

SWORD OR CUP ?

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Luke 22:51

51 And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

I don't know if we have ever talked about this particular scripture or not. I don't know whether I've ever heard it talked about in the last 25 or 30 years in going to church. As I was lying in bed, this gentleman's name came to my mind last night. As we were reading and studying down through the day, we couldn't get rid of him. Therefore, we are going to give him to you tonight.

There is a wonderful lesson here. This is the last miracle that Jesus is going to do before the cross. Do you remember the first miracle that He did? He turned the water into wine. In John chapter two, there was a marriage and they had run out of wine. The servants came to Jesus and told Him the situation. Mary said to them; "Whatever, he says; do it." We know that He took the water pots and filled them up to the brim. He dipped it out and gave it to the governor and guests. The gentleman made the statement that usually you set your good wine out first then when men have well drunk; you put out the wine that is not so good. But this guy said that "You have kept the best wine till last."

I thought about how that was a wonderful time at the wedding. It was a time of joy, and great happiness. A Jewish wedding was a little bit different than the weddings that we have today. It was actually a celebration that went on for several days. It was a happy time. That was His first miracle.

However, the last miracle here that He is going to do; it wasn't a happy time. The Bible tells us that the last supper has ended. He has washed the disciples' feet.

He has talked with about some different things. As you read the Bible, you will find out that Judas has went out from among the twelve and that satan has entered into him. He goes to the high priest to make his arrangements to bring him to Jesus. We know when Jesus leaves the upper room; He comes down through the Kidron valley and comes across a bridge that goes across the valley; goes up the other side into a garden called the garden of Gethsemane. We are all familiar with that. We know that he took the eleven disciples with Him. If we understand things correctly, the Bible says that He goes to a certain place. He stops and He takes Peter, James, and John with Him. Then they go a little farther. Then He goes about a stone throw away from them and the Bible says that He begins to pray.

He was in great agony because He knew that in a matter of hours that He was going to be hanging on a cross and that He was going to be dying. The Bible says that as He prays; His sweat became as great drops of blood. He prayed this prayer: He said, "Father if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me but nevertheless let not mine will be done but thine will."

He goes back and He finds the disciples asleep. He talks to them about some different things. Then He goes to pray. The Bible tells us that He prays a prayer three times then He comes back and finds the disciples asleep.

This miracle that we are going to talk about; it is not a happy time. It's a very dark, gloomy and agonizing time for the Lord Jesus Christ. He says to His disciples, "Sleep on, now." Then He tells them that they need to get up because He that is going to betray us is at hand. We know that here comes Judas at about eleven or twelve o'clock at night. The Bible says that they have come with their swords, staves and torches. I can imagine where Jesus was at and where they were coming from; if you would have been there on that hillside, on that night; you could have looked down across the valley and you could have saw the torches and lanterns coming. I don't know how many was there, but probably a few hundred of them were coming to arrest one man. They were coming to arrest a

man that they did not know who that He was. The reason that I can say that is because of what Judas said. Judas said the fellow that I kiss will be Him. You hold Him fast. Judas gave them a sign. Evidently, those that were coming to get Jesus didn't know who that He was, and didn't know what He looked like. If they had known what He looked like and who that He was then they wouldn't have needed a sign from Judas showing this is He.

I can just picture in my mind as Jesus and the disciples were on one side of the hill in the garden and here the soldiers and Judas come down the other side. I can picture in my mind the lights that are flickering in the night. Here they come down the hill and Judas is leading the band. They get down to where Jesus is at and Jesus makes a statement. He asks them who they are looking for and they told Him that they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said, "I am Him." The Bible says that when Jesus said that they fell backwards upon the ground. We know that Judas comes over and kisses the Lord and says, Master, Master and so forth. Jesus says some things to him about "Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" At that time, if you read the four accounts of what happens, some of the soldiers that were with this mob coming to get Jesus they took hold of Him. When that happened, there was one in the crowd, a disciple named Peter, who drew out his sword and cut off a fellow's ear.

If you read the Bible, you will find out that this guy's name is Malchus. Peter wasn't trying to cut off his right ear. Peter was trying to cut off his head. Peter was trying to kill him. Because this guy had just took hold of the Savior.

