"THREE BIG MISTAKES
On the Night of the Betrayal"

Matthew 26:31-56

2/24/2019

INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-32

***Don't make the same mistakes Peter did!**

Three big mistakes:

I. **<u>PROUD</u> SELF-CONFIDENCE** (v. 33-35)
(Never say, "I will never. . .")

II. **<u>PRAYERLESSNESS</u>** (v. 36-46)
(Never sleep when you should pray)

III. **<u>PRESUMPTION</u>** (v. 47-55)
(Never do for Christ what He did not tell you to do)

CONCLUSION:
Verse 56: *"Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled."*

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V. 31

"Offended" - lit. "caused to stumble"; you will "fall away."

Jesus specifically addressed Peter and said, *"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat"* (Lk. 22:31).

As Jesus and the disciples leave the upper room and walk through the darkness toward the Mount of Olives, Jesus foretells what the disciples would do that night.

Because the disciples would see Jesus betrayed, captured, mistreated, etc., they--for fear of their own lives--would become offended (scared into abandoning Christ) that same night.

One would think that the disciples could muster up enough courage to stand firm to the end, but such could not occur, because the Scriptures had to be fulfilled.

"For it is written" - Zech. 13:7

V. 32

Although they all scattered, they would all be regathered after Christ's resurrection.

This verse should have given the disciples the confidence that they would not die, but would survive through the dark three days ahead.

***Don't make the same mistakes Peter did!**

Three big mistakes:

I. PROUD SELF-CONFIDENCE (v. 33-35)
(Never say, "I will never. . .")

V. 33

Impulsive, impetuous Peter pipes up with proud self-confidence, ***"Though all [men] shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."***

Peter had a knack for putting his foot in his mouth (cp. Mt. 16:22-23).

"Peter was unwilling to apply the word *'All'* (v. 31) to himself" (Wiersbe, p. 97).

"All [men]" - i.e. all the other disciples; Peter somehow thought he had something they didn't have.

--Maybe he thought he had more <u>love</u> for Christ than they did; or more <u>boldness</u> & <u>courage</u> or more <u>dedication</u>.

Peter obviously viewed himself as spiritually superior to others.

Be careful never to think this way. Think humbly about yourself (Phil. 2:3 - *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."*).

Right now "ask God to forgive you for your feelings of superiority" or you are headed for a nose dive (ILLUS: the minister, boy scout, and computer expert on board a small plane that was going down).

V. 34

"Verily" - truly; as impossible as such a denial seemed to Peter, Christ's words will <u>always</u> be fulfilled. What He says, will happen!

"Deny Me thrice" - Peter would even swear, saying, *"I know not the man"* (26:74)

V. 35

"Peter said" - <u>Not</u> with a skeptical tone of voice; but with intense, brazen confidence, he **"*<u>vehemently</u>"** (Mk. 14:31) spoke.

Peter still had not learned not to contradict Jesus!

"Though I should die with thee" - I am willing to be a martyr for You! *"I am ready to go with thee, both to prison and to death"* (Lk. 22:33).

"Yet I will not" - an emphatic double negative. The word *"not"* translates two Greek words for "not" (*oi ma*).

Peter speaks as emphatically as possible.

We should never say "never" when it comes to trusting in ourselves.

Rather say, "If God is willing..." "By God's grace..." "With His enabling power..."

Martin Luther said: "Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, if the right Man were not on our side, the Man of God's own choosing."

We truly do not realize the evil and deception of our own hearts (Jer. 17:9).

At times, we are so smug, so sure, so bold, so enthused, so brave, etc. that we say things that we end up later eating.

Don't put confidence in yourself or in your plans, but in God and in His will.

James 4:13-16 - *"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boasting: all such rejoicing is evil."*

"Likewise" - Note: Peter's self-confidence spirit spread to the others.

Be careful your children will catch and copy your spirit as well.

II. PRAYERLESSNESS (v. 36-46)
(Never sleep when you should pray)

V. 36

"Gethsemane" - The name means "oil press." This ancient garden, which still remains to this day, was on the west side of the Mount of Olives.

V. 37

"Two sons of Zebedee" = James and John

Jesus often brought this inner circle of Peter, James, and John to be eye-witnesses of certain events (Mt. 17:1) . . . *"That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established"* (Mt. 18:16).

