

Series: John

Title: Put Up Thy Sword

Text: John 18: 10-11

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**John 18: 1: When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. 2: And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. 3: Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4: Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5: They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.**

Why are we given this detail that Judas stood with them? Among other reasons, Judas had told the soldiers he would kiss the Lord so they would know who to arrest. But Judas did not recognize the Lord. If he had, when Christ said whom seek ye, he would have said, "You." But two times, Judas did not say that.

**John 18: 6: As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground. 7: Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.**

It is probably at this point that Judas stepped forward and kissed him. As the officers came forward to arrest him, Luke says the apostles asked, 'Lord shall we smite with the sword?' But Peter did not wait for an answer. Here is our text.

**John 18: 10: Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. 11: Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?**

The apostle Peter meant well. He probably did this to show the Lord that he would not deny the Lord and was ready to die with the Lord as he had said. *"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* Then the other gospel tells us that the Lord reached forth and healed the soldiers ear.

Why did the Lord Jesus tell Peter to put up his sword? The Lord is not forbidding a believer from possessing a sword or a gun or protecting our families and homes from criminals. He is not forbidding a believer from joining the military and fighting for his country. Some use this passage to make that claim. But this has to do with salvation.

**Proposition:** The work of our Lord in redeeming, regenerating, calling and establishing his people in his kingdom is not by carnal means but a work of God in Christ in Spirit through the preaching of the gospel of Christ and him crucified.

Earthly, carnal kingdoms are established by carnal means. The Roman empire was founded in blood. All vain religions of this world are founded and maintained by the sword and carnal means. Even earthly Israel was established by the carnal sword against the Canaanites. But Israel after the flesh was a kingdom of this world. The Hebrew writer says their priests were made after the order of a carnal commandment. God's promises to them were earthly promises in an earthly land. So when Christ came the first time, they were still looking for an earthly king to establish an earthly kingdom. They dreamed Christ would exalt their nation above all others. But Christ's kingdom is spiritual, produced by God using spiritual means that he ordained. This is one reason the Lord told Peter, *"Put up thy sword into the sheath."* After this,

John 18: 36: Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

**THE CARNAL CANNOT FIND OUT THE SPIRITUAL**

Unregenerate, carnal man do not and cannot understand spiritual things and certainly not by carnal means. We see that here.

**John 18: 3: Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.**

The chief priest and Pharisees, along with Judas and this band of officers, thought Christ came to set up a political kingdom in this world. That is why they came with carnal weapons. They thought the Lord Jesus would put up a fight to defend his kingdom with the sword. But the Lord Jesus gave himself to these men and permitted them to bind him and take him away. Nor did they recognize Christ by these lanterns and torches. Carnal, unregenerate man does not understand spiritual things and cannot know them by carnal means. Christ went to them and revealed himself. That is the only way they knew it was him.

Carnal man may (and has) formed many civil establishments they call churches. They use every carnal means imaginable: ceremonies and programs and activities man can see so as to attract and entertain and keep men interested. They give their ministers pompous titles and attract men with their qualifications. Carnal religion takes the offense out of the gospel. They do all this in the name of making religion respectable and palatable to carnal man. They do it so that they are not persecuted and disdained by the masses as being unlearned and ignorant like those rough fishermen of Galilee who Christ made apostles.

But carnal man cannot know spiritual things because they are spiritually discerned by the Holy Spirit alone. These men came with lanterns and torches. Pink commented, "What an anomaly! Seeking out the Light of the world with torches and lanterns!" But the Lord made it so they could not recognize who he was like those on the road to Emmaus. Even after Christ declared "I AM" and they fell backward, when Christ asked them the second time whom they sought, they still did not say, "You." Again they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

What is God teaching by this? Carnal man cannot know Christ by carnal means. Christ is the Light. But here we have an example of what John wrote in chapter 1:

John 1: 5: And the Light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

These men illustrate the warning Christ gave in

Isaiah 50: 11: Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

These men illustrate how that attacks upon the Truth of God are made by men using artificial light and carnal weapons. Carnal man uses the light of reason and carnal sight and carnal wisdom. And when that fails carnal man resorts to brute force. But in order for a sinner to discern the Lord Jesus and believe Christ is the righteousness of his people, God himself must shine into the heart. Christ the Light must give light.

2 Corinthians 4: 3: But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

## **WE MUST USE ONLY THE MEANS GOD HAS ORDAINED**

The Lord told Peter to put his sword up because God's people must not use carnal means but only the means God has ordained.

