

A Rose Among the Thorns (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] I have a Bible with you this morning. I want you to open it to Luke chapter 22.

! All the way to the end of the chapter, full 25 verses, because chapter 22 is quite long, 71 verses all together. And so I'm going to go ahead and read the entire passage, even though our focus will be really on just parts of it, and then we'll finish it up next Sunday morning. But starting with verse 47, let me read all the way to the end of the chapter, verse 71. And when he was still speaking, behold, a multitude, and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? When those around him saw what was going to happen, they said to him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, permit even this. And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders who had come to him, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize me, but this is your hour and the power of darkness. Having arrested him, they led him and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance.

That when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, this man was also with him. Of course, meaning Jesus. But he denied him, saying, woman, I do not know him. And after a little while, another saw him and said, you are also of them. But Peter said, man, I am not. Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, surely this fellow also was with him, for he is a Galilean. But Peter said, man, I do not know what you are saying. Immediately, when he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, word of the Lord, how he had said to him before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

So Peter went out and wept bitterly. Now, the men who held Jesus mocked him and beat him. And having blindfolded him, they struck him on the face and asked him, saying, prophesy, who is the one who struck you? Many other things they blasphemously spoke against him. As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led him into their counsel, saying, if you are the Christ, tell us. But he said to them, if I tell you, you will by no means believe.

And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer me or let me go. Hereafter, the son of man will sit on the right hand of the power of God. And they said, they all said, are you then the son of God?

[4 : 22] So he said to them, you rightly say that I am. And they said, what further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from his own mouth.

Now, I've entitled the message, and you see it right up here on the screen behind me. I've entitled this message from this particular passage, entitled it, A Rose Among the Thorns.

And that title really comes from a very old expression that means basically something good found among not so good things. That's just basically what that expression means. And perhaps you've heard it used. And so we might say, you know, in regard to that expression, we might say that someone is a rose among the thorns if everyone around him or her is unpleasant.

And that's basically the meaning of the expression. And yet I would say to you that to apply that expression to this particular passage really stretches its meaning to the limit. Because Jesus, the rose, of course, in our story was surrounded by people who were far more than just unpleasant. Many of them were nefarious and even to the point of murderous. And so this is the approach that I want to take in this passage, this part of chapter 22 of the Gospel of Luke. Although we'll see some of this a little bit further as we go into chapter 23. But the approach is this, this morning and next Sunday morning. Jesus, the, of course, is the central character in our story. And Jesus is suddenly

surrounded by people who in one way or another are behaving very badly, very badly. And so Jesus is the rose among the thorns. And who are these thorns? And what can we know about them from this particular passage? And so looking at this passage in Luke chapter 22, as well as bringing kind of into play here, the other accounts, gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, or John, we put all of these together and we can utilize some specific adjectives that will help describe these, what I'm calling thorns.

[6 : 59] In the story. And so getting to it, the first thorn in our story is Judas. So we begin with Judas. Judas. And so what adjective would describe him, best describe him? Well, we could probably come up with a number of them. But how about this one? The traitorous Judas. Let's use that one. The traitorous Judas. Now looking at the passage again, verse 47, the Bible says here, and while he, that's Jesus, was still speaking. So while he was still speaking. Now remember, Jesus and his disciples, minus Judas, are in the garden of Gethsemane. We studied that last week as they came into the garden and were praying and so forth. So they're in the garden of Gethsemane. And the disciples don't know it, but Jesus has brought them to the garden to be arrested, for him to be arrested. I mean, he knows it's coming. And he knows it's coming very soon, even though the disciples do not. And so that's why Jesus instructed his disciples to pray. To pray lest they fall into temptation. In fact, when we look at Matthew and Mark's account of this same event, and I mentioned this last week, three times Jesus had to urge his disciples to be in prayer. Again, lest they fall or enter into temptation. And so then Luke says in verse 47, while Jesus was still speaking, and this is, by the way, the third time, while he was speaking, behold, behold, or really we could translate it, look there, with an exclamation mark.

