

# An Upside-Down Kingdom (Part 3)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles, would you, this morning and open them to Luke 22 once again.

! Here this morning and then next Sunday we'll be ready to move on.

And so I want to go ahead and read once again the entire passage, even though we're going to be focusing on the last, really the last four verses. So Luke 22, starting with verse 21, but behold, the hand of my betrayer is with me on the table.

And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. And they began to question among themselves which of them it was who would do this thing.

Now there was also a dispute among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And he said to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors, but not so among you.

[ 1 : 28 ] On the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger or the least. He who governs as he who serves.

Or who is greater, he who sits at the table or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as one who serves.

But you are those who have continued with me in my trials, and I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as my Father bestowed one upon me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Lord said, Simon, Simon, indeed Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail, and when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren.

But he said to him, Lord, I am ready to go with you, both to prison and to death. Then he said, I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know me.

[ 2 : 40 ] And he said to them, when I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything? So they said, nothing. That is, we didn't lack anything.

Then he said to them, but now he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack, and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in me. And he was numbered with the transgressors. For the things concerning me have an end, that is a fulfillment.

So they said, Lord, look, here are two swords. And he said to them, it is enough. All right, so I have decided this morning to, even though we're going to focus on the last four verses here this morning, I've decided to read the entire thing once again, because you see, there are three stories here, three things going on in this passage, and they may seem to be unrelated, but they go together.

There's a theme that ties these three seemingly separate stories or parts of the narration, a theme that ties them together, a purpose, really.

[ 4 : 05 ] Jesus' purpose in his teaching that ties all three things together. And what are the three things? Well, you have the disciples disputing over who is the greatest in the kingdom or will be the greatest in the kingdom.

Then you have Jesus' prophecy concerning Peter's denial of knowing him. And then we have this issue concerning money bags and swords, money bags, knapsacks, and swords.

And again, though they seem to be unrelated, they go together. Now, we can maybe kind of see, and really we ought to be able to see this by now because I've already preached on the first two stories.

We can see how maybe they go together, but it's difficult to see how this third one fits into this theme with this purpose. But I assure you that it does.

They're all connected together. Let me remind you, the disciples have now been with Jesus for a solid three years. And in those three years, Jesus has taken many occasions to teach lessons on his kingdom.

[ 5 : 12 ] He has been giving them instructions, lessons, defining his kingdom, describing his kingdom. He has given them many lessons on the kingdom of God.

Some of it has been publicly with all other people and crowds and multitudes of people. And some of it, a lot of it has been privately, just between Jesus and his 12 disciples.

And so they have received a lot of teaching on the kingdom of God. And yet, even at this point, they still do not understand. It's obvious they don't understand.

And Jesus knows they do not understand. They did not yet understand the nature of the kingdom of God. And specifically, they did not understand how it would begin.

How it would begin. They were completely wrong on that. Because, you see, and you know this, don't you, that God's plan for his kingdom includes two comings of Christ.

[ 6 : 10 ] There are two comings. The first and the second coming. Now, in the disciples' eschatology, their theology about in things, they only had one coming.

But in God's eternal plan, there are two comings. And so, between the two comings, that's what we need to understand so that we'll understand the passage.

Between those two comings, the kingdom of God will look quite different from what it will look like after his second coming. And Jesus is preparing his disciples, then, for what the kingdom is going to be like between those two comings.

What the kingdom is going to be like very soon. As a matter of fact, after Jesus dies and ascends back to heaven. Now, the disciples didn't understand that. And they need to understand that.

And so, the passage here that we're looking at represents the last time that Jesus will spend this time with his disciples in giving them instruction on this issue before he dies.

[ 7 : 15 ] This is it. This is, in a sense, his last shot. They, very soon, are going to be leaving the upper room. And they will travel the short distance over to the Mount of Olives and specifically to the Garden of Gethsemane.

And then, in a matter of a few hours or less, Jesus will be arrested and taken from his disciples. And so, this is Jesus' last shot with his disciples before he dies.

