

The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: Healing Malchus' Ear (Part One)

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Forerunner, "Bible Study," July-August 2016

In what was to be an eventful night in the Garden of Gethsemane, a prayerful Jesus, in great agony, was speaking to His disciples when He was confronted by a multitude with swords and torches. They had come from the chief priest to arrest Him. Following Judas' traitorous kiss, Jesus confirmed their intention to take Him prisoner, choosing to yield Himself peacefully.

However, Peter was not willing to let his Master be hauled off without a fight. He rashly cut off the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest, prompting Jesus to restore the man's ear miraculously. This merciful act would be His last miracle before being crucified (Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-50; Luke 22:47-53; John 18:1-12).

1. What character flaws does Peter's deed expose? Matthew 26:51-54.

Comment: The suddenness of Peter's reaction reveals a lack of forethought and patience. Just before his action, he had asked Christ, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" However, he did not wait for an answer (Luke 22:49-50). His abruptness reflects that he was moved more by his passion—his emotions—instead of upright, reasoned thought and godly principle. Such ungoverned passion rarely leads to righteous action.

Pride is also evident in his action. Perhaps he was even trying to impress his fellow disciples. Peter had boasted earlier that he would remain faithful to Christ even if the others were to stumble (Matthew 26:33). Initially, his strike may have appeared to be sparked by a courageous and noble faith, but it was wrongly motivated. It actually manifested more vainglory than faithful

courage or nobility. Peter's carnality echoes the approach of many nominal Christians, inspired more by the desire to outshine others instead of a sincere passion to honor and glorify God.

2. Is not doing the will of God ever justified? Mark 14:46.

Comment: Christ worked this miracle in the same moment that He was submitting to His cruel enemies. In addition, on the heels of His agonizing prayers (characterized by His bloody perspiration; Luke 22:44), one of His own disciples, Judas, had given Him the kiss of betrayal, a prelude to the coming horrors of His arrest, trial, and crucifixion—the cruelest trial ever suffered by a man. If ever there was a situation that justified a little self-focus, one would think it would have been this time. Yet, amid all of this, Jesus chose to show mercy to His captors and to glorify His Father by submitting to His will.

Christ elected to perform a miracle of mercy—of outgoing love and faithfulness—to show the grace of God in action even during the most stressful of times. This shames us all! We find so many excuses for not serving God as we should. For the slightest reason, some skip church services, neglect to come to the aid of others, or refuse to help with the needs of the church. If any Christian thinks he has problems sufficient to exempt him from serving God, he had better be sure his problems are greater than those that faced our Savior at the time of this miracle.

3. What part does unbelief play in Jesus' arrest? Luke 22:52-53.

Comment: This tragic situation shows unbelief to be destructive, ugly, and cruel. Christ possessed all the power to serve—to heal and to bring peace—yet He was seized and bound to suppress His good works. He lived, died, and rose again so that one day He could fulfill His own inspired words from Isaiah 61:1: “He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” Yet, his captors and eventual slayers, in their ungodly malice, could see His

good words and works only as threats and Him only as an enemy, a man to shame, wound, and kill.

People are no better today. Christians are prohibited from praying in many government buildings or at public gatherings and are sometimes prevented from speaking the truth because man's laws have, in effect, seized and bound such activity. The powers of darkness have influenced this world to hinder and persecute Christians just as Christ was.

Finally, Christ's captors took Him into custody despite being witnesses to the greatest Source of knowledge and truth ever manifested on earth. Foolishly thinking they were superior-minded to Christ and His disciples, these men's actions will forever be a shameful tribute to unbelief (Romans 1:18-22). Had they truly known Him and the truth He brought, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians 2:8).