

**Luke 22:39-65**

**Surrender is the remedy to the temptation to deny Jesus.**

Trust falls - I talk about them often...because I think they are silly. They are a product of 90's team building. Line up coworkers, two lines interlocking arms. Have one on top of a chair close their eyes and fall backward into the cradle of arms formed by their coworkers. Symbolic of the sentiment that "we have your back, we will catch you, we are in this together!"

We have all also seen the memes of coworkers letting the fallen hit the ground or where the person falls forward instead of backward!

We do these silly things because we know trust is good. When we trust in the right team, the right strategy, and the right Savior, it is good and for our flourishing.

In trust there is surrender; letting go, falling into their arms.

In our text today we see in bold actions the temptation away from trust.

It happens to be a temptation to denial. Denying Jesus himself, denying Him to others. The remedy is surrender. Learning to fall and your will be caught!

Context: From the upper room, from the emotional institution of the Lord's Supper; the servant Jesus washing feet; singing hymns... from that Jesus and the apostles head to a garden to pray "as was his custom."

**Luke 22:40** "And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." (ESV)

He will say it again because the emotionally drained, and wine-filled disciples will slumber!

**Luke 22:45–46** “And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, [46] and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.” (ESV)

There have already been in Luke’s Gospel calls to stay awake in prayer. To maintain a readiness, to be active in their faith. Here it is to avoid temptation.

The temptation to what? Everything applies! But in the context we might think they should avoid the temptation to sleep!

Given the situation, and how the story plays out though, it seems more a temptation to leave, to turn away from Jesus.

**Luke 22:31–32** “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, [32] but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” (ESV)

Though they pray. Though Jesus prayed. They took the bait.

Like them, we are tempted to deny Jesus, but there is a remedy. Before we get there, however, we want to see the two ways of denial - both ultimately a rejection of Jesus.

### **Tempted to Deny His Way**

While Jesus is speaking a crowd comes, with swords and torches, to find Jesus. Think of villagers on the hunt for vampires in the night!

Judas, one of the twelve, has led them here. It was Jesus’ customary place to pray. The betrayer drew near to kiss Jesus.

**Luke 22:48** “but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?” (ESV)

Faux affection painting over rejection. Denying Jesus to his face. He had called Judas to follow him, he was there for all of the ministry, all of the healing and feeding. He was close.

Betrayal sucks. Many of us know the feeling - when a friend, loved one, or coworker turns on you. “What about the trust fall?!”

I remember one such betrayal - in ministry! Innocuous but it stung. Friends, partners in ministry, enjoyed each other’s company socially. But during a fateful meeting, they accused me of lying. In an attempt to win over others, they stabbed me in the back, publically... Et Tu Brute!

Relationship was never repaired... spouse would repent for them... but I never felt like I could trust them again. Blindsided, felt horrible... and Stacy was ready to fight!

On a far more significant scale cosmically, Judas “loves” Jesus in his betrayal/denial. “Yeah, yeah, I love Jesus... but I think he should be murdered.”

What was it? Maybe his generosity was too much. Maybe it was the elevating of the poor or disabled, the foreigner... that Judas couldn’t take. Whatever it was, by making a deal with those seeking to have Jesus killed Judas is agreeing that what Jesus was preaching was dangerous and that his way was wrong.

Points for boldness - but this betrayal leads to ruin.

But Judas wasn’t the only one to deny the way of Jesus that night.

The disciples fall for Satan’s temptation too. This reaches back to what we read last week - where Jesus making mention of the long journey of life ahead - saying the sojourner should buy a sword.

And the disciples are like “hey we have two swords, will that cut it?!” Jesus responds “It is enough.”

You might recall that Jesus wasn’t approving of the number of swords but essentially saying “enough of this kind of talk.”

Footnote ties the language used by Jesus to Deuteronomy. To Moses being kept from going into the land.

**Deuteronomy 3:26** “But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘Enough from you; do not speak to me of this matter again.’” (ESV)

So that’s the vibe. Back in the garden - the crowd comes, Judas comes in for a kiss and the disciples ask “lord shall we strike with the sword?”

Before he can answer though, Peter (which we know from other accounts), is the man of action - slices Malchus’ ear, this temple guard.

We can only imagine what was going through their minds. This was their moment. War was finally going to break out - redeeming Israel!

But they were wrong and it was a denial of the way of Jesus.

*Slicing heads doesn’t smell like Jesus.*

You might say “yeah but he whipped people that one time!” Whipped those that would corrupt what was supposed to be a house of prayer for all nations by oppressing the poor and restricting minorities.

We never own up to being a Judas, but man do we get his way wrong all the time.

We demand men of action - That would finally make things right. If we just fought back, if we took power... hated our enemies, prioritized ourselves over our neighbors...

This works out in myriad ways and friends, we are all guilty of it. Missing the point of what Jesus calls his people to is a denial of his way.

**Luke 22:51** “But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.” (ESV)

Even so, the chief priests, officers of the temple, elders, seize Jesus and take him away. “This is their hour and the power of darkness.”

“Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

## Tempted to Deny Jesus

All of the disciples bale, except one. Peter follows at a distance.

This Peter: **Luke 22:33** “Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” (ESV)

Sword-wielding, now fearful.

I don't want to rag on Peter too much. His leader has been captured. He is confused as to what is happening. Remembering old Scripture but not sure how it plays out. And now he is alone. But he still has the inclination to be close to Jesus.