And the disciples need to be ready, then, for what comes next. They need to be ready for what is about to happen to Jesus. They need to understand why their Messiah must die.

But also, they need to be ready for what is about to happen to them. They need to understand the persecution, the rejection, the difficulty, the hardship that is about to come into their lives.

And, really, for us today, and this is where it intersects with us, we need to be ready, need to understand the nature of the kingdom here between the two comings of Christ.

[ 8 : 28 ] The visible kingdom of God, I guess you could say, and I think rightly say, is seen operating in the true church. Now, I believe that the kingdom of God actually resides in the heart of the believer because the kingdom represents the reign of Christ.

And where does he reign right now? In our hearts. But it is visibly manifested in the true church.

And frankly, if we would just think about it and admit it, we would know it's true.

The church is not what we might wish it to be. I'm not just talking about our church, but all church.

The church in the world today. It's not what we wish it would be. Not now and not even since it was established 2,000 years ago.

It seems so weak, so fragile, so frail, so anything but glorious. Right? When you think about it. And it is hated and despised and persecuted.

And though this is not our experience, for the majority of Christians in the world today, Christianity is hazardous to their health and life. They're being martyred all the time.

[ 9 : 41 ] And that is the way it has been. It's been the consistent reality for all true believers all down through history. And so Jesus' disciples needed to be prepared.

They needed to understand some things about the kingdom. About how it would begin. Again, they were expecting crowns right away.

They thought that was the next thing on God's agenda. Their crowns. But Jesus said, no, crosses come first. Mine first and then yours.

And remember, the disciples were trying to figure out who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God. They thought the kingdom had come in that sense, that they were about to put on the crowns

and rule with Jesus.

Rule the world. But Jesus said, the greatest is identified by the one who is the least. That's how my kingdom begins. The ruler, those who rule, are identified by the one who serves.

[10:48] Serves. It's crosses before crowns. And then when Jesus said that Peter would deny him, deny even knowing him, he would deny him not once but three times, what did Peter say?

In a sense, he said, Lord, not me. Not me. It would never happen. I'm ready, he said. Remember? I'm ready to go with you, Jesus.

I'm ready to go both to prison and to death. And so you see, Peter and really all the disciples thought they had arrived spiritually. Thought they were ready to rule.

They thought that they were ready to rule Christ's kingdom. And in their thinking, they were the chosen ones. They were the greatest ones. They were the triumphant twelve, ready to conquer the world for the kingdom of God.

And they're kind of halfway around their own victory lap before Jesus yanks them off the track and says, you're not ready. You're not ready. Not by a long shot. You certainly think you are.

[11:53] But you're not. That is why I have permitted Satan to sift you like wheat. And that's why I have permitted you, and I'm going to let you fail miserably.

That's what he said directly to Peter. But really, by extension, he's speaking to all of the disciples. I'm going to let you fail. I'm going to let you be who you are, really, on the inside, so that you can discover who you are on the inside.

And so that's the only way that you will discover just how weak you are, how unready you are, and just how much you need me. And then he basically said, when you come through that sifting, and you will because I'm going to be praying for you all the way through, then and only then you will be ready to serve me.

Then you will be ready to accomplish great things in my kingdom, victorious things, triumphant things. But remember, disciples, in my kingdom, it is trials before triumphs.

And so it is an upside-down kingdom, and the disciples need to know that, and we need to know that. Crosses come before crowns, and trials come before triumphs.

[13:06] And now we're ready for the third part of this passage, the hardest part, by the way, for us to understand. And so here it is. The kingdom of God begins with swords before scepters.

And even how I've labeled that is a little bit troubling to us, and maybe causes us to wonder, well, what is the pastor going to say about this this morning?

So we've come to that place in the text where, quite frankly, many Bible commentators simply punt. It's true. You'll just get a collection of commentaries.

You'll find that many of them just leave this part out. They don't deal with this. They don't add this to their commentary. And it's obvious, I think, why, because of the difficulty that lies with Jesus' instruction here.

