

Luke 22:35-51 "Put away your sword"

Proposition: learn from Mr Wrong (Peter) what not to do and from Mr Right (Jesus) what to do.

(Hopefully have an image of dark Gethsemane on the screen as I speak).

Traditionally Good Friday is a time for reflection and for remembering again what Jesus went through for each of us. I guess that along with that I want us to look at the scene in the garden of Gethsemane leading up to the Lord's arrest and see what we can learn from Peter's mistakes and from Jesus' submission to the Father.

In life we do our best to learn from our own mistakes. The Bible is helpful in so many ways including giving us a real insight into the mistakes others made, especially big Pete and hopefully learning from his mistakes.

Luke 22:35-51 (Contemporary English Version)

35 Jesus asked his disciples, "When I sent you out without a moneybag or a travelling bag or sandals, did you need anything?"

"No!" they answered.

36 Jesus told them, "But now, if you have a moneybag, take it with you. Also take a travelling bag, and if you don't have a sword, sell some of your clothes and buy one. 37 Do this because the Scriptures say, 'He was considered a criminal.' This was written about me, and it will soon come true." 38 The disciples said, "Lord, here are two swords!"

"Enough of that!" Jesus replied.

Have you ever said something that wasn't to be taken literally? Like I feel like I could eat a horse or I feel like a box of birds or I need to get a lot of fuel in the tank to get me through this busy day. Now obviously you are not going to eat a horse even though you are hungry, you are not turning into some multi-personality feather brained personality and you are not going to fill your car with fuel. Those phrases are figurative.

Jesus reminds them of the time he sent them out to do ministry and the fact that they had no money, no back pack, no change of clothes and it wasn't a problem because God just provided and they enjoyed the adventure.

Jesus is saying, times are changing, it's going to be tough ahead and he illustrates that by figuratively saying hey, now you will need money and you will need a sword.

These disciples though are a little bit like us. At times we understand clearly what the Lord wants to do in our lives and at other times we completely miss the point of what he is doing. These disciples take him literally and so produce two swords.

Jesus then says "enough of that". He sounds a little bit frustrated to me. How could they miss the point? He was talking about a spiritual readiness and they took his phrase literally. "Enough of that", Jesus would say.

After a time of lonely prayer in the garden Jesus is with the disciples again in the garden when Judas comes toward him flanked by a whole lot of temple officials and around 600 soldiers. He comes to betray Jesus with a kiss.

47While Jesus was still speaking, a crowd came up. It was led by Judas, one of the twelve apostles. He went over to Jesus and greeted him with a kiss. **48**Jesus asked Judas, "Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

49When Jesus' disciples saw what was about to happen, they asked, "Lord, should we attack them with a sword?" **50**One of the disciples even struck at the high priest's servant with his sword and cut off the servant's right ear.

51"Enough of that!" Jesus said. Then he touched the servant's ear and healed it.

Now friends who was the guy who cut off a man's ear in his passion to protect Jesus?

Peter. Big Pete. Passionate, sincere and yet sincerely wrong. Other gospels tell us it was Peter and I am not surprised. I admire this guy. He misses the point a lot. He makes some huge mistakes but ...he's a man of action. Jesus had just said a few hours earlier that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed. Now I can imagine Peter here ready to prove his devotion to the Lord. Out comes the sword and flop goes the ear on the ground.

What can we learn from Peter's mistakes?

