

Matthew 26:46-56

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[0 : 00] There's about 30 common stories that are found in Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. But there are 10 specific events that are found in all four books.

And this morning I really wanted to look at one specific event, and that's the story of Jesus and the crucial night of his being betrayed by Judas and arrested by a hostile crowd and then deserted by the very people who loved him.

When I was working, every once in a while I would come home, my wife would say, how was your day? And I'd say, well, it wasn't a good day, it was a bad day. When I read the scripture this morning, I'm thinking, man, my bad days were nothing like yours, Lord Jesus.

That had to be the worst night ever in his life. We're going to read all four passages of scripture because we find some similarities, but we also see some significant differences.

The gospel has been written and has been designed by God who presents special aspects of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew writes, Jesus Christ, King of Kings.

[1 : 12] That's his theme. Mark writes, Jesus Christ, the servant. Luke, Jesus Christ, the son of man. John, Jesus Christ, son of God.

And if we look at those passages, you're going to see that evident. So it's a significant moment in Christ's life. He has just finished three years of teaching about the kingdom of God, about love, and about who God is and how we should be in our relationship with man.

And he's performed countless miracles, supernatural miracles. And as we read the scripture, we'll remember that he just finished praying, asking God to take away the cup he was about to bear. But then he said, not my will, but yours. When we read it, please focus on the people who were involved in this event. Of course, you have Jesus and the disciples.

You have Judas. You have the multitude made up of Gentiles and Jews. And, of course, we have the slave of the high priest. I think God uses all these scriptures to help us get a full picture of this night.

[2 : 24] And as we read them, I hope you will, in your imagination, try to place yourself there and witness this event. Because I think there are some great truths. So if you would, stand with me, if you're able, and turn to Matthew, the 26th chapter.

And we will read about the betrayal of Jesus Christ. Matthew 26, verses 46 to 56. While he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a large crowd with swords and clubs, who came from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Now he who was betraying him gave them a sign, saying, Whomever I kiss, he's the one. Seize him. Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, Hail, Rabbi, and kissed him.

And Jesus said to him, Friend, do what you have come for. When they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And, behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Then Jesus said to him, Put your sword back into its place. For all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

[3 : 44] How then will the scriptures be fulfilled which say that it must happen this way? At that time Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as you would against a robber?

Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize me. But this has all taken place to fulfill the scriptures of the prophets. Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you and praise you again for this time together. Father, we have come together because you have called us to be together. We have worshipped you in song,

in spirit, in truth.

We have provided offerings showing our great love for you. And now, Father, as we read the scripture, we pray that our minds would be open to hear your word, that you would speak to our hearts.

Help us, Father, to be alive to your leading of the Holy Spirit, to how we should be as we become more and more like your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask your blessing upon our time together in Christ's name.

[4 : 47] Amen. You may be seated. I'm going to read these in actually chronological order. It's interesting. Matthew wrote this as early as in the 50s. And Matthew wrote basically to Jews to help them see that Jesus Christ was the King of Kings and convert them to Christianity.

I think, first of all, as we read that scripture, I want to point out the first truth. I want us to understand the power of spiritual blindness. The power of spiritual blindness.

Our problem is we do not see things as they are. We see things as we are. All that we do and how we behave is because of who we are and what we are.

And as believers of Christ and followers of Christ, that means, of course, we should see things as Christ does, as God does, as he's explained in the word. Again, our problem is we have a sinful nature.

We don't always fully understand what the word of God is saying to us. It's a universal human condition, spiritual blindness. And it often keeps us from seeing things clearly.

[6 : 06] That's why we need to know the word of God. We need to read it. We need to meditate it. We need to memorize it. So look at the scripture with me. I want to note some very important things. Note number one, verse 47.

There's a crowd. He doesn't say how big that crowd is. As we read Mark, you're going to see he says it's a large crowd. And the estimates may be anywhere from 200 to 600 if we look at the terms of squad and cohort and the number of a multitude.

And you notice what they have. They have swords and clubs or some translations say staves. And these are a large group of people. Kind of look.

Is that bigger than the crowd we have here this morning? Coming out to arrest Jesus Christ and his 11 followers. The most peaceful man who ever lived on the face of the earth. Isn't that ironic?