Jesus instructs his disciples in verse 36, and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. I mean, that's strange, isn't it? I mean, isn't it?

[14:15] Sell your coat if you have to. If you don't have enough money to buy one, get a sword. Get a sword. That's strange. Coming from Jesus. Doesn't seem to fit.

And so does Jesus really mean that? Well, that's what he said. Right? I think we ought to take Jesus literally at what he says, although in this case we might want to look a little deeper.

But this is what Jesus said. Sell your coat, buy a sword. And then to add to the strangeness of this passage, verse 38, the disciples say to Jesus, Lord, look, here are two swords.

And what does Jesus say? It's enough. I mean, this is strange. What are we to make of this? And how does that translate into our lives as believers today?

What is Jesus saying to us? Well, believe it or not, I think the meaning of this passage is really not all that difficult to discover. If, that is, you will pay attention to everything Jesus says here.

[15:23] And not just this part about the sword. Because we tend to focus too narrowly on a passage, and especially when those passages of scriptures that contain oddities, or difficulties in interpretation, or strange things, or even shocking things, or things that don't seem to fit, seem to contradict with other places in scripture.

And so we kind of focus on that part of the passage. And when we do that, then we miss the real meaning of the larger passage. And therefore, we miss out on what God has to say to us in the passage.

Kind of like the two guys I heard about who are traveling together down the highway. And one of them said to his friend, he said, Did you see that billboard back there? Did you notice this century Gothic font that they used on that sign?

And his friend said, Well, that wasn't century Gothic. I mean, it's obvious that it was Bookman Old Style. And so his friend said, Well, anyway, how did you like the fire engine red coloring of the lettering?

And his friend said, That wasn't fire engine. Anybody who knows anything about colors knows that that was electric crimson. Well, okay. Anyway, I did think that the little silver stars were a nice touch to the sign.

[16:43] And his friend said, Well, I don't want to be too nitpicky, but they weren't silver. They were metallic gray. And they weren't stars. They were pentagrams. Because after about 10 miles on down the road, one of them says, By the way, what did the sign say?

And his friend said, I don't know. I didn't read it. You see, that's our problem. Focus on things that are interesting or focus on things that are odd or focus on things that are difficult to interpret and we don't read the whole thing and don't take the whole thing in and not just the passage that we're reading, but even the context and other things that appear in Scripture that help us understand the meaning of that particular passage.

And so, when we run across something strange, a strange passage in God's Word, let's make sure we look closer. And again, I would say to you that the meaning of this passage is really not all that difficult to discover if, again, we'll pay attention to everything Jesus says here.

And so, let me point out a few things that should help us understand Jesus' meaning as well as understand how it makes any difference in our life. And the first thing I want you to notice in the passage is the connection that Jesus makes.

First thing he does is connect something. Connect his disciples, their thinking, he connects their thinking to something in their past.

[18:18] That's the first thing he does. Something actually fairly recent in their past. And that's what he's doing in verse 35. And he said to them, when I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals would be kind of like a backpack today, you know, and sandals.

When I sent you out with sandals, and really, don't get the idea that Jesus sent them out barefooted. He's really talking about an extra pair of sandals. I mean, when you walk everywhere, you need an extra pair.

And so when I sent you out with all those things you need, did you lack anything? So he's reminding them, he's connecting them to something in the past.

And the disciples would have remembered that, right? I mean, we should remember that. In fact, we studied this in Luke, in our study of Luke. Back in Luke 9, Jesus sent out the 12, remember?

And then, in the very next chapter, in Luke chapter 10, Jesus sent out 72. Or 70, depends on which translation you're looking at. And so he sent them out two different times.

[19:24] And he gave them some specific instructions that, by the way, would seem, do seem, a little odd to us. In Luke chapter 9, verse 3, he said to the 12, take nothing for the journey.

I'm going to send you out, but don't take anything with you. Now, that doesn't seem very wise. Don't take anything for the journey. Neither staffs, nor bag, nor bread, nor money, and do not have two tunics apiece.