Peter spoke a lot of times before he thought. Peter acted before considering what he was doing. Peter drew his sword and hits Malchus' right ear and cuts off his ear. Jesus looks at Peter and says to Peter; put your sword back into its place, into its sheave. He that lives by the sword is going to die by the sword. Here is a guy that is Jesus Christ's enemy. Malchus. He's a soldier. He was the one who evidently, grabbed Jesus because he was the one that Peter wanted to stop first. Peter cuts off his ear and his ear falls to the ground. What are you thinking if you

are there? What are you thinking, if you are Malchus? What are you thinking, if you are there and you are one of two hundred to six hundred soldiers; tough, rugged guys that know how to fight. They come to get one man and here he gets his ear cut off. Jesus looked at Peter and tells him to put up his sword into his sheave. The reason He did that, He said to Peter, "Don't you know that I could presently pray to the Father and He would send me more than twelve legions of angles." That's what Jesus said. He could have done that, but He didn't do that.

Here we are in a garden, in a very dark time; not only physically dark, but in Jesus' life a very dark time. One of His own disciples that He knew was a devil in the beginning, that He knew when He chose him he was a devil; Jesus said that. One of the disciples that ate with Him and saw Him do great things. He had seen Him walk on water and heal some people. Not only that, but Jesus had done some great things for him and with him. One of His disciples had just betrayed Him.

I don't know whether you have ever really been betrayed or not; I mean sincerely been betrayed, but if you have, it hurts. Even though He was the Son of God, He felt pain just like you and I feel pain. The betrayal hurts. I'm not talking about somebody who takes your parking spot, or somebody who doesn't comment on your hair; I'm not talking about that. I'm not talking about some little petty thing that we carry around as chips on our shoulders all of our life. I'm talking about if you have really been betrayed by somebody. It hurts. Here Jesus is and He is going to perform a miracle on an enemy. He was going to perform a miracle on somebody that wanted to do Him harm. It wasn't a happy time. It wasn't a wedding. It wasn't a happy time. It was in a garden, it was dark and He was surrounded and He knew that just in a matter of hours He was going to die.

This miracle is one that He is going to do on an enemy and someone that is not asking for help. You'll never read anything where Malchus asked Him to heal his ear. It's not there.

As was said earlier about the woman with the issue of blood; she was seeking some help. She wanted help. Also, blind Bartimaeus had asked for help. There are so many others in the scriptures that came to Jesus who all asked for His help. When they asked for help, then He met their need.

However, this miracle; the last one that He is going to perform before He goes to the cross, is going to be on someone who didn't ask for His help. There is a reason for that. There are reasons that Jesus is going to perform this miracle, on this guy, at this particular place. I never really thought about these things until just sitting and meditating on what it really means. This one verse of eight to fifteen words: *“And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.”* We know that his ear is healed.

I want you to think about a couple of things here that is going to take place. First of all, you cannot get to Jesus, gain or win Christ, or gain favor with Christ by using violence. It can't be done. You know, I could commend Peter and say, if I would have been there on that night and they were coming to get Jesus, I may have been like Peter; I may have wanted to fight. I may have done that and you may have done that. However, as Peter did what he did; and we would have been there and we would have wanted to fight; we would have been wrong in what we were doing.

Jesus had just prayed the prayer, “...nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” You know what Jesus knew? Jesus knew that the only way for this to be done is for Him to drink the cup that His Father had set before Him. He knew that the cup His Father had set before Him was for Him to die on the cross in a matter of hours. There is something about being submissive unto the Will of God. Jesus was going to be submissive unto His Father.

Even though that Peter was very close to Jesus, he walked by His side, he had just said an hour just before this when Jesus said that all of you are going to betray

me; Peter rose up and said that all the rest of them may deny you, all the rest of them may run off Lord, but they may kill me, I'll never deny you. Peter had just said that just a few minutes before. Even though Peter was that close to the Lord, he saw Him, he was with Him and he walked with Him; Peter didn't understand sometimes what God's Will really was.

Sometimes in our life we come to church, we preach, we sing, we talk, we do, we give, and I'm not saying that we are not close to God; because Peter was, but sometimes when we are close to God, we make impulsive decisions that are absolutely stupid. You do and I do. When we make decisions on the spur of the moment without giving it any thought; we mess up. You do and I do. It might be buying something, it might be something that we say to someone, it might be going somewhere, it might be giving to something, it might be building something and when we make decisions on the spur of the moment, we mess up.

That's what Peter done. Peter messed up. It was commendable for him to defend Jesus, but it was wrong. It wasn't the Will of God for Peter to defend Jesus with a sword. If Jesus needed to be defended, God will defend Him; not with a sword, but with angels. Here they are; Malchus with his ear gone and Jesus has told Peter that we cannot accomplish the Will of God with a sword.