2 Corinthians 10:4: (The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.)

Zechariah 4:6: Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

Christ is revealed by the power of God the Holy Spirit, by the Sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Christ reveals himself in the heart through the preaching of the gospel.

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Someone pointed out that using a carnal sword, Peter cut off the soldiers ear. But on the day of Pentecost he used the gospel sword and the Lord pricked men in the heart. In our text, Christ healed the man's ear. At Pentecost he made believers every whit whole.

In order to give God all the glory and man none, God chose the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. It is why the message is Christ and him crucified. Our message is how God sent his Son as a Man, who laid down his life on a bloody cross in place of his elect people, to manifest God's righteousness and justify his people.

It is why the Lord chose the apostles from among the basest, lowest class of men: fishermen. These were uneducated men instead of royalty or men skilled in war or academics. They were not politicians or philosophers or even men eloquent in preaching.

Carnal religion in our day, if they did not know the apostles, would be ashamed to associate with the apostles if they walked among us. And carnal religion would certainly reject the gospel they preached. But not when God shines the light into the sinners heart. Paul said,

2 Corinthians 4:7...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

## **CHRIST OVERCAME BY MEEKNESS**

The Lord told Peter to put up his sword because Christ overcame the world by meekness. Meekness is submission to God. The Lord Jesus overcame this world, and his people in him, by Christ obeying the Father and willingly drinking the cup his Father gave unto him.

**John 18: 11: Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?**

Christ must be the willing substitute. That is why they could not know Christ and arrest him without Christ first revealing himself and giving himself to them. He is fulfilling all the old testament pictures. Christ's willingness to lay down his life was typified in all the old testament offerings where God required they be made willingly.

He could have easily delivered himself. At his name they had just fallen backwards. But the Son of God took flesh to fulfill the will of the Father, to fulfill the law and the prophets, to declare God righteousness as he bore our sin and curse and justified his people by his obedience. In Matthew's gospel,

Matthew 26: 52: Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. 53: Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54: But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

This is why the Lord told Peter his desire to stop him from going to the cross was devilish.

Matthew 16: 21: From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22: Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23: But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

How did Christ overcome the world? By meekness. He submitted to God his Father in faith and love. This is not the way of the carnal mind. Judas and the soldiers did not expect our Redeemer to give himself into their hands to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. But Christ believed the Father would fulfill ever covenant promise made to him so he submitted to the Father to drink the cup the Father gave him. He did it that he might fulfill his covenant obligations and highly exalt his Father. He drank it that he might redeem his people and make us the righteousness of God in him. Christ conquered satan, sin, and death for his people using no carnal weapons, not resisting, but in meekness trusting his Father in love to God and to his elect.

When we are born of his Spirit, he makes us meek. He makes us bow and trust Christ as our only Righteousness. He makes us meek to submit to Christ to save us and to save others. He makes us submit to Christ so that we use only the means God has ordained as we send forth his gospel.

When rejected at Corinth and accused of being a false prophet and walking in the flesh, Paul said, "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ..." Moses is the meekest man on the earth, why? It is because every time he was opposed, he hit his face before God, depending entirely upon the Lord to save him and his people. That is meekness. That is what Christ did in submitting to the Father. That is what he works in his people so that we submit to him.

So Christ bids us use no sword except the gospel. He makes us meek to believe on Christ our own selves. He makes us meek to preach and bear witness of him and his accomplished redemption. He makes us meek to pray to him with all dependence upon Christ, asking him to continue to save and protect us personally. He makes us meek to ask him to bless his word and make it effectual in the hearts of his people by the Holy Spirit. To use any other means or to force sinners would be the power of sinful flesh and nothing spiritual is accomplished by the arm of the flesh of man. It is devilish. The apostle John, the loving prophet, when Samaritans rejected Christ, asked him, "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

Luke 9: 55:L But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56: For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

Had our Lord used carnal weapons and carnal means then his people would have went about piercing dissenters with the carnal sword. We would break down idols and burn meeting houses. We would impose a tax, forcing professing believers to contribute to the support of the church. Many in religion have done these things. But we never read of any such thing in the gospels or in the acts of the apostles. Those things are done by those who do not know the Christ of God. God's people are made to believe on Christ and to preach Christ. We trust Christ to provide through the generosity of those who behold how that Christ who was rich became poor and made us rich by his grace.

Truth is, just as the kingdom of God is spiritual, so our enemies are spiritual. So by the Holy Spirit we trust the Captain of our salvation and depend entirely upon him to make us more than conquerors.

Ephesians 6: 10: Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. 13: Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14: Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15: And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16: Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17: And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints

**Amen!**