

Midweek Lent 3 Sermon
“Do it My Way” (Luke 22:49-51)
February 28, 2024
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 3rd Lenten Wednesday is Luke 22:49-51.

“49 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, “Lord, shall we strike with the sword?” 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, “Permit even this.” And He touched his ear and healed him.”

So far the text...

We thank Pastor Goetz once again for this object lesson Lenten series that points us to the passion of Christ. So far, we’ve had two objects – the 30 silver coins and the rooster. First a quick recap...The 30 silver coins reminded us about the temptation to love money more than God. Pastor Goetz reminded us that if your goal is to get more and more stuff, you’ll never be content. And Judas was not content, but he despaired to the point of taking his own life.

Stuff will never bring true happiness. As we heard in the men’s Bible study last week, there’s no U Haul that follows the funeral hearse to the cemetery. You can’t take anything with you! Money and wealth are gifts from God and He wants us to be good stewards. But the love of money is the root of all evil. It’s a 1st commandment problem – loving money more than God-making money your god.

The greatest riches are what Jesus went to the cross to give us – forgiveness, the complete satisfaction of our enormous spiritual debt of sin, the crown of eternal life, the inheritance of heaven itself! This is the unlimited wealth of a believer in Jesus, for He shares it all with us.

Next, the rooster. A 2nd commandment problem. Instead of praising Jesus, thanking Jesus and calling upon Him in trouble. Peter did just the opposite. He disowned Jesus, disassociated himself from Him, and even cursed Him. 3 times he denied Jesus before the rooster crowed. The warning was not heeded. And yet we know that Jesus first personally came to Peter’s saddened soul when He rose from the dead. (Luke 24:34) He found Him to restore him, forgive him, and later lead him to feed His sheep. (John 21:15-19)

Which leads us to 3rd object – a sword – a sword in the hand of Peter. A real sword represents man’s might and strength. Yet, this plastic sword isn’t much of a threat to anyone. And furthermore, it can accomplish as much for the kingdom of God as did Peter’s real sword. For

the kingdom that Jesus fought for was spiritual – for freedom of all the souls of the world from the devil’s stronghold. It was won by Jesus’ sacrificial love for Peter and all of us.

Peter, like us think we know better than God sometimes, right? On Sunday, we heard Peter rebuking Jesus when He said that **“the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” (Mark 8:31).**

That one word “must”, went right over Peter’s head. It didn’t register. Peter’s way was better – no suffering or death for Jesus and if it came right down to it, fight evil men with blades of steel.

Jesus quickly rebuked Peter, **“Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”**

God gives men and women governments, of course, the power of the sword to keep law and order. **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ... 4 For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”**

And, of course, the Jewish leaders with their temple troops had no legal right to arrest Jesus. Nor did they offer any warrant or charges for His arrest. They were doing it their way – mob rule. This was not about the rule of law being carried out properly. It was about Jesus doing what He knew He must do. So, we read from John 18.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?” 5 They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

Jesus went forward to them. He asks them the question “whom are you seeking?” And when Jesus responds, “I am He.”, they fell to the ground. The swords and clubs of sinful men could do nothing to Jesus unless He let them. The great I AM speaks, who spoke from the burning bush. In His presence is holiness and evil must fall down. Matthew records these words of Jesus:

Matthew 26:53

Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?

But Peter wanted to do it his way and quickly drew the sword and cut off Malchus' ear, a servant of the high priest. Jesus quickly healed his ear and says.

So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?” (John 18:11)

This cup of suffering was the things of God, the things that wrought our salvation. Peter's sword was the things of man, man's thinking, Peter's thinking and ours also.

How are we sometimes like Peter? When we think our way is better than God's way. We are always tempted to try and use our methods and gimmicks to help God's kingdom grow. We are tempted to copy others who use entertainment and success theology. We are tempted to take credit for the good that happens in the church instead of giving all glory to God. It's His church, His mission, His work of salvation 100% and we must always answer

Luke 17:10

So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”

And we are tempted to take credit for our own salvation. I can do it my way by deciding what is morally right and wrong in my own mind. I can do it my way by giving up this or that during Lent and earn more credit towards heaven. I can do it my way by thinking I don't need Bible study or I only need the Lord's Supper when I “feel” like I need it. Doing it my way, is thinking that this world is more than my temporary home. That my pilgrimage in this world is what I want it to be and if God should allow any tests in my life then I have every right to be upset with God like a toddler whose toy is taken away.

But, God's thinking and the things of God are much, much different. First, of all, we must know that God's word is a two-edged sword. And by hearing His Word we know the things of God which gives us salvation alone through Jesus.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

God's powerful word of His law condemns us for all our self-centered thinking and breaking of God's commandments. And yet, His Gospel heals us. Just as Jesus healed the ear of Malchus with His love, so Jesus heals our souls by His great love that He voluntarily drank the cup of suffering for us.

He was wounded for our transgressions. (Isaiah 53). To crush the serpents head, His heel had to be bruised. He had to be wounded. This was God's things, God's plan, God's "must". And Peter's sword or any of our ways to earn salvation need to be sheathed in repentance.

We see the imagery of a two-edged sword in Revelation 1. A two-edged sword comes out of the mouth of Jesus. And this is what we see and hear Jesus say.

“out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore.”

The disciples ran and fled in fear when Jesus was arrested. Adam and Eve hid in fear from God in the Garden. We too have fears and hide from God for not following His ways. But, Jesus says “Do not be afraid”. No club, sword or spear can take you away from Me. For Jesus was dead. He accomplished the “must” for all people. He paid for the sins of all people with His precious blood. But now He lives! And lives forevermore!

He protects us with the **“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; (Ephesians 6:17)** Law and Gospel! And feeds us with His very body and blood for our soul's healing!

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written:

**“For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”**

**37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
(Romans 8:35-37)**

Yes, Peter's thinking would come into line with God's thinking. He would learn, treasure and share the Kingdom of God's grace and mercy. So that Peter wrote in:

2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

All glory to God for His thinking, His way, His salvation for us in Jesus! Amen.

“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)