And his story actually gives us great hope. He will be restored. He will three times commit to love and shepherding. He ends up being a humbled brute giving his life for Christ and his kingdom.

But here he falls for the temptation to deny Jesus before others.

He sits around the fire to get warm in the night. A girl recognizes him and says he was with Jesus.

**Luke 22:57** “But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” (ESV)

So easy. He is not going to see these people again. No foul in staying under the radar.

Then a little later someone else saw him. “You are one of them.” “Man, I am not.”

Then an hour after that, still another insisted “he was with him for he is a Galilean too.” “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.”

Immediately, while he was still speaking the rooster crowed.

It is as if the world paused at this moment.

Some of you have heard me talk about listening to birdsong as a reminder of God's presence - any time I hear birds sing, I think, "God is here!" In our neighborhood that includes a rooster or two! "*Don't deny me!*"

**Luke 22:61** "And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." (ESV)

Devastating.

**Matthew 10:28-33** "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. [29] Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. [30] But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. [31] Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. [32] So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, [33] but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." (ESV)

The Lord turned and looked at Peter. I don't think it was a look of judgment but one of confirmation, forgiveness.

I get the temptation. I have been told by friends that I preach hate. I have been in plenty of settings where by my words and actions I could in effect deny Jesus. "I don't know him."

"He's not God." "He didn't really rise."

To avoid ruffled feathers, to keep getting invited. To be accepted... we deny him before others.

We can end up joining the mockers - blaspheming him.

**Luke 22:62** "And he (Peter) went out and wept bitterly." (ESV)

Some denial leads to destruction... Judas dies.

Some denial leads to repentance... Peter dies, having lived for Jesus.

Temptation will come.

### **Surrender is the Remedy**

Jesus, in the garden, a stone's throw from his disciples, prays. *V. 42* "saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me."

I think it was Jesus' custom to come to this place to pray because he knew he would be praying here on this night. He knows. He has been anticipating it from eternity. The coming hours of separation from the Father. Torture. Death.

"1) Jesus knew that death is the "wages of sin" (Romans 6:23)—and that he would pay the total wages in full. 2) He also knew that death is a result of the judgment of God (cf. Romans 5:12)—and that he would bear that judgment. 3) He knew that he would become sin (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21). 4) He knew that death would bring on him the wrath of God (cf. 1 John 2:2)—and that he would propitiate it to the full. That is why Jesus was filled with such unremitting dread. This is why he was so fearful. This is why he could well have died before the cross." Hughes

We will never know the weight of this - because he took it on for us.

An angel ministers to him strengthens him and still in agony he prays. Drenched in sweat, in anguish.

**Psalm 6:1–7** "O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger, nor discipline me in your wrath. [2] Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing; heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled. [3] My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O LORD—how long? [4] Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love. [5] For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise? [6] I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. [7] My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes." (ESV)

"Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

Nevertheless - such a heavy word. All that is opposite isn't worth denying you.

Jesus gives us an example - this is his trust fall - to face temptation and say, “not my will, but yours, be done.” Because his way is better. There may be turmoil, and agony, but there is also life, the kingdom, and eternity.

More than an example though, it is his surrender that is our remedy.

Because he took on the shame, the mocking, the beating we deserve.

Because he gave his body, his blood, to make us righteous.

Because he prayed “Father forgive them for they don’t know what they are doing.”

He took on all the betrayal, all the denial for us.

“Who every grief hath known  
That wrings the human breast,  
And takes and bears them for His own,  
That all in Him may rest.” - Matthew Bridges, 1851

When we miss the mark of his way, he invites us back in. “When you have turned again, strengthen your brothers and sisters.”

When we deny him to the watching world, he looks on us with compassion and calls us to be restored.

Restoration is real because he surrendered himself for you.

“God cares most about our hearts, and even when we fail out of fear and rebellion he restores us out of his abundant grace... When we understand God properly in this way, it creates in us a freedom to be honest and open about our weaknesses and failures, which is precisely the humility needed to approach God. Our acceptance of God’s acceptance of us—free from condemnation, because of Christ (Rom. 8:1)—woos and draws us near to God and frees us from shame and fear.”  
GTB

Emboldens us against the temptation that comes our way.



**Hebrews 4:14–16** “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (ESV)

Because Jesus surrendered to the will of the Father we can learn to surrender to his will for our lives and trust him with all of it.

We will fall, but in getting back up and learning to trust again is where we are transformed. Where we learn surrender to his way. Where we are made like him.

“Though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to Him...He warned people to “count the cost” before becoming Christians. “Make no mistake,” He says, “if you let me, I will make you perfect. The moment you put yourself in My hands, that is what you are in for. Nothing less, or other, than that. You have free will, and if you choose, you can push Me away. But if you do not push Me away, understand that I am going to see this job through. Whatever suffering it may cost you in your earthly life, whatever inconceivable purification it may cost you after death, whatever it costs Me, I will never rest, nor let you rest, until you are literally perfect—until my Father can say without reservation that He is well pleased with you, as He said He was well pleased with me. This I can do and will do. But I will not do anything less.” C. S. Lewis *Mere Christianity*

Are you up for learning this surrender together?

**Surrender is the remedy to the temptation to deny Jesus.**

Claim His surrender for yourself. His finished work for your forgiveness. For righteousness. To be made his.

Go on surrendering to Him - trust Him and His way. Keep looking at the glory of Christ until you see it. And live.

Jesus has called a family to himself, a team of coworkers, that can only catch each other because he has caught us. Surrender is the way, for His glory and our good.

Let's go!