

**The Arrest**  
**Mark 14:43-52**

It is acknowledged by everyone in this room that we live in a sinful and fallen world, and one of the effects of living in such a world that is in fact sinful and fallen is that you don't just see things that happen on the outside, things that are taking place that you look and observe from afar and think that's not right; it shouldn't be like that. But when those moments of maybe mistreatment or injustice take place, you not only see them from afar, but the reality is everyone in this room has had them happen to themselves. You yourself have, as you are a human being living on this planet, you have had those moments where you have been mistreated. You have been affected by this fallen world. You have had moments where someone has been unkind to you. Someone has deliberately or intentionally or unintentionally sinned against you. You felt that you've experienced that. Every one of us has been there and experienced this injustice, and it happens often, many times from even loved ones. The reality is it's not easy to respond to these moments especially when they come at you, when they're directed towards you, and all too often we fail. We fail. We view that the moment that someone mistreats us or sins against us, we now have license to sin in return. We respond in kind with the evil that has been demonstrated towards us.

We obviously know, and it doesn't take very long to look at God's Word and be reminded, that that is not okay; that is not the proper response for us. And we get that reminder this morning coming specifically from the life of Christ, coming from Jesus and how He gives us this example and model, once again, that we know we are not perfect, and we will never fully manifest this holiness, this righteousness in response to every sin against us. But we have the model before us in Christ and His response this morning. Let's look at our text, Mark 14:43-52; "And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.' And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not

seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.’ And they all left him and fled. And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.”

I know some of you are eager to get into verses 51 and 52 this morning to find out what that’s all about, but it is at the end of our text, so I’m going to have to let you kind of be on the edge of your seat there and waiting. Alright? So, as we do so often, we work through our passage so we’re not going to hop to that first. We’ll start at the beginning here in verse 43 which really comes off of, perfectly, where we were last time and what we covered. We now in verse 43 encounter this arrival because where we were last time really was those final moments. It was the cusp of it. Right? It was right on the edge where if there was a point where Jesus could pull back, if there was a point where Jesus could change His mind and decide never mind I’m not going to do this, it would’ve been last week. It would’ve been in this prayer time that He had in the Garden of Gethsemane. It would’ve been that time where He was wrestling, struggling with God and laboring in intensive prayer. And that’s what we saw. This happened for, really, an extended period of time and multiple times that He would come to God, and He would say if it’s at all possible let this cup of suffering, this cup of Your wrath, God, against sinful mankind, let that pass from Me so I don’t have to experience it. But of course, Jesus followed that up saying, “Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

And as that prayer time came to a close, we saw where Jesus landed. We saw that He basically exited that prayer time with a determination to in fact follow and obey and submit to His Father’s will. That’s what we saw in verse 42; “Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” This is Him saying not, “Rise, let us be going...” and run away and escape the situation. This was “Rise, let us be going...” to meet, to confront what is before us with His betrayers specifically Judas. That brings us to verse 43 where we have, “And immediately...” Jesus is right on time. He knows exactly what’s happening. He doesn’t just have the knowledge, He’s even in control of these events as they are unfolding before him; “And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas...” shows up. While He’s still saying these words to His disciples, while He is telling the eleven that it is time to meet the betrayer, the betrayer shows up. This is what takes place. Notice how Mark describes Judas for us. This is the last time we’re going to see him in the gospel account of Mark, but he says, “Judas came, one of the twelve...” as if

you might've forgotten which is so obvious. We know that Judas has been one of the twelve, and from the beginning of Jesus' ministry Judas was there, obviously "...one of the twelve..." one of the followers, one of the disciples who got to see what Jesus was doing and teaching.

Mark is reminding us, yes, that Judas. This is again how low and how heinous and how terrible this act is. This betrayal ranks up there and stands alone in terms of how terrible this is. He was "...one of the twelve..." and yet here he is returning to Jesus, not on the same team but now lined up against Jesus. Who does He come with? This crowd as the verse says, "...and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders." You notice a couple of things about this crowd. First, they're armed. They have weapons. Alright? It's an armed crowd that comes. They're "...a crowd with swords and clubs..." obviously intending to do some intimidation, and they intend to, very much, get compliance with their will. They will make sure that their demands are met when they come. They're coming to arrest Jesus, and they will carry that out. They come armed, but not just that; they're not just a crowd that comes with weapons, they're also a crowd that comes with authority because of who they are sent from. It's not just Judas showing up with some men that he found on the streets; this is a crowd that has come from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. These three groups were the same groups that we saw mentioned a little earlier in Passion Week when, really, they were the ones that made up the Sanhedrin. They're the three different components, the three different prime groups, that you would find that were the Jewish ruling authority. They were the ones that were kind of telling the people, leading the way in instruction and in even practice in Jerusalem, particularly in the region of Judea. They were the ones that went to Jesus and tried to trip Him up in public before everyone with their knowledge, and in fact it came back against them, and they were the ones that looked foolish and stupid. This group that then, after failing in public to make Jesus look foolish, they now resolve to a new plan of trying to deceive and win in private. It is this authorization; it is from this Jewish ruling authority that this crowd comes.