And he hadn't done really anything wrong. He'd been teaching about, again, the kingdom of God and love and doing great, great miracles. And then secondly, I would like you to notice again what he's famous for.

[7 : 11] Judas the betrayer and his kiss. A kiss, again, was pretty much a common to the culture that when we greeted one another, kiss on the cheek. It's a show of love.

It's a show of friendship. It's a show of acceptance and allegiance. Many of the followers of rabbis greeted their masters with a kiss. Here we see Judas using a kiss, a token of love, as a weapon. I can't imagine the hard-heartedness of Judas at this moment. Next, I would note that in the verse where in 450, Jesus looks at him and he says, Friend.

Friend. Isn't that amazing? No bitterness, no anger, but he says to Judas, who he knows is going to betray him, and calls him friend.

What a tremendous love God has for us as sinners. And it's interesting, later on, Peter will deny Jesus at the trial while he's watching, and Peter actually weeps bitterly.

[8 : 20] Judas is called friend, and we see nothing changed in Judas whatsoever. An incredibly hard heart, completely spiritually blind.

Then I notice in verse 50, it says that he, I'm sorry, I'll find it. Oh, yeah, verse 50, that he came and laid hands on Jesus to arrest him.

Jesus had slipped out of their hands several times they had tried to arrest him, but this time he got caught. He had these rough, rude hands, again, arresting him and treating him poorly.

Again, peaceful man on the face of the earth. You'll note in verse 51, some action taking place. It only says someone took a sword. Now, we know the story, right?

It's good old Peter, the impulsive Peter. But Matthew doesn't mention his name. It's a possibility because he wrote in 50. Of course, Peter is still alive, and I'm not sure there was such a thing as a statue of limitations at that time.

[9 : 23] But it sure wouldn't look good to have Peter recorded as the one who cut off an ear. So Matthew doesn't mention his name at all. And we know that because he cut off his ear, Peter was

going for his head.

He was trying to behead the man. But he probably ducked, and the ear fell off. But notice in 52, Jesus simply calmly says what?

Put away your sword. He doesn't get after Peter. He doesn't shine at him. He said, just put it away and stop it. Jesus realized any action like this could be a danger to himself and to his fellow disciples.

And Jesus was determined to protect his disciples. And then I would have you vote 53, where it says, Jesus says, Do you not think that I can appeal to my Father and he will come at once and put in my disposal more than 12 legions of angels?

The word legions, again, is also a Roman word. It talked about a group of people of 6,000. That made up a number of legions. So Jesus was saying, you come out as a big multitude.

[10:32] I could have called 12 legions, 72 angels to help me. Matthew is pointing out, listen, this is a king of kings.

He has a whole army ready to defend him and protect him if he had willed. But of course, we notice again that verse 56 says, but all has taken place so the scriptures could be fulfilled, the prophecy.

So Jesus does not interfere. So we see again spiritual blindness. Look at the characters again.

Obviously, Judas was spiritually blind. He had sold out Christ for money.

Peter was a little bit spiritually blind. Before this, Jesus had been talking about his death. And Peter said, no, no, that won't happen. I won't let that happen.

And Jesus rebuked him for that. And then, of course, Peter didn't understand it even in this moment. He took out a sword and struck the high priest. And, of course, we have the crowd and the slave of the high priest.

[11:39] Isn't it odd that these people who were expecting the Messiah to come, who anticipated him to come, and they were ready to receive him, had him standing right before them, and they were so spiritually blind, they didn't see him.

When you think about that, it's kind of easy to understand why they didn't quite get it, why they were spiritually blind. The religious leaders saw Jesus doing what? He was eating with sinners and publicans, and he was not, again, what they expected at all.

And, of course, the disciples, we can understand why they were maybe spiritually blind. They were expecting the Messiah to simply come and overthrow the Roman government. And here he was being peaceful and helping.

And they expected him to remove the Roman rule. It didn't happen. Now, sadly, I have to note, we don't do much better.

Sometimes, I think, it's my observation that as Christians, we don't truly live fully in the freedom and the liberty that Jesus Christ has given us as followers of him.

[12:58] Think about it, folks. You and I, as followers of Christ, we've received eternal life. We have received the living water. We have received the bread of life. We have the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There should be a lot of joyful laughter among us.