It is the Greek word, *eduo*, and it is, if you are familiar with this grammatical term, it is a demonstrative. And this was purposeful by the narrator. Who's the narrator? Luke is the narrator. And so really, it's his way of getting the readers, that's us, to turn our eyes, so to speak, in a sense, to look in another direction.

We've been looking at Jesus and his disciples, and Jesus has been speaking to them, urging them to pray. Every time they're falling asleep, and then he comes back and says, pray, pray. And so this third time, and so we've been looking at Jesus, and then the narrator says, but wait a minute, look. Look, look there, a multitude, a multitude of people, a crowd of people approaching. We're to turn our attention to this mob of people, and John says in his gospel that they were carrying torches and lanterns and weapons. And so we're to look there. Now, who is leading this group of people? Well, we know, don't we? It's Judas. Judas is leading the way. And yet, if you're one of the disciples, you're, you're, you're, you know, the very mention of that possibility would cause you to say, no, it can't be, surely not.

Not Judas, one of us, leading this mob of people to Jesus. And so, you know, just imagine that you're one of the disciples. And all this time, you have been wondering, what happened to Judas? [10 : 28] Where's Judas? Where did he go? Why hasn't he been with us? You know, they, the Bible doesn't mention this, but I'm sure, naturally, they're wondering about Judas. And remember, they hadn't seen Judas since he left the upper room, and left rather abruptly, by the way, and they didn't know where he had gone. They even had to guess about it. In fact, John, in his gospel, tells us that they thought, well, perhaps Jesus sent Judas to buy some more food for the feast. Or perhaps he sent Judas out to give some money to the, for the offering to the poor, which would be a standard thing to be done at the Passover week. And after all, Judas was the treasurer, the financial secretary for the group. He carried the bag, the Bible says. So he had all the money. And so their natural conclusion was, well, he's just gone to take care of some business. But a lot has transpired since Judas left the upper room.

In fact, the institution of the Lord's Supper took place after Judas left. Pretty significant event. And Judas was not there for it. I'm sure that the disciples were wondering about that. And also a whole lot of important teaching has transpired. Now Luke doesn't give us all of this, but we put all the gospels together, especially John. John gives us a lot more information about what took place in the upper room and Jesus' teaching. For example, the famous, let not your hearts be troubled passage recorded in John 14. That took place in the upper room, and Judas was not there for that. And also the, I am the vine and you are the branches. That particular passage recorded in John chapter 15. And even Jesus' high priestly prayer that's recorded for us in John 17. All that took place after Judas left the upper room, and he missed out on all of that. And so as they are leaving the upper room, they're wondering, where is Judas? You know, he hasn't been here. And as they

are walking out of the city of Jerusalem, out through the gate, they're looking around. Where's Judas? What happened to this guy? And as they walk down in that valley there, the valley of Kidron, they crossed over the brook Kidron. And remember, we studied this passage. They look back and looking at the temple, and they're in awe at the temple mound and commenting about that. Isn't this wonderful? It's glorious, and so forth.

And Judas wasn't there. And they're thinking, where's Judas? And then as they are kind of walking up, hiking, so to speak, up the slopes of the Mount of Olives, where's Judas?

Judas. What will happen to that guy? And then when they get to the Garden of Gethsemane, where they had been, by the way, camping out for the last several nights, that had been kind of the rendezvous place, a place of secrecy and privacy, a place of seclusion, a place that would protect Jesus from being arrested prematurely. As they get to the Garden of Gethsemane, they're kind of their camp.

[13:45] I'm sure they were expecting Judas to be there. And they get there, and they're looking around, and where's Judas? He's nowhere there. What's happened to this guy? Now, we know, don't we?