Whatever house you enter, stay there with those people. Although, those were his instructions to the 12, as he sends them out. And then, in chapter 10, verse 4, he said to the 72, which would have included the 12 as well, carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals, and greet no one along the road.

That is, don't beg from any strangers on the road. Alright, so, Jesus says to his disciples, do you remember that? Now, those words don't appear there, but this is implied.

Do you remember that? When I sent you out, and I gave you those instructions. And of course, they did remember that. Of course. And so, then Jesus asks them, did you lack anything?

[20:37] And their answer, nothing. We lack nothing. And you know, that's pretty amazing. That's pretty amazing. They took no money with him.

They took no food with him. They took no extra clothing or footwear with him. And at no time, did they have a need. At no time.

Even the most basic needs. Pretty amazing. Now, beside the fact that we would admit that God is able and was able to supernaturally provide for all of their needs. Certainly so. It's obvious. But it's obvious that God used other people to generously provide for them. So when they go to a house, people would welcome them in. When they needed food, people would feed them. When they needed an article of clothing or another pair of sandals, those things were provided for them. They didn't lack anything. [ 21 : 36 ] God didn't just throw them out of the sky. He used other people to provide those needs. And this helps us understand that throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, the only issue he had was an issue between Jesus and the Jewish leadership.

The only problem he had was with them. But when it came to the people of Israel, he was very popular. And so were his disciples. And so the people opened up their homes to them and fed them and clothed them and took care of their needs, their basic needs. And so Jesus is connecting the disciples' mind to that experience. And you didn't lack for anything, did you? And I sent you out without anything. In fact, I commanded that you not take anything with me. And so before Jesus gives this last bit of instruction to his disciples, he makes this connection with how things worked in the past. Alright? So that leads to a second thing. We're trying to understand what Jesus is teaching his disciples and us today. Secondly, notice the contrast.

[ 22 : 54 ] So there's first a connection. He connects his disciples' minds with something, an experience that happened to them in the past where they were commanded not to take anything as they go out in Jesus' name and they didn't lack for anything.

So he connects them with that and then he makes a contrast. And so what Jesus says next, I believe, really is a crucial key that will help us unlock the meaning of this passage. Verse 36, look at it. Then he said to them, but now. That means he's about to make a contrast. But now. He's about to say everything is about to change. This is the way it was before. But disciples, now that's going to change.

Something's coming. Something's going to happen that's going to change everything. But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it. Got money? Take it with you. You're going to need it.

[ 24 : 05 ] Use it. Use it wisely. And if you have a knapsack, take that. Take your backpack, all the things you need to take with you, all your necessities and clothing, take that with you.

And he who has no sword, then he adds this on the end of it, and this is the troubling part for us. He who has a sword, let him sell his garment, that would be his outer coat, and buy one.

Buy a sword. Now, I want to try to get you to put aside, first of all, put aside this question about the sword for a moment.

See, that's what we're focusing on, the sword, wondering how that fits in here, and why Jesus would instruct them to buy swords and such. Just kind of put that very narrow focus aside for a moment, and you would have to admit that clearly Jesus' primary concern here is to present an important contrast between the way things were in the past, and the way how they're going to be very shortly in the future.

Jesus is leaving very soon. His crucifixion, his resurrection, his ascension back to heaven is coming.

[ 25 : 38 ] Coming very soon. and the disciples must be ready for the change that is about to take place. And so no longer can they assume that God will miraculously provide for them.

They can't just assume that, and neither can we assume that. Now they must work with their hands. They must toil, they must work, they must serve, as Paul did, remember?

Paul was a tentative. And so no more multiplying of little boys' sack lunches. There will be no more pulling money out of a fish's mouth to pay the taxes.

There will be no more turning rocks into bread, even though that's something Jesus did after his resurrection. But all that's going to come to an end. And no longer should they expect popularity with the people.

That's about to change dramatically. And so that translates over to us that we should not assume popularity with the world. We would like to have that. We wish we had that. We think we ought to have that.