"Sorrowful" - to grieve over the separation which was about to take place (Mt. 27:46).

"Heavy" - to be distressed because of the weight of the sin He would bear for the world (I Pet. 2:24).

V. 38

The impending judgment from Heaven which was to fall upon Jesus so deeply grieved His soul so that He felt as if He would die even at this point.

"Watch" - stay awake so as to pray

V. 39

The cup that Jesus was to drink was not drunk in the Garden, but later that day (Jn. 18:11) at Calvary

Jesus didn't fear death. "Many godly people have been (wrongly) arrested, beaten, and slain because of their faith. But only Jesus experienced being made sin and a curse for mankind" (Wiersbe, p. 97) (II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13).

"This cup" - not speaking of the mere physical suffering Jesus would have to endure, but of the spiritual agony He would endure and drink for all of humanity.

Later that day from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m., "darkness" would mysteriously cover the earth (Mk. 15:33), as the Son of God would become a *"curse"* by hanging on the cross (Gal. 3:13), bearing the *"iniquity of us all"* (Is. 64:6), and as the Father would turn His back on His own Son (Mt. 27:46).

In that *"cup"* were all of the vile sins you committed, are committing, and would commit.

In that *"cup"* was death, as Christ would *"taste death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9).

The pure, spotless, undefiled, holy soul of Jesus was repulsed by the thought of becoming a sin offering and experiencing the equivalent of our hell on that cross.

"Not as I will, but as thou wilt" - When Christ became man, He totally subjected Himself to the will of the Father (Jn. 6:38 - *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*)

For Him to ever violate the will of the Father would be to sin. This was an impossibility for the Son of God.

Although Jesus wished not to be accursed for those three hours on the cross, severed for the first time in eternity from the presence and power of the Father, He was willing to do the will of the Father no matter what the cost!

Is such your desire? If so, you must be a man/woman of prayer.

V. 40

"Asleep" - Due to the intense pressures of the hour, the disciples gave in to the suggestion of the devil to sleep their problems away rather than pray their problems away.

V. 41

"Watch and pray" - stay awake and alert so as to pray.

"That ye enter not into temptation" - daily prayer is the only secret to overcoming the strong solicitations to evil that will come our way.

"Deliver us from evil" needs to be our daily prayer (Mt. 6:13).

Note: Proud self-confidence will always result in prayerlessness.

There is a time for sleep and there is a time for prayer. This was no time for sleep. The biggest trial Peter would ever face was minutes away!

"The spirit" - a believer's inner regenerated spirit, which is the aspect of man (which separates him from the animal realm) which alone is eager (***"willing"***) to commune with God.

"The flesh is weak" - Our bodies and old nature succumb and seek to gratify the impulses of the carnal body.

This war of "spirit versus flesh" is a real one (Gal. 5:17) which can only be won by the spirit if you daily feed the spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to control you.

Whenever the Spirit prods you to do something, do it. This is the secret to the Spirit-filled life.

V. 42

"O my Father" - the depth of Christ's intimacy with the Father and agony at the thought of His being separated from the Father drives Him to plead a second time.

V. 43

"Asleep again" - They woke up momentarily only to fall back into slumber.

When the temptation to sleep conflicts with your doing the will of god, fight it! Fight it out of love for Christ and His will!

V. 44

Christ intensely requested that the Father remove the bitter, hellish cup of spiritual suffering and separation. Although an angel was sent to strengthen Christ (Lk. 22:43), *"being in agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were <u>great drops</u> of <u>blood</u> falling down to the ground"* (Lk. 22:44).

V. 45

"Sleep on now, and take your rest" - The verb endings could be translated as imperative (KJV) or indicative (NASV; NIV). The context of the second half of verse 56 proves that the indicative is correct. The statement should be translated as a question, "Are you <u>still</u> sleeping now and taking your rest?"

"The hour is at hand" = the hour of the power of darkness (Lk. 22:53).

III. PRESUMPTION(v. 47-55)
(Never do for Christ what He did not tell you to do)

V. 50

Jesus calls Judas ***"friend"*** (comrade or companion).

V. 51

"One of them" - John specifically identified this *"one"* as *"Simon Peter"*, who *"having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus"* (Jn. 18:10).

