

## Alone

[Announce Text] Please Open your Bibles to Luke 22:39-62. [Pages 882-883](#)

[Scripture Introduction] Good morning, my name is Brett Sweet and I'm one of the pastors here at Grace Christian Fellowship where we exist to glorify God through gospel-centered worship, evangelism, discipleship, and community. We are continuing our series through the book of Luke.

[Prayer for illumination] Please pray with me...

[Illustration] Apart from the work of God's Spirit every Christian is a smuggler. Many smugglers hide their illegal items in secret compartments. Drugs packed into truck tires. Illegal items sewed into the lining of coats. Many so-called Christians have a secret compartment that no other human ever truly sees. It's their hearts. And the things they are usually smuggling into churches and conversations are these: good works.

The word gospel means "good news." The good news that we are saved by the work of Jesus! It's only good news because Jesus alone has saved us. When we try to smuggle in our good works we actually lose the good news. If you are a Christian, you are saved by Jesus alone. Not Jesus plus the good works you've done. Not religious duties. Not knowing the right words. Not being the perfect spouse or parent. Living up to others' expectations. Not voting for a certain party or avoiding substances. That is not how we are saved. We are saved by Jesus alone. Jesus has done everything. For Jesus to save us He must succeed in all the trials we have failed. And if Jesus is the only Savior. Not a helper, but a Rescuer, which He is, then He must have had to face things on His own.

So my goal for all of us who are tempted to be smugglers today is to take a long look at Jesus from Luke 22:39-62 and what He has done to save us. So my thesis is this:

**[Proposition] We're saved by Jesus alone because Jesus faced trials alone.**

Jesus will be put on trial shortly. But even before He gets to multiple courtroom settings, He is facing the greatest trials. And we will find that He's facing them alone. We'll look at these three scenes: In Scene 1 we will see that Jesus faced the greatest inner trial alone. Scene 2 will show us that Jesus faced the greatest

betrayal alone. And in Scene 3 we will see that Jesus faced the greatest denial alone. Inner trial. Betrayal. Denial.

Before we get to the scenes, let's remind ourselves of the setting by rereading vv. 39-41

*And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed,*

So Jesus is praying on the Mount of Olives near His disciples. That's the setting

Let's now look at

### **[Scene 1] Jesus faced the greatest inner trial alone.**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, Jesus begins to face the greatest inner trial that anyone has ever experienced. How can I say that this is the greatest inner trial?

[Subpoint 1] It's the greatest because Jesus knows God's wrath is coming.

Let's read vv. 42-44

*...saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, by yours, be done." And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

For a time, the Jesus we meet in the Garden of Gethsemane appears to be a different Jesus. Earlier, Jesus seems so confident. So sure of Himself. Now, we see Him in His full humanity. He's struggling. He is facing the greatest inner trial. When Jesus prays about wanting this cup removed from Him, He is using language that is used in the Old Testament in Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:22, and others. And that cup is filled with God's wrath. We often experience inner trials and struggles and anxieties. They come from fears of the unknown. But Jesus is facing the most terrifying thing imaginable- God's righteous wrath and just anger toward sinners. If you aren't a Christian, you are facing an eternal cup of God's wrath and you have no idea how bad it will be. But mysteriously, if you submit that Jesus must

alone be your Savior, you'll find that Jesus has already drank it in your place. And Jesus knows it. Since Jesus is the eternal and all-knowing Son. He knows exactly what He's getting into.

So this cup of wrath makes Jesus sweat like crazy under stress. The sweat pouring off Him. Because of the plasma and platelets, drops of blood can be larger than drops of the salty water of sweat. Is Jesus so stressed that His sweat is mingling with blood due to broken capillaries - as has been reported by doctors and relayed by preachers? That is possible, but this text doesn't explicitly say that. The main emphasis is that His inner trial at facing God's wrath is the greatest. And it's obviously stressful.