[ 26 : 53 ] We're just loving people and great people and why wouldn't the world love us. And they did love the disciples while they were walking with Jesus before Jesus went to the cross.

But all that's going to change. Followers of Jesus will be hated and persecuted. They will be. You know, there is a parallel to this in the Old Testament.

Just compare, if you would, just think about this. Compare the condition of the disciples before and after Jesus' ascension back into heaven. Compare that with the condition of Israel before and after they entered into the promised land.

It really is a good example. Now think about it. Before Israel entered into the promised land, God miraculously fed them from heaven, didn't he?

Manna. And before they entered into the promised land, God miraculously led them with a pillar of fire and cloud. And before they entered into the promised land, God miraculously protected them from their enemies.

[ 28 : 02 ] But from the time they entered into the promised land, they had to work, they had to toil, they had to fight, they had to provide for their needs, they had to do whatever was necessary with the resources that God gave them.

Do you see? This is what the text is about. But now, see, that's the key. between the cross of Christ and the triumphal return of Christ, 2,000 years now and counting, God's people will work for their keep.

God's people will suffer for their faith. God's people will fight for their lives, to take up the sword if need be, to protect life and limb and family and home and nation.

that's the way it's going to be. It has been for now 2,000 years and will continue to be until Jesus comes again. It's a reality. Now, in case you're misunderstanding me, this in no way negates faith. And in no way does it negate the fact that God does protect his people and love his people and provide for his people and God blesses his people. He certainly does all of that.

[ 29 : 18 ] But I like how J.C. Ryle, and I want to quote him. I like how he speaks to this. Now, listen to this very carefully. The general significance of this verse appears to be a caution.

A caution against the fanatical notion that diligence in the use of one's resources is somehow carnal. You understand what he's saying?

The fanatical notion that the diligence in the use of resources is somehow carnal, and it's a sinful dependence upon the flesh.

And he goes on and says, to my mind, the whole verse supplies an argument against the strange notions maintained by some in the present day who tell us that making provision for our families is wrong, and ensuring our lives is wrong, and collecting money for religious societies is wrong, and studying for the work of the ministry is wrong, and taking part in civil government is wrong, and supporting police and standing armies and courts of law is wrong.

It's a fanatical view, he says. Now, he says, I respect the conscientiousness of those who maintain these opinions, but I am entirely, utterly unable, rather, to reconcile them with our Lord's language here in this verse.

[ 30 : 44 ] And this, by the way, from a guy who wrote back in the 1800s, a long time ago. And now you're still thinking, what about this sword? What about the sword?

I mean, what about Jesus telling them to buy a sword? That's really the sticking point here, isn't it? Not that we have any problem, necessarily, you know, here in Oklahoma, where you can carry a firearm concealed and do that legally.

We don't have any problem with carrying around swords. But what does Jesus mean here? It seems to be a contradiction. And that is my third point, third thing to notice in the passage. The contradiction.

The contradiction. There is an apparent contradiction. Verse 36, again, He who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

And this poses an apparent contradiction. That is a contradiction with scripture itself.

[ 31 : 48 ] And more immediately, contradiction was something Jesus says a little later in this chapter. And to see this contradiction, let's see what happens later in the chapter.

Remember Jesus and his disciples, they're in the garden of Gethsemane. This comes after. Very shortly, they're going to be going there. And so here they are.

Later in the chapter, they're in the garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives. And in verse 47, you have the chapter there in front of you. Look at verse 47. Luke records this. And while he was still speaking, behold, a multitude.

This is a huge crowd of people. And he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them. That is, he was leading this crowd. Leading them to Jesus, right?

And he drew near to Jesus to kiss him. That was the prearranged signal for the guards. That's the guy you want to arrest.

[ 32 : 57 ] All right? That's what Luke tells us here in verse 47. Now, if we were to look at Matthew's account, Matthew tells us that the crowd was armed. Armed with swords and clubs.

That's what Matthew tells us. So here's this huge crowd of Jews who've come and they're armed. Swords.