And when you look at it and you start to take into account the other gospels and what they say, you realize that this is an eclectic crowd. It's not just a bunch of people with weapons that the Jewish authorities said go. It's actually quite a mix. If you look at the reality of these Jewish authorities, because of their prominence and because of how they led the people in Judea

and Jerusalem and even in the temple precincts, they had the authority. They had temple guards. They had security guards. They had people that they could command and tell to go take care of something lest some situation arise and become more dangerous. They already had those temple guards at their disposal, and they could order them around and tell them what to do. So, without a doubt, this crowd contains those temple guards. But then, there's even more. If you listen to John 18:3, we learn that there's even Roman guards. John 18:3 says, "So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees..." There was a combination in this group. It's not just those temple officers. It's not just the temple guards that the chief priests could order around, but it's also this band of soldiers. This is coming from the Romans so now there's Roman soldiers in this mix as well. And then Luke tells us that it's not just the Jewish authorities sending this crowd, but some of them even coming themselves as Luke 22:52 states, "Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him..." So, there was even chief priests there. There was this Jewish ruling class and authority that come themselves. There's their temple guards, their own security that they bring, and then, there's even Roman soldiers that they bring.

This is a pretty big crowd if you think about it, and it's quite a mix. How did they assemble such a crowd? How are they able to do so? Specifically, how did they gain Roman soldiers? Because if we think about it, you think Rome's in control of the land, but they're letting the Jewish people live there. So, why would Rome care about this at all? Well, the reality is if the Jewish authorities tell the Roman authorities, you know, we got this rebel over here, and he's causing a stir, and he's going to really mix things up, and it's not going to look pretty, pretty soon. And that's going to look bad on you, the Romans, because if the Roman rulers that were there, if the governors of the land were there, and there was this rebellion taking place under their control and authority, they would automatically get removed from power. And so, it was in the best interest of the Roman governors and the Roman rulers to listen to these Jewish rulers and to help to make sure there is no rebellion and to make sure there is peace. So, all that the Jewish authorities had to do is tell this to the Romans, and the Romans said, fine, we'll give you some soldiers to help. We'll make sure that this doesn't happen. So, that's all they did. They assembled this troop. How many people are we talking about? It's hard to know because a band or cohort of soldiers

would've been about six hundred men, but then you take into consideration that this is something they're trying to be stealth about, and this is at night time in the Garden. Right? This isn't something that necessarily they're trying to bring as many people as possible. Nonetheless, you get the picture. This is a big crowd, and they're armed, intent on their purpose of arresting Jesus.

Not only are they bringing numbers and intimidation, they actually have thought this through with strategy. This is what we find in verses 44-45, the arrangement - the arrangement. There had been some thought given to this. There had been some strategy going into this as verse 44 states; "Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard.'" The betrayer, of course, reminding us of Judas. He not only had made the deal and was willing to hand Jesus over to these men, he participated in the plan, and he is the one that came up with the plan. We see that this sign was necessary because of the fact that they're arriving, they're trying to arrest Jesus at night time, and so, it's dark already. And on top of that, it's not just Jesus. There's His eleven disciples there, so you want to make sure you get the right guy because if you get the wrong guy then everyone flees and runs away. You could miss out on the important opportunity. So, some thought was given to this. This was Judas' plan; "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard."

Why a kiss? Well, there's some help that we get from commentators who know the culture of the time a little bit and tell us about this. On the one hand, a kiss is a very typical and normal greeting. One commentator states, "It's a customary greeting especially between a rabbi and his disciple." However, some people would speculate even further and say that a kiss is even more intimate than necessarily just a greeting that any person would give. He states, "In addition to being a special act of respect and affection, this kind of kiss was a sign of homage in the middle east culture. Out of the varieties of this kiss, on the feet, on the back of the hand, on the palm, on the hem of the garment, Judas chose the embrace and the kiss on the cheek, the one that showed the closest love and affection normally reserved for one with whom a person had a close intimate relationship such as a pupil for his teacher. Judas could not have chosen a more despicable way to identify Jesus because he perverted its usual meaning so treacherously and hypocritically." So, in reality, this was a normal thing. Judas is saying this will not be suspicious when I show up, and I greet Him in this way. No one

will be suspecting necessarily anything; of course, though, coming with all these men makes it very clear what his attention is. But this kiss, this greeting, this allows a clear identification of Jesus and the one to arrest.