Because now, because of Christ, we have a joy that's what? Unspeakable. And it's my observation. There's a whole lot of sour Christians.

The laughter of the world, if you've ever noticed, is very shallow, very short. But as believers, we have such laughter because we have been given such a gift of life of Jesus Christ.

Now, I hope you kept your Bibles open because I do want to move to Mark. So if you would, follow me in Mark. We're going to turn to Mark, the 14th chapter, in verses 43 to 52.

[13:56] I will read those quickly. But I want you again to listen to see any similarities and differences. Chapter 14, verses 43 to 52.

Mark records, immediately while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd of swords and clubs who were with the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now he who was betraying and giving them a signal, saying, Whomever I kiss, he is the one.

Seize him and lead him away under guard. After coming, Judas immediately went to him, saying, Rabbi, and kiss him. They laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword, struck the slave of the high priest, cut off his ear.

Jesus said to them, Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as you would against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me, but this has taken place to fulfill the scriptures.

And they all left him and fled. A young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body, and they seized him, and he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked.

[15:01] Very close to what Matthew has recorded. And Mark, Matthew was, of course, an eyewitness to this event. Mark is basically writing based on what he had heard Peter preaching.

And his work, again, is later in the 50s. And note again, he doesn't mention Peter at all. I think he's still trying to protect Peter. Much similar there, but there are a couple of things I think that are extremely important.

But here I want us to see this truth. It was true in the first verses. Jesus is still in control of the situation no matter how bad it looks. He is completely in control.

There is absolutely no sweat on his brow. There's not a frown or a scowl. He knows what is about to happen, and he's in control. Because in this section, again, he talks to them and tries to reason with them.

He's trying to point out to them, my goodness, you guys are being ridiculous here. I have been teaching daily in the temple. I have been with you for three years. And now you wait until this night to come and arrest me.

[16:06] How silly can we be? But I love again, verse 49, everything that happened because Jesus is in control, it says to fulfill the scripture.

And I think that's where we see Mark showing that Jesus Christ was a servant. Jesus was determined to follow and obey God's will no matter what took place. So he simply served God by obeying him completely.

Now, again, the truth, Jesus is in control no matter how bad it looks. I don't know about you, but I get a little worried about the world, don't you? I think things are bad. I think things are out of control. And I don't like that. My wife and I just a couple weeks ago got to go down to Florida, flew to Clearwater, Florida, to see our granddaughter, Reagan, graduate. Anyway, I'm not a big fan of flying.

It's not that I'm afraid. It's basically I'm uncomfortable. You know why I'm uncomfortable? Because I don't know who the pilot is. I don't know his name. I don't know his education level.

[17:11] I don't know his expertise. I don't know how many plane wrecks he's had. I don't know if he's a drug addict. I don't know if he's been drinking before he did this flight. Basically, I'm uncomfortable because I'm not in control.

Aren't we silly? We really think we're in control. Folks, we serve a sovereign God whose wisdom and providence has control over all.

Even when the world is looking terribly, terribly bad, God is in control. That's why we praise him. That's why we trust him.

And we can allow God to be in control. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15, 31, I die daily. We just need to die to ourselves and our wants and our needs and just say, may your will be done in my life each day, Lord Jesus.

Because he's in control and we can trust him. All right. Keeping you busy. Turn to Luke. We're going to look at Luke. Luke, of course, is not a disciple.

[18:22] Luke, again, has written an account of Christ. Luke's focus, again, is Christ as the Son of Man. And Luke writes basically as he has reported those witnesses that he's talked to, those who were at that event.

But notice what Luke says. We're Luke 22, and I'm going to read quickly, 47 to 54. Stay with me. While he was still speaking, behold, a crowd came and the one called Judas, one of the 12, was preceding him.

And he approached Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? When those who were around him saw what was going to happen, they said, Lord, shall we strike with a sword?

And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. Jesus answered and said, stop, no more of this. And he touched his ear and healed him.

Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who came against him, Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? While I was with you

daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on me, but this hour and power of darkness is yours.
[19 : 33] Some similarities, but note many times here the differences. You will note, of course, first of all, that Jesus says to Judas, are you betraying me with a kiss?