Clubs. And then John tells us that there was a detachment of soldiers also. Quite large one. And they, of course, he says, and we would assume they would be carrying weapons.

Can you imagine? And all of this to arrest one man. You know, one carpenter from Nazareth. And then, look at verse 49. When those around him, that would be the disciples, saw what was going to happen, what was going to happen, they were going to arrest Jesus.

They said to him, they said to Jesus, Lord, shall we strike with the sword? Oh, we've got these swords, remember. Shall we use them now?

[ 34 : 07 ] And, of course, not waiting for an answer, verse 50, and one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. And who do you suppose was so bold and reckless?

Who was it? Well, Luke doesn't tell us, does it? But it was Peter. And we don't have to guess about that, John does tell us. John 18, verse 10, Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.

That was Malchus. Peter did it. But now, do you remember what happened or how Jesus responded? The Bible says he healed the servant's ear, right?

I guess he picked that bloody ear off the ground and brushed it off a little bit maybe and stuck it back on the guy's head. Healed him.

Good as new. It was a miracle. You remember that, don't you? But what did he say to Peter? Well, in Luke's gospel, he said, permit even this.

[ 35 : 20 ] That's how it's translated in the New King James. We're thinking, what? Permit even this. And really, it's quite simple. The idea is, let them do what they've come to do. They've come to arrest me, let them do it.

Don't fight them, don't stop them. Permit this. But Matthew records a little bit more of what Jesus said after Peter whacked off the servant's ear.

In Matthew 26 and verse 52, he said this, put your sword back in its place. Jesus said to him, that is Peter, we know it's Peter, he said to him, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

Now, wait a minute. Does that seem like a contradiction to you? Jesus had just told each of his disciples that if they didn't have a sword, sell their coat and buy one.

Alright? Go buy one. It makes it sound pretty urgent. But now, the first time Peter uses the sword, Jesus rebukes him.

[ 36 : 32 ] He said, put it away. He said, if you're going to draw the sword, expect to die. Expect to die by the sword. By the way, he would have, literally.

If he had kept on whacking, they would have done away with Peter. He'd probably done away with Jesus too. Prematurely before the cross. But the principle, he said, put it away.

Those who draw the sword, die by the sword. So, just what did Jesus expect them to do with their swords? Huh? Open letters? Clean their fingernails?

Some other disgusting thing? What? What are they supposed to do with them? Go out and buy one, but don't use it. it's a contradiction of what seems to be a contradiction.

But, listen, many times in Scripture you have what appear to be contradictions and in a sense they're purposeful. It causes you to look a little closer, think a little harder, say, well, it can't mean that.

[ 37 : 42 ] There can't be a contradiction, so I've got to figure this out. Pray about it and study over it. Because Jesus would never ever contradict himself, would he? No, he wouldn't.

And so, when we see what appears to be a contradiction in something Jesus has said or taught, then we need to look deeper.

We don't want to make the wrong conclusion about what Jesus is meaning here like the disciples did. They misunderstood.

They misunderstood, and that's what verse 38 is all about. I know it doesn't seem like it when you look at it on the surface, but Jesus is actually telling them in verse 38, you guys just don't get it. Verse 38, so they said, Lord, look, here are two swords. and he said to them, it is enough. Really? [ 38 : 51 ] Two swords would be enough? Two swords? Just two? That's enough? I mean, do you really think that two swords would be enough to take a stand against a whole contingent of Roman guards and an angry mob of armed people?

Everybody has swords and clubs and all kinds of weaponry, whatever they had available in those days. Maybe some of them brought shovels. You think two swords would be enough. So that can't be what he means. Because it's impossible. See, here's what we ought to understand. It is enough. When Jesus said it is enough, he's not referring to the swords. He's referring to the disciples' talk. what they're saying. In effect, enough with that talk, that kind of talk.

Guys, you have completely missed what I was saying. Well, you know, so he just leaves it there. And they go on from there and really they're going to discover what he means later. [ 40 : 06 ] and they're going to understand the principle, really not until Pentecost. The Holy Spirit dwells and gives them understanding.