We look at how Judas describes this; “Seize him and lead him away under guard.” Judas was with Jesus for some time. He saw what Jesus did. Judas knew what Jesus was capable of. He remembers probably some of the times where Jesus was in His home town in Nazareth, and people are trying to kill Him, and Jesus disappears through the crowd. Judas knows what Jesus can do, the power, the abilities, the supernatural things that He’s done. So, Judas has to say I’ll identify Him and then we surround Him, and sheer numbers ought to do it. No. He says you need to lead Him away under guard. You need to give attention to Him. Do not let your eye off of Him. “And when he came, he went up to him at once...” He didn’t delay. He didn’t waste his time. Judas immediately went up to Jesus and greeted Him. The greeting as we read is “Rabbi!” He greets Him as his rabbi as was common; “And he kissed him.” So, what we have is this usually affectionate greeting turned into an empty act of treachery from Judas. Jesus sees right through it. He obviously knows. In Matthew 26:50, “Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Jesus knows. He’s not fooled. He’s still in complete control this entire time.

This leads us to verses 46-47. After this arrangement and signal, and it is executed, then there’s the arrest. In verses 46-47, Mark doesn’t give us a ton of details in terms of this arrest when you look at verse 46; “And they laid hands on him and seized him.” That’s about it. It’s not very many details there. It’s very vague. We do get the air of some time of resistance in verse 47, but verse 46 is pretty straight forward. The reality is, when you look at it, Mark is just giving us the matter of the fact and the straight forward kind of presentation of what ended up essentially happening. But when you look at other gospel accounts, you get even more detail to be reminded of how this unfolded and Jesus’ complete control throughout the process. Listen to John 18:3-9; “So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ They answered him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am he.’ Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, ‘I am he,’ they drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again, ‘Whom do you seek?’ And they

said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.' ” It's another more detailed description of what it meant when they actually seized Him. Jesus, in complete control of this, knowing what Judas is there to do, knowing why these people are here, and separating Himself even from His disciples by way of protecting them and loving them.

We see the resistance back in Mark in verse 47; “But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.” There's some resistance, and we look at this, and he doesn't identify who it is, just “...one of those who stood by...” You look at Matthew's account, you look at Luke's account, and none of them actually identify who this person is. It's not until John writes his gospel way later in time, that there's no longer a need to protect Peter's identity from Jewish persecution, that John identifies it as Peter. Peter's the one who drew his sword. Peter's the one that's trying to live up to these claims he's made. He is loyal. He is brave. He is bold. He will follow Jesus even unto death. It's what Peter has said, and so in this moment of arrest, in this moment of Jesus being seized, we see this kind of almost glimmer of hope that there is perhaps a disciple, there is perhaps someone, that will make good on his commitment to Christ. How does Peter do this? With violence, drawing his sword and striking “...the servant of the high priest...” and cutting off his ear. Peter steps into action. The victim here is “...the servant of the high priest...,” and some people have tried to identify that this is just a poor helpless sap, a poor soul that just happened to be there within reach, and the reality is if he was a “...servant of the high priest...,” an attendant of Caiaphas the high priest, he probably had some power and authority, and he must've been one of the ones actually carrying out this operation alongside Judas and other authorities that were there. I mean, in fact, he was probably there taking notes to make sure that Judas and everything that was planned went according to what was determined.

It's interesting to see that in Mark's account we have no response from Jesus to what Peter does. Right? We have Peter lashing out with this violent act, and then, when we look at verse 48, it's just Jesus addressing the crowd. When you look at Matthew's account and when you look at Luke's account you find something different. For instance, Matthew 26:52-54 states, “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 should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?' ” Jesus rebuking Peter, telling him to put his sword away. Even more in Luke 22:51 we read, “But Jesus said, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched his ear and healed him.” He healed the servant. It’s almost as if Mark is trying to show that there was someone that was trying, and that at first blush, it looks like there might be some committed disciples here. It looks like there might be some that are actually going to follow through on what they’ve said, that they will follow Jesus. But the reality is that’s far from the truth, as far as this passage ends in verse 50 with all of them leaving.