I want you to remember something. Even today sometimes we try to accomplish the Will of God the wrong way. Peter wanted to accomplish it by fighting, but Jesus was going to accomplish it by being submissive. In His submission, He had to drink the cup of death. He had to drink the wrath of God that was going to be poured out upon the cross. He had to drink that cup. When He drank that cup, He was doing it and being submissive to the Will of God. By doing that He was pleasing and doing what God had asked Him to do.

It wasn't by fighting with swords. Even today, when you think about what I am going to say here for a moment; there are times in my life and in your life that the sword is before us and the cup is before us and instead of being submissive and

drinking the cup, we want to use the sword and try to accomplish God's Will by fighting, with violence or with things that have nothing to do with the Will of God; instead of coming over here and drinking the cup that God has set before us. Sometimes the cup that we have to drink to accomplish the Will of God in our lives isn't necessarily pleasant.

Study for thirty minutes to an hour on Jesus' death and you'll know that the cup that Jesus drank on this day was a very bitter cup. He did that to accomplish the Father's Will. The Father's Will for Jesus Christ could not be accomplished with violence, fighting, arguing, denial; it could not be accomplished that way. The Will of God for Him had to be accomplished by drinking the cup that God had given Him to drink.

Sometimes we want to take the easy way out. Sometimes we don't want to drink the cup. Sometimes we would rather resist that and go to our own strength and power trying to do things that we wanted to do in our own way. All along, we know that if we are going to accomplish the Will of God we have to drink this cup. That has not changed any. There is a Will of God for my life and there is a Will of God for your life. I know that we have specific things that God wants us to do individually. I know that it's God's Will for everybody to be saved.

I have heard people get up and pray, "...if its God's Will, save my son..." You don't have to pray a prayer like that because it is **God's Will** for your son or your daughter, your husband, your wife or whoever it is; it is God's Will for them to be saved. When we do get saved, there are specific things that God wants us to do and it's not always pleasant. Sometimes the way to accomplish the Will of God is not easy.

Jesus here had to drink the cup. In doing what He was doing, He was accomplishing His Father's Will. He was being submissive. He wasn't going to fight; He was going to drink the cup. In doing that He was being submissive. He wasn't using violence. He was simply being obedient to God.

When He heals Malchus' ear, Jesus tells us that we need to pray for our enemies, to pray for those who spitefully use us and say all manner of evil against us falsely; we need to pray for those folks. If Jesus taught that we need to love our enemies, and if He didn't love His enemies then everything that He taught wouldn't mean a whole lot. What I am saying is, if Jesus said that you need to love those that hate you and if He didn't love those who hated Him then what He said wouldn't mean anything. He practiced what He preached. He said love your enemies, pray for them. That's what He is going to do here.

Malchus is here with his ear cut off. He is Jesus' enemy. Do you know what Jesus does? He looks beyond the part of the enemy and he looks to the part; here's a guy that's in need.

This is important! Here's a guy that one of my disciples has just injured. Jesus is going to heal him and He does that. Did you ever think about the concern that Jesus not only had for Malchus, but what the people were going to think about the followers of Jesus Christ. Here is Malchus with his ear gone and here is Peter one of the followers of Jesus that has just done it.

How many times in your life have you done some things that you shouldn't have done? You know that you shouldn't have done them, then a millisecond after you did them, you got yourself into a mess and there's been the potential to bring reproach not only upon yourself, but upon the church, and upon Jesus Christ. How many times have you done things like that and the Lord came and rescued you? He fixed things (*He forgave your sin, but He didn't forget about it*) but He had fixed things that you had messed up where you really could have been embarrassed, where reproach could have been brought to the cause of Christ and upon the church. How many times has He come and fixed those things and reproach wasn't done? You might say that it never happened to me but everybody here; if you would take inventory of your Christian life, there have been many times you have done things that if it had been brought out into the

open, you would have been embarrassed, the church would have been embarrassed and it would have brought shame to Jesus Christ.

Jesus saw a guy that was hurting, but He saw more than that. He saw the potential for His followers and the cause to be hurt or harmed by one fellow.

Sometimes we don't really think about what we are doing. Remember when some of the Samaritans, when someone said something about Jesus, or the events that had taken place and the disciples said, "Lord, do you want us just to pray from heaven fire to come down and destroy them all..." Jesus said, "...you don't know what spirit you are of."