That's enough, enough of that. I'm done with that, that point of instruction. You don't get it, you don't understand it, you will by and by, but let's just go on, let's move on.

See, the disciples were taking Jesus' words about the swords literally. And Jesus meant to be taken figurative.

Figurative. Verse 36 is a, is proverbial language. It's like a proverb. He who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack, and he who has a sword, let him sell his garment and buy it. That's proverbial. Proverbial language. That's exactly how they would put something like this in this language, in this culture, to speak a proverbial saying.

[ 41 : 16 ] It's proverbial, it's symbolical. The money bag, the knapsack, and the sword are symbols of human resources.

Guys, you've not had to have those while you've been with me, but I'm leaving, and now you're going to need them, and you're going to use them. Human resources. You must not expect constant miracles to be worked on your behalf.

Again, and I'm sorry to quote J.C. Ryle so much, but he just puts it like I can't put it, so why not just tell you how he put it?

he said, until our Savior comes again, we're to make a diligent use of everything God has given to us. We're not to expect miracles to be performed to save us from trouble and labor.

God's going to let us go through trouble and labor. We're not to expect bread to fall from heaven into our mouths if we refuse to work for it. we're not to expect difficulties and enemies to be overcome if we will not wrestle and struggle and take pains.

[ 42 : 36 ] Let us labor and toil and give and speak and act and write for Christ as if all depended on our exertion.

And yet, let us never forget that success depends entirely on God's blessing. Then he closes by putting those two things together.

Listen to this. To expect success by our own purse and sword, that is to expect success by our own resources, is pride and it is self-righteousness.

But to expect success without purse and sword, without resources, using resources that God has given us, that's presumption and fanaticism.

see the balance. By the way, what is our sword? Yeah, I mean, one sense we could argue that, yeah, I'm going to get to that, we could argue that we should take up literal swords.

[ 43 : 44 ] You know, maybe not swords, but guns, whatever. That we're going to need to protect ourselves. Anything wrong with that? probably not among anyone in this crowd.

If some have a problem with that, I'd like to take that right away. Well, there is such a thing as taking up physical swords, to protect life, to protect family, to protect nation.

Firm believer in it. But, you know, it certainly means the word of God. Pat back there was raising up her Bible.

The sword of the spirit. Even though I don't think that Jesus is necessarily saying that here. Because the disciples have already been using the sword of the spirit.

They've been taught to do that from the beginning. So this is not something that's new. Something changed. What's changing now is that they're going to need swords like they never have needed them before.

[ 44 : 49 ] And so for us the word of God is certainly our sword, our testimony of faith in Christ and what Christ has done for us. Our testimony is a sword. Our prayer is a sword.

We could name a number of spiritual disciplines that God has provided for us. It's resources that in some sense are swords. They certainly do battle against the flesh and do battle against the principalities of wickedness present in our world today.

On the spiritual side. But I would add also that our citizenship is a sword that God has given to them. Did you know that Paul used his citizenship as a sword on one occasion?

They were going to arrest him and he said, hold on a minute, I'm a Roman citizen, you can't do that. That was a sword. It was a sword, the sword of the government.

We still have that resource in this country. There are many of God's people in other countries who don't have that resource, but we have it here. We should use it. Our citizenship, our nation's laws, that's a big part of why we're making some changes in our bylaws, so that we can be protected by the laws of the land concerning certain issues and cultural things that are happening.

[ 46 : 16 ] using it as a sword. It's a resource that God has made available to us. And Jesus said you need to use it. Our citizenship, our privilege to vote, is a sword.

We're not killing anybody with it. But it's a resource that we have, that we're to use. We could go on and on, and I think this is what Jesus means for us to get here.

A change is coming for his disciples. We're part of, have been immersed in that change that the disciples are now very soon going to be introduced to.

It's going to be strange to them, new to them. It's not strange or new to us. We're part of that. It's the change that has taken place between the two comings of Christ. And so Jesus says, my kingdom begins with swords before scepters and why.