He actually addresses him. Jesus is trying to point out to Judas the hypocrisy and the unfaithfulness of his heart. How could he do this to someone who he has followed for three years, who had shown great grace and mercy to, and he was prepared to do that?

And you'll note in verse 48, because again, Luke wrote that Jesus Christ was the Son of Man. He actually uses that term in 48. Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?

That theme, again, goes throughout the whole book of Luke. And then note 49, the disciples asked the question, should we use our swords?

Well, Jesus doesn't reply here. Apparently he didn't have time because we know, again, Peter took out a sword and struck the slave of the high priest. Good old impulsive Peter.

[20 : 46] God admired the man. But here again, we see for the first time that he touched his ear and healed him.

Here's the truth, that even in the worst conditions, even in the worst times, even in the darkest hour, Jesus Christ is still saving, healing, and restoring people and ministering to people.

Isn't that amazing? In his most horrible moment, he takes the time to heal. Think about this healing. The slave didn't ask him for it.

The slave didn't show any faith about it at all. Jesus just took it upon himself to heal him.

Now, in my imagination, I'm sorry, but I've got to go here. How did that happen? I mean, think about it. Is there an ear on the ground? Did he get down and pick it up?

[21 : 51] Did he just slap it back on? No stitches? No sutures? Or did he touch his ear and miraculously, it just grew? I wish they had said a little bit more.

Don't you? Isn't that amazing? I mean, you know, all the miracles that Jesus did, healing the blind, giving the deaf ears, helping the, healing the hand, the leg, but to simply have and replace an ear. Isn't it amazing? These people, this multitude, sees it. And they arrest him as a common robber anyway.

Okay. In verse 51, again, kind of illustrates what I said before. Jesus said to Peter, stop, no more of this.

Again, Jesus is in control completely. Now, here's the truth, folks. If Jesus can minister in the power of darkness at this worst kind of moment, even though we may not have the best situation, we are called to minister, to serve, and to love one another as well.

[23 : 08] We can still witness about Jesus Christ, even when things aren't as rosy and good as we think they should be. And I want to draw your attention to verse 53.

Notice what it says. While he was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on me, but this hour and power of darkness are yours.

Jesus plainly identifies who's behind all of this. This, again, is Satan's moment to try to eliminate Jesus Christ.

The ruler of darkness, the ruler of this world, is only permitted to do what God allows.

It wouldn't have happened unless Jesus said, okay, this hour is completely yours. Satan, folks, is only as powerful as God allows him to do the work.

[24 : 19] We need to serve Jesus well. All right, last one. Stay with me. Now we're going to turn to John, because John, again, has other words to talk about.

John 18. John, of course, has written this gospel far, far later, sometime after 80 A.D., sometime between 80 and 90 A.D.

I think that's significant, because you'll notice John names Peter. Peter's already died. I guess they can't do anything to him at this time.

But look at verses 1 to 11. Real quickly. When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, which was a garden in which he entered with his disciples.

Now Judas also, who was betraying him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met them there with his disciples. Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came with lanterns and torches and weapons.

[25 : 20] So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth and said to them, Whom do you seek? They answered him, Jesus the Nazarene.

He said to them, I am he. And Judas also, who was betraying him, was standing with them. So when he said to them, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground.

Therefore he again asked them, Whom do you seek? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he. So if you seek me, let these go their way.

To fulfill the word which he spoke of those whom you have given me, I lost no one. Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave and cut off the right ear.

And the slave's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, put the sword into the sheath. The cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it? Beautiful, much expanded story of this, as John was the key witness.

[26 : 23] I would notice again first in verse 1, notice that this all took place in the garden. It's interesting that sin originated in the garden.

And then one of the worst crimes of arresting Jesus Christ is in a garden as well. And again, I noticed again in verse 3, where he says a squad of soldiers, talking again about a number here, possibly up to 600.

We don't know, but it's a group of them. And now we have thrown in here Roman soldiers who have been assigned apparently to accompany the multitude. So we have Gentiles, we have Jews, we have religious leaders, we have Roman pagans.

Quite a mixture. Notice verse 4, again, showing that Jesus Christ is omnipotent, omnipresent, but also omniscient.

He knew all this was going to take place. Judas was standing there. It's interesting, John didn't bother to mention the kiss, isn't it?