Sometimes we do and say things that hurt other people that we should just never do. Sometimes when we do these things we never think about what it is going to do to our reputation, to the reputation of the church, or to the cause of Christ. Sometimes we don't think about those things.

I think that Jesus did here. Jesus not only sees the need of this guy's ear to be healed, but he did not want reproach to be brought upon Peter and upon the church. It would have if Jesus had not taken action.

Do you know what could have happened? Peter cut his ear off. They could have taken Jesus and left. Do you know what would have happened to Peter? They could have come and got him, locked him up or killed him.

When we hear about prominent religious leaders falling from grace, it's hurtful.

What I am saying is that Peter did something that if Jesus had not corrected it; could have destroyed his ministry from then on. Sometimes we say things and do things never stopping to think about what we are doing and never stopping to think about the repercussions.

When Peter drew his sword and tried to kill Malchus, he wasn't thinking about dying. He wasn't thinking about preaching on the day of Pentecost; the day that three thousand people got saved. He wasn't thinking about that. All of that could have been forfeited had not Jesus fixed it for him. There are times in my life and in your life when we do things, say things, go places, and participate in conversations that we should never participate in. If it were brought out in the open, it would bring disgrace to you, to the church and to Jesus Christ.

I could mention a guy's name, one of the top dogs at Enron that was in the top of the scandal, but he died here not too long ago. However, when someone mentions this guy's name, they always equate that with Enron and the disgrace that this guy brought to Enron. When someone that is supposed to be a Christian does things that they shouldn't do; it always brings disgrace to wherever they are at and whatever organization that they belong to; it brings disgrace there.

I said all of that to say this. Jesus is concerned about a guy here that's His enemy. He's also concerned about Peter and about the repercussions that could happen in Peter's life. Peter puts up the sword and Jesus heals this guy's ear and the case is closed. Had not Jesus healed this guy's ear, Malchus could have gone to the governing authority the next morning and said this guy assaulted me and cut off my ear. My ear is gone and here it is. Here's the proof and Peter would have been in trouble.

How many times in your life and how many times in my life do we do things that we really don't care who we hurt, we really don't care if people don't like us, that we really don't care if we disgrace our name, we really don't care if we disgrace our church, we really don't care if we disgrace the name of Jesus Christ; how many times?

There are times that Jesus comes; He fixes things and rescues us, saves our integrity, and saves our name. I wouldn't want to do that as much as some people do that. It doesn't always work that way. God is a very gracious God. He is very

concerned about your integrity and my integrity. Not only is He concerned about an enemy here, but He is concerned about what would happen to this band of disciples and what was going to happen to Peter if He didn't fix this problem.

I am not telling you that you can go out here, cut somebody's head off, and God is going to fix it for you. I'm not telling you that. I am saying that God loves us and is very concerned about what we do and how we do it. **It's either the sword or the cup.** We choose which one we use to accomplish the Will of God.

Sometimes we try to use the sword and make a mess, but if we just simply drink the cup then the Will of God could be accomplished. God would bless us. Things would prosper, and things would go on.

He heals Malchus' ear. Things go on. Jesus was concerned about Malchus and Peter. He shows tremendous mercy on an enemy. The Bible tells us that we are to be Christ-like.

Most everybody here has probably had people or someone along the line in life that has done us wrong. Like I said before, I'm not talking about stealing your chewing gum or Oreos. I'm talking about someone who actually has done something wrong to you. Not what's in our minds sometimes, but someone did something wrong to you. If the Bible tells us that we ought to be Christ-like and if Jesus loved His enemies enough to pick up an ear and put it back on the side of his head so that this guy would not go around telling everybody.

If Malchus was going around with one ear, people would have been asking him, how did you lose your ear. He would have said, well, we went to arrest this fellow named Jesus one night and one of His disciples named Peter took a sword and cut it off. Do you think that he would have said that? That's exactly what he would have said. It would have been truth. Sometimes when people come and talk to me about situations, when you go to someone's house to invite them to the house of God and you are talking to them about coming to church then they mention something about someone; and before you can ever get them stopped.

Do you know what that sad part is in a lot of cases? I don't have a defense. Do you know what I have to say? I have to say that, "...what you said is truth." The sad part is that when we say that we are followers of Jesus Christ and we act like the world doing worldly things and the world knows what we do and sees what we do; then I am not going to defend you. I can't defend you. If I would defend you, I would be a liar. I am not going to do that. I am not going to defy myself to keep you out of trouble. It's not that I don't love you, because I do love you.

