in front of the camera, on the field or court, or stage, but what are they like in the hospital? What are they like in the face of an emergency or crisis?

This is why this text is so fascinating, comforting and actually convicting. Jesus is in the ultimate pressure cooker. He is bearing a weight no one has ever carried. He has just finished praying so intensely his sweat pooled and fell like heavy drops of blood. He was so exhausted that an angel came to sustain him. And now in this weakened, exhausted condition, with the weight of sin crushing him, Judas Iscariot comes walking up, pretending to be a friend, greets him and kisses him. Jesus is exceedingly vulnerable. How much can one take?

Back in Luke 6.45, Jesus said, *"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of this evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."* My uncle used to say that whatever is in the well will come up in the bucket. This text has both action and words. There are basically 3 sets of actions and 3 sets of words. There is the action of Judas, the reaction of the disciples and the action of the chief priests, officers and elders. To each of these, Jesus responds with words. The words of Jesus reveal another layer of the heart of our God.

From this text I aim to do two things: 1) I want us to see and savor the heart of Christ that is so perfectly and powerfully displayed so our love of him, our security in him and our trust and delight in him is stirred. This text is like lighter fluid on the coals of our worship. 2) I want us to want to reflect the mercy of Jesus, like this. I want my life (and our lives together) to be so gospel-attractive that people who know us think, "if this person is what Jesus is like, then I want to follow Jesus." With that in view, let's see how Jesus responds to:

1. **<u>Being betrayed to his face</u>**. (47-48)

When you love deep, you hurt deep at the loss of that love or in this case, the betrayal of that love. Jesus loved Judas. Jesus did not have transactional relationships. Judas did. Judas determined that Jesus was worth 30 pieces of silver. For the right price, Jesus was dispensable. What is that like to know that Judas made plans with the chief priests to betray Jesus with a kiss

and told them that the one he kisses will be the one they want. (Matt 26.48) Judas planned to betray Jesus with a kiss. Judas planned to kiss Jesus, as a sign of affection and relationship. Judas presumed he could approach Jesus and get so close to him he could kiss him. Judas presumed Jesus would let him. Judas knew he could trust the affection of Jesus. Judas knew Jesus would be so approachable, so dependable that Judas could make this the plan. And to add to this, Judas knew that Jesus would be at this place.

Earlier Judas left the upper room and met the chief priests, who mustered their posse with soldiers, and others. They gathered swords, lanterns and torches. But it was night and it would still be difficult to know who was who. So, in an effort to single out the one they wanted to arrest without scaring him off, Judas came up with this plan to identify Jesus with a kiss.

Back in Luke 7, we read of a dinner Jesus was at where a woman anointed his feet with alabaster from a flask and then wetting them with her tears, she wiped his feet with her hair and kissed them. That was intensely personal and moving. Jesus received this from her and said, “she loved much.” That scene was repeated, but this time by Mary, the sister of Lazarus in her home and it took place just 6 days ago on Saturday evening, April 1, A.D. 30. Judas Iscariot was angry and offended at Mary’s extravagant waste of money as she displayed her love of Christ. Now, he comes, approaches Christ and fakes affection in order to mark Jesus as the one to be arrested. It is more than ironic. It is poisonous. His soul is poison.

Here he comes, leading the band, dripping in hypocrisy. You can smell the stench of his heart from a mile away. And as Luke notes in v. 47, he is “one of the twelve.” Earlier while eating when Jesus told them that one of them would betray him, they were asking themselves which one it could be, never imagining that it was Judas. Now they know and if I am understanding this scene correctly, they are shocked and they are incensed.

Jesus does not deserve this. Jesus gave up so much to become one of us. Jesus has just spent the last three years with Judas, teaching him, serving him, feeding him, helping him, loving him, talking with him, even trusting him with ministry opportunities. And now this. What slight, perceived slight, hurt gives Judas justification to turn on Jesus and the brothers? How could Judas do this, to Jesus and the other 11? What story was he telling himself? What rationale had he come up with that made this sound even remotely reasonable? How could he do this?

