

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT**

## **The arrest of Jesus, Monday of Holy Week**

### **Welcome**

Jesus is arrested. This is the moment when everything changes, the transition between freedom and captivity. Up to this point, there have been controversies, opposition and threats. And yet Jesus has still been free to continue His work of teaching and healing. But now threats become reality. From this point on He will never in a purely human sense be free again, His movements will always be circumscribed by the will of others.

But is this the end of Jesus' story or the beginning? It is the key transition between the powerful ministry of Jesus' life and the even more powerful ministry of Jesus' death. If the story of Jesus had ended immediately before His arrest what would we be left with? Immensely inspiring teaching, prophecy and healing? If this was the case we might admire but could we follow or be like Him? And yet Jesus is of course much more than a powerful teacher, prophet and healer. Jesus is our Saviour and it is through His death that He saves us from our sins. And through His death, resurrection and ascension He comes to live within us by His Holy Spirit. So we don't simply admire Jesus from the outside, rather He comes to live within us so that we too can share in His life and power.

Our movements too are constricted in this emergency. Outwardly, we may be able to do less than we could before. On the other hand, might this also be a time (as in Jesus' captivity) where we find that God does more in and through our lives than He ever did before?

## Scripture Passage

*Matthew 26: 47-56*

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him."

At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?"

At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.



*Gethsemane 1953*

## Thoughts from a Parishioner

A parishioner has offered the following thoughts on what Jesus' death means, reflecting on Judas' kiss and our need to forgive and be forgiven.

In what follows the words in bold are (with the exception of the final paragraph) drawn from scripture. The references are given in the endnotes.

**“How shall the scriptures be fulfilled?”** asks Jesus. Then during the Last Supper, **“Father, all things are possible...take away this cup from me”**. Finally, at the moment of truth the following day from the Cross, **“Father into thy hands I commend my spirit”**.<sup>1</sup>

The Jewish elders and Roman authorities contrived Jesus's death. It had to be of humiliation, gruesomely inflicted, guaranteeing finality and obliteration. It had to be public, an act of state terror and ultimate power-demonstration over subject peoples, for the greater good of the greater number. **“It is right”**, they said, **“that one man should die for the people?”**.<sup>2</sup>

At this acute and dramatic moment in the last 24 hours of Jesus's life, we too witness that he was born to die. Subtly and unknowingly, in this they who followed them into the Garden that evening, **“a great multitude with swords and with staves”**, were fulfilling God's design.<sup>3</sup>

But is there a connection between a kiss and a crucifixion? There is a terrible irony of the pre-arranged sign of love by which Judas would identify the man to be arrested and executed. **“Master, master”; and he kissed him**”. What had turned Judas away from Jesus? What expectations had he thought Jesus promised and been disappointed? Was it money, place in the hierarchy of the good, instant earthly gratification?<sup>4</sup>

Like Judas, living a life of common sense and intuition as we have to do, it is quite difficult to see the meaning of God's service as being of love and self-sacrifice, in **“spirit and in truth”**. Jesus said earlier in the evening, **“I came not to judge the world but to save the world”**. The miracle enacted on the servant of **“touching his ear and healed him”**, was part of the drama of events that evening.<sup>5</sup>

**“I have sinned”** said Judas, when he realised *what he had done*. Why should Jesus not forgive him when **God's will had to be done**? Do we blame Judas in his betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane? Are we surprised? What of our own 'dark side'? We forgive our own mistakes easily enough, but are hugely hurt by others who let us down badly. Why do we so easily fail to forgive those who misuse us yet continue to accept Jesus's forgiveness?<sup>6</sup>

So they **“led Him away to crucify him”**. Jesus taught us in sayings, works and example to be counter-intuitive, willingly to suspend our belief that death must be ultimate, a victory over life. Death really isn't the end. **“The way, the truth and the life”** is here and in eternity, the fulfilment of **“faith, hope and love”**.<sup>7</sup>

So spiritual victory over death brings the ultimate meaning to life. We learn to live and to conquer death, through His betrayal by humankind. In life, with a true not a false kiss, forgiveness conquers everything. Jesus's **“end was His beginning”**. Spiritually it is our **“beginning”** too.<sup>8</sup>

### **Points for Prayers**

- God's work in our lives in this period of our isolation
- Our own need both to forgive and be forgiven
- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers
- For coronavirus testing to be rolled out with greater speed

- Funerals needing to take place under new restrictions with only family mourners.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

We pray that ‘we might live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us’ (Ephesians 5:2)

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 26:54, Mark 14:36 and Luke 23:46.

<sup>2</sup> John 11:50.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 26:47

<sup>4</sup> Mark 14:45.

<sup>5</sup> John 4:24, John 12:47, Luke 22:51.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 27:4

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 27:31, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 13:13, John 11:26, Mark 10:52, Luke 6:35 (in this context perhaps selflessness is to be interpreted as hope), Matthew 22:39.

<sup>8</sup> Words of Guillaume de Machaut, French clergyman, poet, composer.