1. Peter was fighting the wrong enemy. Now it's true there are times when Christians must defend their families or a weaker, vulnerable person but 99.9% of the time our weapons are not physical but spiritual and centred on correctly using the word of God. Six hundred soldiers are there to arrest him. They are ready for a battle, fully dressed in armour. They had heard that they were coming to arrest the king of the Jews and so who knows what is going to happen. Peter doesn't take on the soldiers though he must have confronted the high priest and in the process lops off the ear of a man who most likely was unarmed and insignificant. He attacks the servant of the high priest a man called Malcus. Now I don't know if Malcus tried to dodge the sword or if it was simply that Peter was a fisherman not a swordsman but that sword skims the face of the servant and slices off the guy's ear. Plop. Peter was fighting the wrong enemy and his mistake reminds me this Easter that when people get nasty, when they say abusive things to us, or act out of their addictions that we are not fighting against flesh and blood, that when God calls us to fight 99.9% of the time it is against principalities and powers; that the weapon of our warfare is the word of God correctly used. Eph 6:6 says that it is the Sword of the Spirit. We are not to fight with our spouses, our employers our teachers or the bullies or the nasty people in this world. Usually that bad behaviour has been caused by awful life experiences and the influence of the demonic realm. We are the children of the cross, we are to love the people and fight the evil behind their behaviour.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find sorrow and suffering enough to disarm any and all hostility. " 2x. When you see how much satan has messed with a person you can't help but feel some compassion for them and get angry at satan.

Peter, Peter, Peter; 600 soldiers to fight but you sliced Malcus' ear.

2. Not only did he fight the wrong enemy but he used the wrong weapon. As I just mentioned our weapon is prayer and it's to use the Sword of the Spirit as God shows us how to wield it. Hebrews 4 says that the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword. Now the bible is a weapon not to hurt or bash or cut people with but to be declared as the Lord leads to help the other person. I really dislike it when on the rare occasion you hear of someone having an argument using the bible. It's not for that, it not for bashing and

cutting.

James 3:14-17

14But if your heart is full of bitter jealousy and selfishness, don't brag or lie to cover up the truth. 15That kind of wisdom doesn't come from above. It is earthly and selfish and comes from the devil himself. 16Whenever people are jealous or selfish, they cause trouble and do all sorts of cruel things. 17But the wisdom that comes from above leads us to be pure, friendly, gentle, sensible, kind, helpful, genuine, and sincere.

When you wield the sword, the right weapon or receive a scripture from someone else it must lead us to be pure, friendly, gentle, sensible, kind, helpful, genuine, and sincere.

You cannot swing this sword out of anger or jealousy or selfishness or bitterness or you will hurt people and not help people.

3. Not only did Peter attack the wrong enemy, use the wrong weapon but he also had the wrong attitude. Jesus is in that garden willingly submitting to the Father. Nevertheless he prayed, not my will but thy will he prayed. It was the Father's will that Jesus be surrendered to this group that was going to take him away and shame him and torture him. It was God's will for that to happen and Jesus though he knew what was ahead was for it. And Peter was fighting. His attitude was all wrong. He was completely out of harmony with the will of Jesus and the mind of Jesus.

I do think there are times when God allows or on occasion sends us through times that are challenging. He lets the irritating person and the awful situations come our way and ... we fight and protest and get agro when in fact He is often wanting to do a deep work in our hearts to make us better people.

Could it be that sometimes we miss a chance to grow in faith and in character because we don't realise that God is in our painful situation and wants to do something in us. Instead like Peter we have the wrong attitude, we miss discerning the mind of Christ and we miss our opportunity to become better people. I don't think that Jesus ever intended for Peter to interfere with the process. Big Peter couldn't see what God was doing because He wasn't submitted to God in the situation. When the hard times come rather than kick and moan and swing our weapons – ask the Lord, Jesus are you wanting to teach me something through this situation?

You and I know that a pearl is an attractive and a valuable thing. I heard this phrase last week. "A pearl is the garment of patience around an irritation." When a problem is dealt with, in a Godly way, with a Godly attitude amazing character is formed in us – character that will last.

Peter, Peter, Peter; wrong enemy, wrong weapon, wrong attitude and

4. Wrong timing. Peter could see that an incredible injustice was going down. A completely innocent man getting treated like a common criminal and being taken away for who knows what and he felt he had to do something.

You and I can relate to that. Sometimes you see a bully hurt a younger person and the situation is attended to by a responsible adult but ... you want to kick that bullies butt.