Jesus healed this guy not only out of concern for Malchus, but He did not want the reproach to be brought upon the followers of Jesus and the movement that had started. He did not want disgrace to be brought to this cause. Since, we are saved, since we are Christians and Christ-like and if Jesus loved His enemy enough to heal him, and if Jesus loved Peter enough to help him; then shouldn't we do the same thing? All of us have to say true to that, it may hurt, but we'd all have to say that's truth.

There's one load that so many people carry today that is a very heavy load.

You know what Jesus could have done? Jesus could have been mad at Malchus. He may have roughed Jesus up, he may have grabbed Him hard, he may have got Him in a head lock; I don't know how that he got a hold of Him. Jesus could have said that this guy has done me wrong and even though that I have the power to help him; I am not going to help him.

That same attitude (Jesus didn't have it, by the way) but that is the attitude of a lot of church folk today. Some of them are in my family and some of them are in your family. I've got family that hasn't spoke to each other for 30 years. Haven't spoke to each to each other for 30 years, but yet they go to church and sit on church boards; they sit in meetings to direct the church. You'll never do any steering in the right direction if you have an **unforgiving spirit** about you.

The heaviest burden that people carry is not sickness. We have people here that have gone through some horrible sicknesses. Every one of our families here has been touched by some kind of sickness, death and sorrow. I'm not trying to minimize any of those because whatever that problem is, they are great.

The greatest burden that people carries is the burden of an **unforgiving spirit**. That's the heaviest load that people that's sitting in church pews tonight across this world are carrying, is the load of an unforgiving spirit. Do you know why it is so heavy? Do you know why it is so hard to carry? If I have got sickness, I can go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I can't carry this any longer, please help me." If my children are sick, if my wife is sick, if I have financial problems; I can say, "Lord, I can't carry this any farther. The weight of this burden is too heavy." The Lord will help me.

But there is one burden that people are carrying that's so heavy, that's weighting them down so much and the reason that it is so heavy and the reason that it is so hard to carry is that the Lord won't help with you it. That's one burden that the Lord will not help you carry. That **burden of an unforgiving spirit**; if you carry it, you are carrying it all by yourself. God will not help you carry a spirit of unforgiveness. That's why people get so heavy, so laden down, so burden down, they get so tired, and they get so weary because they have no help.

The Lord will help me carry my burdens if I'm sick, if my family is sick, if I have financial problems, the Lord will come and help me carry those burdens. You can pray for the Lord to help you with your unforgiving spirit until your hair falls out and the only thing that is going to change that, is when you change the unforgiving spirit. If you will not forgive your enemies, then you are carrying a load that is going to get heavier and heavier. It's going to be a load that's going to drag you down that you will never do anything for the cause of Christ.

Jesus helped His enemy, He healed him. He was concerned about him and He was concerned about Peter. He was concerned about the after results. One thing

that He will never help us with is carry an unforgiving spirit. He'll forgive you of that unforgiving spirit and He'll cleanse you from that but He won't help you carry that spirit. If you carry it, you will carry it all by yourself. It gets real heavy.

Ask yourself a question. Do you really love your enemies? Are you really concerned about your enemies; someone that has done you wrong that you would actually help them? Are you concerned about your reputation? Are you concerned about the reputation of the church? Are you concerned about the reputation of Jesus Christ? Are you concerned about those things? Do you take the attitude that so many do today? "I don't care whether people likes me or not. I am going to say what I want to say and do what I want to do." I would agree with that statement if you are living in the center of God's Will, doing everything you can for the cause of Christ, living as you should be living; and then I'd say if you take that attitude that would be fine. Most people that make that statement are living far away from the Will of God.

Ask yourself, "Am I concerned about those around me? Am I concerned about my enemies? Am I concerned about the cause of Christ? Am I concerned enough about the cause of Christ that I'll not try to accomplish the Will of God with a sword?" Whatever the Will of God is for my life; I'm going to drink the cup. Whatever God sets in the cup, I'm going to drink it. I'm not going to resist it. I'm not going to fight against it. I'm going to drink it because I know that if its God's Will then I know that it will be good for me and it'll be good for the cause of Christ.

It's your choice. We get to choose today. The sword or the cup We are either going to resist the Will of God or we are going to submit to the Will of God.

You that are unsaved; it's the same for you. You either fight against the Will of God; you either use the sword or you use the cup. You either take the sword or try to fight against what God is trying to do in your life; or you take the cup and drink it then submit to it and allow God to do what He wants to do in your life.