All right, so, but the disciples, if they don't know, they're wondering. They haven't yet put two and two together, as, you know, they should have, perhaps, by this time. And so he's nowhere there. So where is he? Well, he's meeting with the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin is the ruling body of the Jews. The Romans allowed them to have still their kind of internal semblance of government. And so the Sanhedrin was the Jewish governing body for the people. And so Judas is there meeting with them.

That would have included the high priest, the chief priest, the representatives from the Sadducees, that the party of the Sadducees, also representatives from the Pharisees and so forth.

And so he was meeting with them. And what was he doing? He was betraying Jesus to them. In fact, at this point, they are together making their plans, final plans, on the arrest of Jesus.

[15:03] Because, you see, Judas has already made a deal with them. He'd already made a bargain with them. And Judas has already received, taken some money for this nefarious act.

And he really had been planning this traitorous deed for days. Really, days. And all he was waiting for was what? An opportunity.

The right opportunity to carry all this out. In fact, Luke told us back in Luke 22, verse 6. He says, he, that is Judas, watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present. It was important that the arrest take place when there's no crowd around. Because Jesus was very popular with the crowd and they couldn't do it then. And so he was looking for a time, a place, a good place to do this where there are no witnesses, no spectators.

And so the upper room would have been excellent. Excellent place, right? But as we've explained, Judas didn't know where the upper room was until he got there. And then he, you know, he had to stay there with it.

[16:14] No opportunity to go and betray the place and have Jesus arrested there. And later on, when Jesus finally exposes Judas privately, he dismissed him.

He let him go. He said, go and take care of your business. Go do what you're going to do. And so by the time he left the upper room, there would not been enough time to have him arrested there. But Judas did know where Jesus would be later that night. He would be in the Garden of Gethsemane. In fact, John tells us in John 18, 1, he, that's Jesus, went out with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where there was a garden which he and his disciples entered.

And Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place. Why? Well, it says for Jesus often met there with his disciples. And he had met there really every night that week there at the Garden of Gethsemane.

And so thus, Judas, having received a detachment of troops, the officer and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees came there. And so I can just kind of imagine the looks on the faces of the 11 disciples as Jesus is, again, kind of scolding them.

[17:37] They've fallen asleep rather than praying. And suddenly there's this multitude and they look up and there's Judas. And maybe the first thought in their mind was, well, there's Judas. Maybe they wanted to say, Judas, we've been missing you.

Where have you been? And then, what are you doing with that group of people? What are you doing leading this mob? And perhaps immediately the words of Jesus came flooding back into their

consciousness, taking them back to the upper room, early on in the upper room, sitting at the table there with Jesus.

And all 12 are together, the disciples are together. And they are observing the Passover meal together. And suddenly they are remembering Jesus' words. You remember what they were? He said, behold, the hand of my betrayer.

Is with me on the table. And they might have also remembered what Jesus said immediately after that. He said, and truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined.

Predetermined. That is, my betrayer is simply fulfilling his role in the eternal plan of God. But then Jesus went on to say, but woe to that man.

[18 : 50] Woe to that man by whom he, that is the Messiah, is betrayed. That is, he will bear the responsibility for his act.

And also the judgment that goes with it. And so Jesus, a little bit later in the upper room, and their disciples are perhaps remembering this. As Jesus is praying, recorded in John 17, verse 12.

He prayed, while I was with them in the world, referring to his disciples. I kept them in your name. Those whom you gave me I have kept.

And none of them is lost except. Except the son of perdition. Which is a really frightening term.

The son of perdition. That the scripture might be fulfilled. Meaning this. God's plan of redemption would be accomplished in part by the betrayal of Judas.

[19 : 53] The son of perdition. Judas' traitorous act played a part in the fulfillment of God's plan to save you.

And me. That's amazing, really. Think about it. And so we might want to just, you know, say to ourselves, well, does that mean Judas had no choice in this?

And so if Judas had no choice, he's just fulfilling scripture, it was his destiny, then maybe he's not to blame. And how could God hold him accountable for this? He's just part of the plan.