This betrayal is so bad, so deep, so offensive, and so hurtful that we simply cannot fully imagine it. So, how does Jesus respond? There is no fire that he breathes, nor bitterness that he spits. Instead, he asks Judas a question and he does it personally. He calls him by his name. “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” He reminds Judas of who he is. Judas. I know you. And you know me. I am the Son of Man. Jesus does this to remind Judas of how serious his betrayal is, even as he appeals to him, one last time. What is he asking? Judas, are you sure you want to do this? Are you sure you want to do this, with a kiss? Do you see what I see? Here is one last offer to Judas. Here is an offramp for him. Judas, you don’t have to do this. Think about what you are doing. Judas, this is serious.

Luke does not tell us if Judas kissed Jesus or not. We know from the other gospel accounts that Judas did, but it's like Luke cannot get himself to write it down, it is so offensive, so hard to even think about it. And yet, here is Jesus in the very moment of being betrayed expressing profound compassion to his betrayer. "Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free – rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me! Underneath me, all around me, is the current of his love – leading onward, leading homeward to his glorious rest above."

Beloved, this is our King. This is our Savior. Behold your God. Love him, trust him, embrace him, follow him. Worship him. Where else are you going to find someone who will care that much for you that even when you sin so grievously, he is grieved, for you? He is worth your trust.

Think back to a time when you were betrayed. Why is it so difficult for us to move past this? We tend to focus more on what has been done to us, than we have pity or mercy on the soul of the one who has done it. In the end, Jesus is not the loser. Judas is and Jesus knows it. How does that help you put to rest the betrayals you have experienced?

Luke does not address this directly, but it seems that the 11 are probably enraged at the betrayal of Judas. Judas betrayed Christ and he betrayed them. It is reasonable to think that these guys were enraged at Judas and they, particularly Peter come out swinging. How does Jesus respond to:

2. **<u>Being defended with force.</u>** (49-51)

Judas identifies Jesus and Jesus is arrested. The disciples (v.49) could see where this is heading. It sounds like the crowd was about to leave with Jesus when the disciples realize that if they were going to do anything, they had to act now. In that moment, they sprang into action. They said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" Before Jesus responds, Peter (John tells us) cuts the right ear off of the servant of the chief priest.

When I read this as a little kid, I tried to imagine how Peter could so deftly slice this guy's ear off. Later on, I realized that he wasn't going for the ear, he was going for the head and this servant, named Malchus (by John) probably ducked, resulting in just his ear getting wacked off instead of his entire head. My guess is that Peter was left-handed since it was the right ear that got, assuming he was facing him. Another interesting detail is that this poor dude was the servant, literally bondservant of the chief priest. His name is likely an Arab name. He may have been a slave that the chief priest owned and therefore had to be there. At any rate, Peter and the disciples are ready to stand their ground and start a brawl to protect Jesus.

Jesus didn't tell them to do this and Jesus is being wrongfully accused, wrongfully arrested so, it is pretty clear how this is going to go down. It would feel a bit gratifying for your boys to come to your defense, give you a chance to escape. Of course, this would threaten to escalate things in a hurry. So, how does Jesus respond to being defended with force? He tells his disciples to stop. "No more of this." And then clearly demonstrating to all that he is not the threat that they

made him out to be, Jesus heals Malchus and puts his ear back on his head. This would be the last recorded miracle of Christ before his death. He is not running away. This is his cup.

In that moment, everything stopped. The disciples are stopped. The arrest is paused. The servant is probably feeling his ear and likely others looking at him and wondering what just happened. The soldiers who came were the temple guard, and no doubt, they had never seen anything like this before. What just happened? Who is this that does not defend himself, who actually heals an adversary? Jesus could have let this play out. And the servant, oh well, wrong place, wrong time, unfortunate event. Again, do you see the compassion of Christ? Even in his arrest, Jesus is caring for others, when he is not expected to.

Imagine that you are Malchus. You are told to join this band of soldiers to arrest a dangerous person who is a threat to your nation. You leave your Passover meal (possibly), meet up with the others, go over your instructions and quietly go out under the cover of darkness to arrest this guy. Then this. You get there, and you are attacked. Someone tries to cut your head off, and the next thing you know, you just lost an ear. You are probably screaming because of pain and your ear? That would have been a lot of blood. That's a head wound. Then Jesus touches you. He puts your ear back on. I mean the guy put your ear back on your head, no stitching, no wraps, and it stays. You feel it and you can feel it. The guys next to you look at it and it is on right-side up and it works. You can hear. And if Jesus healed your ear, you may be able to hear better. What are you thinking? This guy just healed my ear! What are we doing arresting him?