There are dictators, child abusers, rapists, thieves, dishonest business people and sure they might get a growling or a fine or a short time in prison but you feel like Peter, and you want to do something about the injustice. The principles are too soft; the courts are too soft and it seems like some people get away scot free. Where's the justice? You want to jump in like Peter but remember this, no one will get away with hurting others or sinning scot free. No-one. It's a matter of timing. I would hate to be around a child abuser or a rapist or a murderer when they face God – really scary stuff. God is 100% fair and just and doesn't make mistakes like you and I. In Rev 19:11-16 we read

The Rider on the White Horse

11I looked and saw that heaven was open, and a white horse was there. Its rider was called Faithful and True, and he is always fair when he judges or goes to war. 12He had eyes like flames of fire, and he was wearing a lot of crowns. His name was written on him, but he was the only one who knew what the name meant.

13The rider wore a robe that was covered with blood, and he was known as "The Word of God." 14He was followed by armies from heaven that rode on horses and were dressed in pure white linen. 15From his mouth a sharp sword went out to attack the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod and will show the fierce anger of God All-Powerful by trampling the grapes in the pit where wine is made. 16On the part of the robe that covered his thigh was written, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

Peter, one day you can come with the Lord as Christians return from heaven at the end of the tribulation on your high horse but until then leave the judging up to God.

It's true that there will be times that God tells us to direct a challenging word to others but the bottom line is in this life we are called to love and serve and we can completely trust God to deal justly with those who abuse and hurt others.

Wrong enemy, wrong weapon, wrong attitude, wrong timing, finally

5. Wrong reason. Peter wanted to defend Jesus. Was it Spurgeon that said that he would rather defend an angry lion than defend God. If Jesus wanted to cause the earth to open up and swallow those 600 soldiers piece of cake. If he wanted fire to fall from heaven and toast the lot of them – easy piezy. Jesus doesn't need defending. God doesn't need defending. I hope that you and I will never be ashamed of our saviour or embarrassed about God. What other people think or feel about God doesn't change reality one little bit. God is God. The Bible is the Bible. God will do what he has decided to do. Peter jumps up to defend Jesus. No need Peter. A couple of weeks ago on the news they said that a new bible had been written by a humanist professor in the UK and this bible didn't include God, it was simply about morality. When I heard that I thought – what an idiot. I don't need to defend the bible to anyone like this. When they are dead and gone and their writings have disappeared from the face of the planet the bible will still be here and will still be the bestselling book of all time.

Friends as you and I reflect on what God has done for us this Good Friday would you like me learn from Mr Wrong's mistakes.

In this life, our enemy isn't the people its spiritual forces of evil and we have authority over them all. Fight the right enemy not that person you are married to or you are working with. Fight the right enemy.

Friends, big Pete pulled a sword and started waving that around. You and I have a weapon

that when used with the right motives can help so many people. Let's determine to learn how to handle it correctly.

Big Peter had the wrong attitude, he fought at a time when it was time to surrender. God was at work in an awful situation and Big Peter missed it. What is Jesus saying to you about the challenges you are facing. Are you and I discerning the mind of Christ so that we might be clothed in patience and good character.

Big Peter wanted to see justice and he wanted to see it now. Friends, I can understand where he was coming from. Christians shouldn't be soft on justice but only God knows everything and sees everything and no one will get away with crime or sin scot free. So can we do our best to help people and let God be the judge?

Finally friends I believe that in the years ahead Christians will get persecuted way more than we do today. In the early church as hundreds of thousands of Christians were thrown to lions, burned, boiled etc the church grew exponentially in number because they trusted God to defend Himself and to make his name known. Can you and I trust him in this generation?

Would Jesus say to you and I about some behaviour or some attitude tonight. "That's enough." I died so that you might live a life worth living.

Peter I like, Peter I admire as a man of sincerely and action. But Peter was Mr Wrong. Jesus is Mr Right and it's his example that we are to follow in this life.

Jesus picks up the man's ear, Malcus' ear and heals his enemy who was hurting. If He hadn't of done that I believe Peter too would have hung on a cross the next day. But Jesus had it covered. Jesus made it right and I believe he can to in your life and mine when we have been hurt or have hurt others. When we have made mistakes He can make it right if we look to him and take the injury to Him.