And that leads me to a fourth and final thing I want you to see in the passage, and that is the confirmation Jesus makes. The confirmation is the confirmation of prophecy concerning him.

[ 47 : 32 ] And the confirmation of that prophecy concerning Jesus is what will bring about this change. Verse 37, he says, for I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in me.

Actually, he could say very shortly it will be. And then he quotes from that great messianic prophecy in Isaiah 53, verse 12 specifically, he said, and he was numbered with the transgressors.

He says, this will be fulfilled very shortly. I will be numbered with the transgressors. And it means more than just that he's going to be crucified between two criminals.

It means he's going to become a transgressor for us. Numbered among the transgressors. Now, we're pretty familiar with Isaiah chapter 53, where primarily we remember the first part of it, not necessarily this verse that Jesus quotes, but in quoting this verse, he is really referring to that entire chapter and really on into the preceding chapter, chapter 52, and it's all messianic.

It's prophetic of the coming of Messiah and what will happen when he comes. And you're familiar with it. Who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground.

[ 48 : 55 ] He has no form or comeliness, and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him.

You remember this chapter, don't you? We often read it around Christmas time and also Easter time. He was despised and we did not esteem him. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, and yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

That's what the Jews believed of Jesus. Well, he deserved what he got. God did this to him. He's a transgressor. He's a criminal. But he was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace so that we could have peace was upon him. And by his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned. You know this chapter, chapter 53, and you get all the way down to the end of the chapter, and this is where we have the quote that's found in our passage.

[ 50 : 05 ] He was numbered with the transgressor. It's great messianic prophecy, and there's not any scholar, any Christian scholar today, that is Bible-believing Christian scholar today, who would deny that this is a messianic prophecy.

And yet, I want you to understand that if you were to ask the disciples at this particular time in their lives, if you were to ask them upon what they were basing their messianic hopes, they would not have even thought of this chapter.

In fact, to them, this chapter was not messianic, as it is not to most Jews today. Not messianic, and why is that? Because they're not looking for a suffering savior, they're looking for a triumphant king to come.

They thought he had come. So, you know, you're going to ask them, you know, is he the Messiah, and what do you base that on? They're not going to go back to Isaiah 53. That didn't enter into their thinking.

That wasn't a part of their theology. That wasn't messianic at all. But it is, and Jesus tells us here that it is. It is a prophecy concerning the coming of Christ that describes just how he will come the first time, and therefore why the kingdom is manifested in the way it is now, and will continue to manifest itself until Jesus comes again.

[ 51 : 32 ] And so, here Jesus uses the prophecy in a particular way, and it explains why things are about to change for the disciples, why they will be rejected, hated, why they will have to work now hard for everything, why they will have to spend resources, because until Jesus comes again, the world will always view true followers of Christ as criminals.

you know that? Until Jesus comes, the world will always view true followers of Christ as criminals, putting them in jail, putting them to death.

Why is that? because to the world, Jesus was a transgressor.

He was numbered among them. And so, as Jesus said, this is how my kingdom will begin. This is what being a part of my kingdom will be like until I come again.

Hard work, pain, suffering, affliction, ridicule, hate, persecution, death, martyrdom, all these things. For the things concerning me have an end.

[ 53 : 01 ] That is, they have a fulfillment. You're part of that. So it's crosses before crowns. Trials before triumphs.

Swords before scepters. He didn't say crosses instead of crowns, or instead of triumphs, or instead of scepters. That comes later.

That is, the best is yet to come. Isn't it? You know, that's one of the things that distinguishes our God from Satan.

I've heard Adrian Rogers say many times, did you know that the devil has no happy old people?

Have you ever heard him say that? The devil has no happy old people.

And why is that? Well, because the devil always promises the best first and then the worst last. God always promises the worst first, the best last, the best yet to come.

[ 54 : 10 ] Even the worst you could experience will not even compare to it. It's an upside-down game. The best is to the best to best best to!

best is best! The is