Malchus likely followed the proceedings and probably wondered why Jesus was considered to be such a threat. A few days later when rumors of his resurrection were going around, and being vehemently denied by his boss, all Malchus had to do was feel his ear and may have indeed, believed. Again, I do not know this. But John tells us the name of the servant. Beloved, I would not be surprised to find out that Malchus, at some point down the road, became a follower of Christ and a member of the church in Jerusalem. If so, he and Peter would have had a few things to talk about for sure. I think it is entirely possible that we will see this guy in heaven. I don't know that, but I know this, Jesus not only preached the sermon on the mount, he lived it. That bit about turning the other cheek, loving your enemies, praying for those who persecute you, caring for those that the world thinks you have a right to hate, he did all of that. Even when he could have let others defend him and let this man suffer, Jesus demonstrated that he was not a victim. He was clearly in charge, even of his own arrest and healed a man he had every reason to hurt. Doing this was not only a mercy to Malchus, it was a mercy to the 11. Jesus stopped them from defending him, and quickly resolved a situation that would have resulted in them being arrested. That would come in the future, but Jesus keeps them out of jail now because they will be needed in a few weeks. Jesus protects them from themselves for their good, and for the gospel. How does Jesus respond to:

3. **<u>Being arrested in darkness.</u>** (52-53)

Everything stopped. The disciples were stopped. The crowd stopped. Malchus got his ear back. It seems like no one is sure what to do. So Jesus says, "*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. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

Once again, Jesus basically asks, "are you sure you want to do this? Think about this, guys. I am clearly not a robber. You had plenty of chances to arrest me when I was in the Temple. Why didn't you do it then? Why are you doing it this way now? Is it because you have something you are trying to hide? Is it because there is something deep down you are ashamed of? Is it because, in your heart of hearts you know that this is not right but you don't have the courage to face it? You know, don't you, that you are being a hypocrite. You are doing this in the dark, not only trying to hide what you are doing but because what you are doing is dark. This is the hour of darkness. This is your hour and you are the darkness.

One last time, Jesus spoke to their hearts and one last time, they, ashamed or not, clenched their resolve, doubled down and proceeded to arrest the Son of Man and Son of God. And Jesus let them. What is Judas thinking? Were 30 pieces of silver really worth it? What was Malchus thinking? Was anyone really thinking, or were they blocking out any rational thoughts because they were hellbent on doing what they wanted no matter what?

Judas traded his brotherhood with the disciples and his allegiance with Jesus for his new friends who would give him what he wanted. What did he expect from his new friends? He was using them; they were using him. Together they were all wrong, guilty, angry, and miserable. His new band would not stay together. Jesus saw what Judas was doing to him and what he was doing to himself. Are you sure you want to do this?

The disciples were ready to prove their loyalty even as they completely misunderstood what was going on. Jesus had told them repeatedly that he was going to die and that he had to die. This was his mission to fulfill, his cup to drink. When they attempted to interfere, he stopped them, even rebuked them. He stopped them from trying to stop the plan of God. Later on they were glad he did that, because they came to see what Jesus had come to do.

To the rest of the crowd, Jesus asked them to consider again, what they were doing. Even as they arrested him, Jesus cared for them. He knew their actions would bring an enormous weight upon them. They were seeking to arrest, convict and execute the Son of God and he was giving them an offramp. It may be that you are planning on doing something wrong and you are trying to block out any voice of reason because you want what you want. This text may be a gift to you, giving you an off ramp, like an emergency ramp for a truck that is going downhill and loses its brakes. Are you sure you want to do this?

This is our God. This is our personally, merciful and compassionate God. Believe that about him. If he is that compassionate to his enemies, how merciful do you think he is to those who trust him? How merciful are we called to be to others?

John Piper said, "*Most of our bitterness and anger towards others is rooted in an inability to be profoundly amazed at Christ's love for us in our sin*."