We might want to think that. And it really brings us to a kind of mystery in trying to figure out these kinds of things.

That Judas could actually be a part of God's plan. And yet at the same time, he's responsible for what he does. Bears the guilt. Bears the judgment. I like the way Leon Morris explained this.

[20 : 54] He said the reference to Judas fulfilling scripture brings out the divine purpose. And it does. It brings out God's divine purpose. This does not mean that Judas was an automaton.

That is a robot. He was a responsible person and acted freely. But God used that man's evil act to bring about his own purpose.

And he did. Earlier in the Gospel of John, in John chapter 6 and verse 70, Jesus said to his disciples, and Judas was present at the time.

He said, did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil? That's what he said. Who's he speaking about? Judas. One of you is a devil.

Now I think that just went right over their heads. They didn't understand that. They didn't make any kind of connection. And I don't know if Judas did. He certainly kept it to himself, of course. And then later, and here is in the upper room, in John 13, Jesus is washing the feet of the disciples, remember.

[22 : 02] And he is including Judas in that. Judas is still there. And Jesus washes Judas' feet. But when Jesus gets to Peter, Peter says, you're not going to wash my feet.

And Jesus said, well, if I don't wash your feet, you're not going to be a part of me. What did Peter say? He said, well, if that be the case, then don't stop with the feet. Give me a full bath here.

But Jesus said in John 13, verse 10, he who is bathed needs only to wash his feet. That is, if you're clean, you just wash your feet. But is completely clean.

And you, Peter, are clean. That is, you're saved. Then he said this, but not all of you. Not all of you. Not meaning not all of you, Peter. You've still got some dirt on you. He's looking to the rest of them, not all of you. See, that's what he means because it's explained in the very next verse.

[23 : 00] For he knew who would betray him. Therefore, he said, you are not all clean. And so to whom is he referring? Judas, of course.

Judas. And so Jesus has said, one of you 12 is a devil. One of you 12 is not clean. That is, you're not saved.

One of you 12 disciples is the son of perdition. Which, by the way, is really a troubling expression.

It means the one destined for eternal damnation. And that was Judas. Now, what does that mean? Well, at the very least, it means that Judas was so hardened in his sin, so fixed in his rebellion against Christ, and in his desire to betray him, that short of God's divine intervention, Judas' betrayal of Jesus was inevitable.

Unstoppable. See, Judas had no thought of doing otherwise. He wasn't wavering on this. His heart was fixed on it. The die was cast.

[24 : 18] The destiny was set. Even though, afterward, Judas wept bitterly, didn't he? Grieved bitterly. What did he do?

Went out and hung himself. The coward that he was. And notice how Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus. Luke tells us in verse 47, And he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, went before the mob.

He's leading the mob. And drew near to Jesus to kiss him. To kiss him. That was the prearranged signal.

In fact, that's what both Matthew and Mark tell us. Judas had said, Whomever I kiss, he is the one. Seize him and lead him away safely. So at least he wanted Jesus to live at that point. This is the signal.

[25 : 20] And actually, and this is interesting, as it turns out, Jesus made the kiss unnecessary. I don't know if you've picked this up. As I read Luke's account, he really made the kiss unnecessary.

In John's gospel, the Bible says that Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went forward. That is, he stepped forward. Whereas he's with the disciples, the eleven, in a group, and Judas and the mob, they're coming, the signal, the plan was to run up and kiss Jesus on the face so that the soldiers would know which one is Jesus.

But Jesus made that unnecessary because he knew everything was going to happen. And so he separated himself from the disciples. He stepped forward. He identified himself.

So there's no need now for a signifying kiss. You say, well, what's the big deal? Well, you know, the sense of how Luke describes this is just interesting to me.

In verse 47, Judas drew near to Jesus to kiss him. Luke doesn't even say he kissed him. Now, Luke's not making a mistake.