Mark records Jesus’ rebuke, not to Peter but to the crowd, and that’s what we find in verses 48-49, this admonition - this admonition. Jesus admonishing, rebuking this crowd verse 48; “And Jesus said to them, ‘Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?’” I mean, here they are at night time, and He’s trying to pray in the Garden, and here comes this crowd with weapons. And Jesus goes who do you take Me for? Well, what are you doing here, and why are you acting this way, and why do you show up like this? It’s as if I am some robber. And “robber,” just so we’re understanding correctly, this isn’t just limited to the understanding of a common thief or an armed bandit, but more probably, it’s a reference to a revolutionary, a rebel, an insurrectionist. This is probably how they got the Roman guards to come in the first place. Jesus says you think I’m a rebel? I’m an insurrectionist here? And you come out with this massive crowd and all these weapons against Me? This is odd behavior for someone who’s been here all this week, teaching in the temple. I’ve been here. I’ve seen you. I’ve interacted with some of you guards and chief priests, and I’ve been out in the open, free for you to interact with Me. But that’s not the case. Here we are at night time, late at night on Passover, and you show up with these weapons. Is this the way to treat a teacher? Is this the way to treat any rabbi at that time, in that day? This is odd behavior.

It’s a little bit more than odd if we really think about it. It’s unjust. It’s wrong. It’s just flat out mistreatment. It’s not fair at all. I mean, you just think about this ridiculous injustice, and if you think about how a teacher or a rabbi ought to be treated, this is just wrong. You wouldn’t ambush a rabbi by nightfall on Passover. This isn’t what you would do. Now take it another step further, what about the Messiah? How would you treat the Son of Man? Well, you certainly wouldn’t do this. It’s not just that they failed to

recognize Him. It's not just that they decide we don't think you're the Messiah so we're going to ignore you. It's that they say we don't think you're the Messiah, and we want to do you harm. And they come to arrest Him. They want to eliminate Him. This is just an incredible example of terrible injustice. This is just a testimony of the depravity of mankind. This is what it looks like to live in a sinful world, a fallen world, not just that there's physical calamity in what takes place around us, but there's sinful treatment of one another. And this is the greatest there is, no greater sinful treatment on a human being in what we find in how the Son of Man, God's own Son, is treated here and will continue to be treated in the rest of the gospel.

We all face moments of injustice. We all can relate on some level. We've all been in unfair situations where we recognize that's not how you treat someone. You can't talk to me like that. How dare you think you can treat me this way. How dare you think you can go behind my back. How dare you act in this way towards that person or towards me. The reality is even unbelievers have an idea of how mankind ought to be treated, even unbelievers in the world have this conscience. They have the ability to see when someone is being treated a certain way, and they say that's wrong. It's not fair. That's an injustice. That's mistreatment. And certain situations are more easy to indicate than others, but we've all had our fair share of experiencing these times where we've been sinned against, and unfortunately, we've all had our fair share of responding ourselves in a sinful manner. We lash out in angry speech at someone who has wronged us. We retreat from others and give them the silent treatment because of what they've done to us. I mean, this happens all the time and, really, often times with people we love, family members, friends, coworkers, people we interact with often. We get sinned against, and we respond in kind with more sin and evil.

When we come back to Jesus' example and what we have before us, there can be no greater injustice than what is happening here and how Jesus is being treated by the religious authorities, by the gentiles, the Romans, by His own disciples. A great and massive injustice that's taking place. In light of all this, how does Jesus respond? How can we actually learn from this model that's before us? How does Jesus respond? He says at the end of verse 49, "But let the Scriptures be fulfilled" ... "...let the Scriptures be fulfilled" to the shock and dismay of the disciples. They thought there's no way He

would let it come to this. Even though He's talking about it, there's no way He would let and He would bow down to this level in letting someone take Him into arrest. But Jesus submissively accepts this seizure and arrest. He's calm. He's at peace with the events that will unfold. He embraces it; "...let the Scriptures be fulfilled." How did He get there? What brought Him to this point that He could respond in this way? Because if anyone had the license or the right standing to be able to respond with a little bit of anger, with a little bit of being upset with these people, it'd be right now, and it'd be Jesus. But that's not the case. He accepts, He embraces this; "...let the Scriptures be fulfilled."

It's amazing to think about this because if we consider the fullness of where we just were, Jesus didn't seem like this when He was in the Garden praying, did He? When He was in the Garden praying, He was struggling. Right? He was wrestling with His Father in prayer. He was asking if there was any way that this cup could pass, anyway that this moment could be different. We saw how He came out of that time of prayer by saying, "Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand." He was determined. He was ready. He was willing to embrace the Father's will. He had aligned His will with His Father's. He had willfully submitted to what His Father had in store, and this is the beauty of prayer, that it aligns our will with God's. But how is it that Jesus now is able to respond in this way and say, "...let the Scriptures be fulfilled." This is where the Word of God comes in and how it functions in your life and my life, and how Jesus utilized the Word of God as well. God's Word is sufficient. God's Word is able. It is through Jesus' time of prayer and talking to His Father and wrestling and struggling and laboring and striving that He recognized and continued to confirm the truth that was already written in God's Word. See, that time of prayer was so essential because it just confirmed for Jesus the truth of what He had to do. He had to go to the cross, and He accepted that, and the Word of God is what gave Him that conviction and that ability to stand at this moment and say, "...let the Scriptures be fulfilled." Tantamount to saying Thy will be done. God have it Your way. Whatever You want at this moment because I know what Your Word says. Suffering is before Me, and I must go before glory which will follow.