[27 : 32] You know, you think about John and James, when Jesus was with him, he called them what? The sons of thunder. Later on as we read about John, particularly his first, second, third letter, we hear John being referred to as the apostle of love.

I don't have any proof of it, just my thought. I wonder if John spared saying anything about Judas because John was the apostle of love. No sense mentioning it in the tragedy of Judas' life.

Verse 6, here we hear Jesus say, I am he. That's the name of God. That's the divine name of God. And you see the power of the name of God.

We take it for granted when we call upon the name of God. We're calling upon the most powerful God. The only one true God.

But they fell to the ground. They fell to the ground. Jesus had the opportunity to run. But he didn't. He stayed with them. But you notice Jesus' great love for his disciples.

[28 : 39] Verse 8, it says, I told you that I'm he, so if you seek me, let these go their way. Once again, Jesus is protecting, as a servant, his disciples.

And he actually said previously, in John 17, when he was praying, I have not lost none of these disciples other than the son of perdition.

Jesus was still in control, still doing what he always does. And I just cannot believe the hard hearts of this multitude. You have seen a great miracle of Malchus.

You have been knocked down to the ground by the word of God, and yet you persist on doing the evil. So what I want us to see here in this scripture is that God exhibits more power in saving men than the devil does destroying them.

I think it's interesting that Malchus is named here. The other three gospels says slave of the high priest. My suspicion is not biblical, don't have any documented evidence, that Malchus may have been converted of this experience.

[29 : 57] I mean, think about it. Why would God inspire John to name that person? Your name is in the book. Can you imagine him going back to the high priest?

The high priest is going to say, what took place? Is he going to say, oh, by the way, this guy cut off my ear, and Jesus healed me? I think he's going to lose his job.

Why would you want to stay around a person who had a miracle happen to him and you were responsible for his death? And I have a suspicion again, Malchus' name may have been recognized by the people after John wrote it so later in history.

But I love it because Malchus' name in the book. You know why? Because as followers of Jesus Christ, our name is written in the book of life also.

We will be known and are known. There's a lot of people when I die, I want to talk to when I get to heaven. I really do intend to see Malchus.

[31 : 01] I got to ask him about that experience, just for the fun of it. How did that happen to you? What do you think? Wasn't it amazing? I have a feeling he'll have a little dwelling place in heaven and probably people will come and visit him all the time.

Since God has a sense of humor, wouldn't it be really cool if Malchus' dwelling place is next door to Peter's? Love thy neighbor.

Okay, a little silliness, sorry. All right, let me finish. God is in the business of doing supernatural work in lives and transforming people just as he did in Malchus' life and in our life.

And he exhibits again such power in transforming our lives. Now, we may not ever have our ear cut off and be healed.

We may never have, you know, had trouble with drugs or maybe have been an alcohol and delivered or been a criminal or really anything dramatic, nothing fantastic like Malchus happened to Malchus.

[32 : 19] But you have to understand the power of what Christ has done in our lives. He has changed our stony, hard hearts. He has lifted us up to be his child.

He has broke the chains that have bound us of sin. He removes all your guilt and your shame. We are new creatures. He transformed us into people with a radical faith in God.

God. That's what we need to show to the world. The world is looking at us to see what is the difference in our lives.

I love a little story about a little boy riding home after a church service sitting in the back seat with his little baby brother.

They had just come from the church service where they had dedicated the little baby and the pastor asked them, Do you promise to raise this little baby in your house or in your home?

[33 : 30] And the little boy started crying and the mother noticed that and said, Why are you crying? And the little boy said, Well, the pastor asked you, Are you going to raise this child in a Christian home?

And I want him to live with us. God has called us to an extraordinary life, not an ordinary life.

The world needs to see us of what Christ has done in our life. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you and praise you for this time again. We thank you for the word of God.

We know it is truth. We pray, Father, that your words would speak to our hearts and souls. You know our desire. You have chosen us to be yours.

We ask God that you empower us to bring glory and honor to your name in all that we say and do.

We thank you for this time together and ask your blessing upon each person here this morning.

[34 : 38] In Christ's name, I pray. Amen. As Christy comes and leads us in a song of invitation, the altar is open. Amen.