[26 : 34] Luke wasn't there, but he's, I think, just really kind of identifying the fact that Judas really didn't have to kiss Jesus. But he did draw near to do it.

He drew near. But Jesus stepped forward just before he kissed him. No need for the signal. And yet, all the other gospel writers tell us that Jesus kissed him anyway.

Even though he didn't have to. I just think it makes this diabolical thing, this hypocritical thing, much more profound.

love, the kiss, by the way, in that culture was supposed to signify love, affection, even more than that, honor, respect.

See, such hypocrisy on the part of Judas. Added to his treachery and this act of treason. And yet, Matthew, by the way, tells us that Jesus said to Judas so graciously, he said, friend, he said, friend, do what you came to do.

[27 : 51] Arose among the thorns. The traitorous Judas. Let's see another thorn in our story. Again, our text reads in verse 47, and while he was still speaking, behold, a multitude.

A multitude. Now, Matthew gives us a sense of the size of this crowd, this multitude, this mob that Judas was leading. And in Matthew chapter 26, verse 47, he described it as a great multitude.

He said, well, I'd like to have a little bit more information than that. But here's the idea. This is a large group of people. Hundreds of people. A great multitude. Anytime you see the Bible or find in the Bible those two words together in English, great multitude.

We're talking about a lot of people coming to arrest Jesus. Now, Luke does not mention anything about the makeup of this crowd. You know, what this crowd consisted of.

But we can understand from the other gospel accounts that this great multitude consisted of at least two distinct groups of people. And the first one would be what John tells us in John 18, verse 3.

[29 : 16] He says that Judas received a detachment of troops. That would be Roman soldiers. officers. That would be officers, probably Romans, but they would be officers assigned specifically to the Sanhedrin, to the temple.

So we have soldiers here. And so Judas received this detachment from the chief priests and the Pharisees. Okay? So, here is our second thorn in the story.

The soldiers. the Roman soldiers. And what adjective might we choose for them? To describe them. And here is the one I have chosen.

Dangerous. And I use that adjective because of the occasion and what we know about the Romans. So here is the second thorn.

The dangerous Roman soldiers. So first, the traitorous Judas. And second, the dangerous soldiers. The ESV translates John 18 verse 3 as a band of soldiers.

[30 : 29] A band of them. And that's a very specific word. A word that the ESV translators are using as they look at the Greek and bring it into English. A band of soldiers.

And really the idea here, what this is talking about here, is what is called a cohort. a Roman cohort. This would be a Roman cohort.

And a full cohort of Roman soldiers would have numbered anywhere from 600 to 1,000 soldiers. That's a lot of soldiers.

Now, you know, John does not specify the number of the soldiers, even though the word he uses points us to a cohort. I think certainly it would not, you know, would not necessarily consist of the entire Roman cohort assigned to Jerusalem.

It's Passover week. A lot of people in the city, a lot of people from the surrounding countries, they're in the city. I mean, this is a big, big time, important time.

[31 : 34] And so the city would be packed with Jewish worshippers and the soldiers would have been needed to assure peace, law, and order. They would have been stationed all around the city to make sure that this was taken care of.

The Romans would have made sure of that. But it was nighttime, right? It was nighttime, likely after midnight. It was the early pre-dawn hours of Friday morning, and so most of the people in Jerusalem, even those who are visiting, would be asleep and be in bed.

So while it is highly unlikely that Judas showed up at the Garden of Gethsemane with a thousand soldiers, he most certainly was leading a very large contingent of soldiers, perhaps 200, 300, maybe more than that.

And that's not unreasonable to surmise here. You might remember in Acts chapter 23, the Romans sent 200 soldiers, Roman soldiers, 70 horsemen, and an additional 200 spearmen, and sent them to safely transport a certain prisoner from Jerusalem to Caesarea, and that certain prisoner was the apostle Paul.

