**When Darkness Reigns**

Luke 22:47-53

Key Verse 53b

“But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”

There’s a certain term used in literary and theater arts. The term is situational archetypes. These are situations that appear over and over in books and movies—and even video games. Can anyone guess the most commonly used situational archetype? **The battle between good and evil!**

When we study the Bible we learn that there is a real battle between good and evil. And, when we become a believer we became an actual player in this battle. Ephesians 6:12 characterizes this battle in the following way: It states, *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

This world is under the power of darkness. Everywhere we look we see it—deception, injustice, anger, frustration, hatred, violence, terrorism, poverty, disasters, sickness and disease, and death, not to mention the darkness within us—the influence of our sinful nature. The question is: How can we overcome the power of darkness in this world? In today’s passage, Jesus faced the start of his darkest hour. He was arrested. He would soon have to suffer many things—including rejection, crucifixion and death. Yet Jesus was not overcome by the darkness of this world, but overcome it, and he revealed the light and glory of God in his life. Through today’s passage, let’s pray to overcome the power of darkness in this world, through faith in God and intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ.

Let’s pray …

**We can overcome the power of darkness when we accept the love of God, when we have the peace of God inside of us, and when we know Jesus as the light of the world and participate in the life-giving work of God.**

First, we can overcome the power of darkness when we accept the love of God.

In the previous passage, Jesus prayed. Through his prayer he put his trust in the love of God the Father and submitted himself to God’s will. In this way, Jesus prepared himself for the darkness that was coming against him.

**Look at verses 47-48**, *“While he was still speaking a crowd came up. The man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him,* ***48****but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”*

Jesus loved Judas. He chose Judas as one of the twelve. He invited him into the fellowship of God’s words. He trained him just as he did the others. Jesus loved Judas. But Jesus knew that Judas loved money. Even so, he allowed Judas to have the responsibility of treasurer in his ministry. Jesus knew that, as it says in John 12:6, that*“… as keeper of the money bag, [Judas] used to help himself to what was put into it.”* But Jesus never directly pointed out his sin. Instead, Jesus bore Judas with the hope that he could one day repent. He waited for Judas to open his heart to accept God’s love.

Sadly though, Judas never repented. He never accepted the love of God Jesus showed him. In the end, Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Someone said, “It’s scary what a smile can hide.” Evidently, it’s also scary what a kiss can hide. A kiss is supposed to be an expression of love and affection. When a husband kisses his wife before leaving the house, he reinforces his commitment of love to his wife. How then can that husband turn around and cheat on his wife? This is essentially what Judas did. Here we can learn that when Judas betrayed Jesus, he betrayed his love.

At that point, Jesus didn’t even have to speak to Judas. He could have just looked at him in utter distain. But instead he asked him, *“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”* This question reveals Jesus enduring love for Judas, even after Judas betrayed him.

**Luke 6:5 reads**, *“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”*

When Judas did not repent of his hidden sin, instead of the love of God the love of darkness grew inside of him. **John 3:19 reads**, *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”* The darkness in Judas became the environment for Satan to work in his life. When the time came, Satan entered him and Judas sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

We must decide to accept the love of God, rather than compromise with our sin.

Second, we can overcome the power of darkness in this world when we have the peace of God.

We would like to see world peace. But as believers we know that there is no real solution for world peace. For example, since 1967 there have been ongoing peace negotiations in the Middle East, between Israel and Palestine. Twelve separate times, the United States government has helped to mediate the negotiations. But we are still no closer to peace in the Middle East today. In order to have peace, we need to personally experience the peace of God.

How then can we have the peace of God? One way is to come to God in prayer. **Philippians 4:6-7 says**, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* ***7****And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

In the previous passage, Jesus prayed. As a result, he had the peace of God and was prepared to face darkness that was coming at him. But, how about his disciples?

**Look at verses 40-51**, “*When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” 50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.”*

Jesus’ disciples didn’t have the peace of God in their hearts. When they faced the dark situation, they acted out violently. Back in verse 32 of this chapter, Jesus told his disciples, *“… if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.”* So, Jesus’ disciples were permitted to have swords. Owning a sword required the disciples to exercise greater responsibility. “With Great power, comes great responsibility! Who said that? Uncle Ben. Actually, the Bible speaks of the same principle in **Luke 12:48** which says in part, *“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”*

This is relevant, because the more we have, the more we are likely to feel anxious and the more we are likely to be tempted. In the previous passage Jesus had warned his disciples, “Pray so that you will not fall into temptation” (40, 46). While anxiety and fear can cause us to fall into temptation, the peace of God guards our heart and mind. We can overcome the darkness of this world when we have God’ peace inside of us.

Third, we can overcome the power of darkness in this world when we know Jesus as the light of the world and participate in the life-giving work of God.

It has been said that the best defense is a good offence. Military experts like George Washington, Mao Zedong, and Sun Tzu have generally acknowledged the truth of this adage in the use of strategic warfare. Most chess experts also advocate an active rather then passive strategy in order to constantly pressure ones opponent. But what does a good offence look like in Jesus Christ?

**Look at verse 51 again**. A good offence in Jesus Christ is not to fight back against our enemies directly, but to serve suffering souls. When the servant of the high priest had his right ear cut off, Jesus touched it and healed him. Just because Jesus acted in peace, doesn’t mean that he was weak. Jesus demonstrated his power by submitting to God’s will to serve and to save and heal others.

When we focus on actively serving others in the name of Jesus, we can be empowered to overcome the darkness of this world.

**Look at verses 52-53**, *“Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs?* ***53****Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”*

The religious leaders carried out a covert operation to arrest Jesus, because they were afraid to do so publically. Jesus called them out on this because it demonstrated their deceptive and sneaky ways of doing things. Jesus, on the other hand did everything out in the open. He did everything in the light, for all to see. He had nothing to hide.

While darkness reigned in the hearts and lives of the corrupt religious leaders, the light of God ruled in Jesus. In fact, Jesus himself is the light of the world. **In John 8:12**, Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

When Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World," it was a statement about his glory, but it was also more than that. It was about what he came to do. Jesus says of himself in **Luke 4:18-19**, *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

This is what characterized Jesus’ life on earth. Essentially his life was about bringing life to people. **John 1:4** describes Jesus this way, *“In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”* He brought life. This means he brought hope and restoration to a hopeless and broken world through the forgiveness of sins. We can overcome the darkness of this world when we accept Jesus as the light of the world. When we know Jesus as the light of the world, we can also be a bearer of his light. We can shine the light of Jesus to others in this dark world.