The 10 disciples actually asked Jesus, *"Lord, shall we smite with the sword?"* (Lk. 22:49), but Peter didn't even wait for an answer. He just hacked away! (Lk. 22:50; Jn. 18:10).

"Smote off his ear" - Just as quickly as it came off, Jesus put it back on again! *"And He touched his ear, and healed him"* (Lk. 22:51).

V. 52

"They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" - The principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7) is implied. (cp. *'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword..."* - Rev. 13:10).

V. 53

Proud self-confidence will always lead to prayerlessness, which will inevitably lead to presumption.

Jesus is saying to Peter, "I don't need you to defend me."

Peter may have meant well, but good intentions don't "cut the mustard" with God.

"Twelve legions of angels" - A Roman legion varied from 3000 to 6000; hence, 12 legions would be 36,000 to 72,000 angels. Jesus, who created the angels (Col. 1:16) could have called on any number of powerful angelic creatures (*"the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands"* - Rev. 5:11).

Any sword Peter had (Lk. 22:36-38) was to be used for self-defense (perhaps) but not to fight for Jesus.

Presumption is the sin of assumption based on "gut feeling" rather than Biblical precept and principle.

"Presumption" is basically caused by an over-confident, egotistical, big-headedness, which results in the audacity to do your own will, rather than the will of your superior.

To presume is to assume or take for granted you can do something even though you have no authority or Bible to back you up.

People often take liberties that aren't theirs; overstep boundaries they should not; intrude into areas they are forbidden; surge ahead like gangbusters down a path they should not be on!

Principle for Christians: Don't react, but act based on solid Bible truth. *Don't do anything you don't have full confidence in doing (Rom. 14:23).

If we would simply do what we are told rather than being innovative and "adding" to His Word through man-made "traditions," man-made creeds and self-induced visions and dreams, Christendom would not be filled with the confusion we see today among various religions.

"Peter rushed ahead and trusted the arm of the flesh. Had Jesus not healed the ear of Malchus, there probably would have been four crosses at Calvary!" (Wiersbe, p. 98).

To act presumptuously is to act independently of God's will and orders.

People who acted presumptuously:

1) Sarah in giving Hagar to Abraham to obtain a son
2) Moses at Egypt (Ex. 2:11-15)
3) False prophets (Dt. 18:20 - *"But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."*)
4) King Saul (I Sam. 15:22)
5) Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1 - *"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.")*
6) Samson (Jud. 14:9)
7) Uzzah (II Sam. 6:6, 7)
8) The old unnamed prophet (I Ki. 13)
9) Josiah - a king who got involved in a battle that wasn't his (II Chron. 35:20-25)

Many presume that it is okay to:

1) Abort an unborn child
2) Date an unsaved boy or girl
3) Divorce one's spouse
4) Move to another location without considering God's will
5) Pursue the pastorate when God did not call
   --EX: women preachers (I Cor. 14:34; I Tim. 2:12)
   --EX: novice Christians (I Tim. 3:6)
6) That their works/religion etc. will get them into God's Kingdom

Sometimes the "Ooops, I shouldn't have done that" is too late!

V. 54

To fulfill (carry out to completion) the Scriptures was Christ's highest goal.

When it comes to doing your will or obeying Scripture, which do you choose?

V. 55

"With swords and staves (clubs)**"** - Incidentally, this big band of men armed with ***"lanterns and torches and weapons"*** when they heard Jesus identify Himself as the *"I AM"* (Jn. 18:6; cp. Jn. 8:24, 58; 13:19), they *"went backward, and fell to the ground!"* (Jn. 18:6).

'Ye laid no hold on Me" - Because Christ's time had not come until now.

Jesus described this time in this words: *"This is your hour and the power of darkness"* (Lk. 22:53).

CONCLUSION:

Verse 56: *"Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled."*

Peter talked when he should have listened,
slept when he should have prayed,
and fought when he should have trusted.

What a contrast is seen between Jesus and Peter (and the others) in this chapter!

Humility even to death vs. pride
Prayer vs. prayerlessness
Submission to God's will vs. resistance to God's will

"Each of us must decide: Will it be the sword or the cup? Will I resist God's will or submit to God's will?" (Wiersbe, p. 98)