470 soldiers, Roman soldiers, just for one man, just to transport one man from one city to another city. Of course, he's a prisoner, and he's the apostle Paul.

[33 : 14] And so why so many? Why so many in the case of Paul? Why so many here in the case of the arrest of Jesus? And the simple answer is the Romans were hyper sensitive about keeping peace in their empire, in every part of their empire.

Pax Romana was the famous saying pertaining to the Romans, meaning Roman peace. And so they were ready to put down anyone who might threaten that peace.

The Pax Romana. And I mean they were ready even to the extent of being brutal if they had to be, and often they had to be, and were.

They were ready and willing to be cruel and brutal, put down any possibility of riot, any possibility of disturbing the peace. Romans were good at that.

And so when it came down to it, and it often did, the Romans could be extremely cruel, extremely brutal in their dealings with those they deemed to be troublemakers.

[34 : 21] And to get a little bit of a flavor of that, we can look there at verse 63 of Luke 22. And some of those guards that arrested Jesus were assigned to guard Jesus.

And notice what it says. They mocked him and beat him, and having blindfolded him, they struck him on the face and asked him, saying, prophesy, who is the one who struck you?

I mean, this is cruel and brutal punishment. This is what the Romans did. Now, all this to say this, that their presence there at the arrest of Jesus made the whole thing very dangerous.

extremely dangerous. More than we know. Just because nothing happened doesn't mean there was no danger, extreme danger.

I think more dangerous than even Judas had imagined. I mean, just one false move. One false move, and the Romans would put it down with dispatch, no matter what it took.

[35 : 32] I'm telling you, we're seconds possibly from a major blood fest. And, really, it nearly did turn into that.

The Scripture doesn't tell us this, but we know from what has happened, and because we know who the Romans were, and why they were there, and this Pax Romana thing, we know that this nearly turned into a very tragic time for Jesus and his disciples.

We'll talk about this more next week, but in verse 49, the disciples, remember, asked the Lord at this point, they asked him, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? Remember that?

And I'm thinking, are you kidding me? I mean, they're brave, right? But their bravery is equal by their foolishness, their stupidity.

I mean, they only had two swords between them, against 200, 300, 400, armed to the teeth Roman soldiers who are soldiers, battle hardened men.

[36 : 41] Two swords against all of that? And yet, you also remember that before Jesus could tell them no, what happened? Brash Peter pulled out his sword, and I think inadvertently cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

I can just kind of imagine, you know, he's just a fisherman. What does he know about swords? And he pulled the thing out and probably swung it out and cut off the guy's ear. I mean, if you've got a sword and you're going to really use it to protect, I mean, what are you going to do?

Cut off somebody's ear? No. I tell you, at that very moment, it was a dangerous moment.

again, we're talking about split seconds before the Romans are going to deal with this. I mean, they didn't carry the sword in vain.

No government has. And so, who saved the day? Jesus did. Jesus saved the day.

[37 : 44] Jesus wasn't going to die in that garden. He's going to the cross. And so, you know, verse 51 says Jesus spoke these words. And I think he spoke them very quickly because we're just seconds away from this becoming a blood fest.

And Jesus spoke. He said, permit even this. And I know some translations render this quite differently, but this is a literal trend. Permit even this. What's he saying?

He's saying, let me be arrested. It's almost as if he's saying, hold on a minute. I'll go peacefully. And he's actually saying this to his disciples. Let them arrest me.

I'm ready to go. And he touched the ear of that servant and healed him. And Jesus diffused the whole thing.

All the hostilities arose among the thorns. The traitorous Judas, the dangerous soldier, leaders, and one more this morning.

[38 : 50] The malicious Jewish leaders. The malicious Jewish leaders. Luke lists them in verse 52. The chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders had come to him.

So they're part of this mob. We don't know how many there were. It really doesn't matter. But the chief priests, the Jewish leaders, very well represented in this mob of people.