The same is true for you and me. God's Word is sufficient. It is able to help you through any trial and any moment of injustice that you will encounter. You've already encountered them. You've been sinned against. You will go

out from this time, and you'll be sinned against again. It'll happen today. More people will sin against you and how can you respond? How can you even get close to being like Jesus? It's the Word of God. God's Word is what is sufficient and able to help you and empower you to have a new response, not one of anger that does not accomplish the righteousness of God, but one of peace, tranquility, one of being Spirit-filled, being gentle, being kind, because we all have people that we can't stand in our lives. We all have encountered situations that just feel too heavy for us to bear. We all have been mistreated by strangers and loved ones. We've all been there, and we will continue to encounter these things because we all live in this fallen world. The problem comes when our response to the sin is just more sin. That's not okay. Just because of one sinful action, doesn't justify the following ones.

The Word of God is what keeps us in line and reminds us. It gives us all the truth we need, all the power we need to recognize how we ought to respond in times of injustice, in times of mistreatment, as Jesus did. As 2 Peter 1:3-4 states, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." Even if you had that one promise, it would be enough, that one promise that anytime someone sinned against you, you remembered that this is God's means of me becoming more like Him. If you had that one promise and nothing else from Scripture, that would be enough; that would be enough for you to endure and to respond righteously anytime you're sinned against. That's the reality. That's the power of the Word of God. That's what it does for you. It keeps you and prevents you from going back and lashing out. And the anger that you once used to give yourself to, now you can respond in kindness, gentle, like Christ in this terrible moment of mistreatment. He says, "...let the Scriptures be fulfilled." Let God's Word have its work in His life and everyone else's. This is what Jesus states, and this is how we can learn from Him, our perfect model.

We recognize that the disciples are not ready for this time, and so they respond with abandoning Christ just as He prophesied. He prophesied this. He already told them that this being struck down as the shepherd will result in the sheep scattering. And verse 50 reads very simple; "And they all left

him and fled” ... “...they all left him and fled.” Really, the way that the verse is actually organized and structured for us, it really states “...and abandoning Him they, fled, everyone, everyone.” Just to make it very clear, not a single one, not even Peter who at this moment thought maybe he’s going to be valiant, and maybe he’s going to stand by his promise, he too runs away. They’re all offended at the fact that Jesus is willing to be arrested and endure this suffering.

And as a further example of those who are fleeing and running, we have this example of this man, this young man in verses 51-52. And there’s a lot of theories out there. Since this is only in Mark’s gospel and we don’t have a lot more information, there’s a lot about who this is or what’s going on here, but probably the simplest and the most natural one to entertain is the possibility that this is actually Mark. This is our author. This is young Mark at this time. Why? Perhaps it is possible because Mark was actually growing up in a well-to-do family that was wealthy. And we learn from the book of Acts, they actually had a home in Jerusalem, and it’s very probable that their home was the hosting site, the place where the disciples and Jesus had their last supper. So, when they had their last supper and Judas was dismissed and then Jesus and the disciples left and made their way to the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas went and got this crowd and came back to the house which was Mark’s house looking for Jesus. Realizing that Jesus and the disciples were gone, they made their way to the Garden of Gethsemane since that was another frequent site for them. Well, Mark having witnessed this probably, being the young man at his house, quickly gets out of bed and puts on whatever he can to go run and follow and see what will take place. And that explains why he’s wearing “...nothing but a linen cloth about his body.” That’s not normal, but if he’s hurrying out of bed, it’s all he can do to try and follow and see what happens to Christ. Unfortunately, Mark inserts himself as an example of humility and reality that Jesus was alone because “... they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked” and ashamed - very probable that this is Mark. But even if it’s not, it continues to solidify the point; Jesus is alone. Jesus is completely alone. No one can actually stay with Him. No one can make good on their commitment to follow Him even unto death and suffering. This is the reality of what took place. Jesus embraced this suffering and because of Jesus’ response, because of His willingness to let the Word of God shape and mold His desire and will, we have Him determined to go to the cross.