In fact, the Roman soldiers are just there so that they will safeguard the whole situation and they'll be able to arrest Jesus and get that done. So these people are part of the mob.

This crowd. In fact, they were solely responsible for instigating the whole thing. Right? they're the ones that got all this going.

They organized the whole thing with Judas' help. And really, the Jewish leadership had been plotting to have Jesus done away with almost from the very beginning of his ministry.

[39 : 56] In fact, you can go all the way back right after Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and then he begins his ministry and his very first sermon he preached is in his hometown there in Nazareth in the synagogue and after he preaches that message, what happens?

They drag him out of the place about ready to throw him over a cliff. They want to do away with this guy from the very beginning and repeatedly we find this in all the gospels and especially in Luke and we've noted this as we've been working our way through this gospel that repeatedly the gospels record that the Jews sought how they might destroy him.

They've been wanting to do this from the very beginning. But now when it comes down to it they're cowards aren't they? Real cowards. Not that they don't want to go through with it but they brought a small army with them just to arrest one man.

And not only cowards but they are liars and this is what we really need to see. Malicious liars. Both Matthew and Mark tell us that they falsified the evidence against Jesus.

They brought him to trial so to speak. mock trial. They falsified the evidence. They had to. Mark 14 55 verse 55 says now the chief priest and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death.

[41 : 22] That was their intent. They were looking for testimony to put him to death. But Mark says they found none. It's a pretty serious problem for them.

they couldn't find any evidence with which to convict him. What to do? No problem. Just make it up. And that's what verse 57 in Mark 14 says. Then some rose up and bore false witness against him. They lied about it. This is a mockery of any kind of trial.

They lied about what he said. They lied about what he claimed. They misquoted him. They took his words out of context and twisted his words to mean something else.

We're not strangers to anything like that, are we, today? A malicious Jewish leader. And they put him on trial before Caiaphas.

[42 : 30] That would be the high priest. Then after that they put him on trial before the Sanhedrin, the ruling body. But these trials were a mockery of justice.

Mockery. They were not judiciously seeking to prove him innocent. They were maliciously seeking to prove him guilty and they're going to get that done even if they have to lie about it.

And they did lie about it. And it's interesting, in verse 66 of Luke 22, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, that's the Sanhedrin, came together and led him into their council, that is, bringing him to trial before them, saying, now look at this, if you are the Christ, tell us.

Don't you think they're sincere in that question? You think they really want to know? I mean, is this an honest question? And they're going to believe one way or the other, depending on his answer to this question?

You think they really care about what he has to say? Really, all they care is what they can do with what he says, how they can use it against him.

[43 : 51] So are you really the Christ? Tell us. I mean, they wouldn't believe Jesus is the Messiah, not in a million years, because they don't want to believe that he is the Messiah.

Their hearts are filled with malice toward the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, how did Jesus answer their question?

But he said to them, if I tell you, you will by no means believe. they're not going to believe him. In fact, when he did answer them, and he did, gave a clear answer, what did they do with it?

We don't have to go on with the trial, we've got all we need. This guy's a blasphemer. Just as we suspected. What did Jesus say?

How did he answer? He said in verse 69, hereafter, the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of the power of God.

[44 : 57] Wow. That's true. True answer. I am the Christ. And so, you know, they ask another question.

Are you then the Son of God? Really the same question, just put differently. Son of God is the Messiah. Are you him? You're the Son of God? And he said to them, you rightly say that I am. He rose among the thorns. Traitorous Judas, dangerous soldier, malicious leaders, Jewish leaders. We'll look at two more next week. But you know, it's interesting that these same kinds of thorns exist today.

We, in a sense, and we'll talk more about this next week, the church is the rose among the thorns today. Because we are in Christ.

[46 : 12] and there are those who are traitorous toward us, those who are dangerous toward God's people, killing them, murdering them, martyring them, and many, many, many people are malicious towards God's people.

Should we expect it to be any different? No. The servant is no greater than the master. The servant is no greater than