Jesus faced the greatest inner trial alone. It's the greatest because Jesus knows God's wrath is coming and He knows what that will be like. But I'm saying He faced it alone. How can I say this?

[Subpoint 2] He's alone because His disciples are weak.

There was an angel that strengthened Jesus. But that angel could not actually experience the inner trial that Jesus faced. Jesus is alone in that way. And His closest friends, just a stone's throw away, aren't helpful either. Let's read vv. 45-46

*And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."*

The disciples have sorrow and anxiety of knowing someone will betray Jesus to death. They are exhausted. Jesus calls them to pray in v. 40. But they are weak. They are sleeping. Sleepers can't help Jesus bear His inner burden. They are weak. Jesus prayed for help and His prayer was answered by the Father sending an angel. But He prays alone. He has had a prayer meeting and, though only a short distance away, in their weakness, the disciples haven't really shown up.

Jesus faced the greatest inner trial alone. It's the greatest because Jesus knows God's wrath is coming. He's alone because the disciples are weak. Now one more thing about the inner trial:

[Subpoint 3] It's the greatest because it's Jesus

Let's read v. 42

*...saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."*

This is the greatest inner trial because Jesus is the One person who ever lived who hasn't deserved God's wrath. Anyone else could say, "I didn't quite realize it at the time, but you know what, I had this coming." Not so for Jesus. And God is totally sovereign. There is no other way for us to be saved. Jesus must face this alone. The Father loves His Son. Luke has shown that repeatedly. But Jesus must face the greatest inner trial alone to save us.

[Application] Please allow me to make a short comment about the disciples here. And their weakness. The disciples pledged their loyalty to Jesus, but when they weren't feeling up to it, they caved. One scholar commented that sleep and withdrawal are rarely the path to victory. The disciples' word meant nothing. I fear that there are a few of you, church members, who say things and then don't follow through. I especially want to challenge some of the men here. Has your community group leader or discipleship group leader just accepted that you will miss a lot? When you say you'll arrive at 10:00 does that really mean 10:12? I don't want to ignore weaknesses and their legitimacy at times, but we need to be willing to suffer to keep our word. I challenge you to ask the people around you if they think your word can be trusted.

More importantly, we should recognize that we've failed when we faced inner trials We've given in to temptation. The temptation to turn away from the obedient path and toward sin and the world. Temptations to be bitter. Temptations to be lustful, proud, resentful of God. But let us all remember that Jesus' inner trial involved facing the wrath of God. And He faced it alone. And He succeeded in your place. His perfection is enough. You don't need to smuggle in your success or religious efforts. He did this alone, so there's nowhere else for you to turn.

And notice the humanity of Jesus here. We have a Savior who was fully and truly human. We have a Savior who feels things. Deep down, we know that that's right. Atheists say that feelings and emotions are just illusions that your evolved brain uses to trick you to respond to certain stimuli so you survive. Eastern religions say that feelings should be neglected, ignored, suppressed so that you can detach

yourself from the world around you. Robots and AI as useful as they are and will become just don't seem right. We don't want something that just powers up. We want someone who loves. Who truly misses us when we're gone. Who rejoices when we're together. Jesus alone is this sort of Savior.

We're saved by Jesus alone because Jesus faced trials alone. Jesus faced the greatest inner trial alone. That was scene 1. Now let's look at scene 2.

## **[Scene 2] Jesus faced the greatest betrayal alone.**

In my experience the worst emotional experience is that of betrayal. Someone you thought you could trust has lived like an enemy. I don't wish that on anyone. But Jesus betrayal is worse than anything any of us have experienced.

[Subpoint 1] Greatest because of how Jesus is betrayed.

Let's read vv. 47-48

*While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"*

Notice what Luke homes in on. This is Judas. One of the 12. Perhaps the twelve most blessed Israelites in history. One of the twelve people with perhaps the greatest spiritual opportunities. To watch Jesus. To listen to Jesus. To be brought into things that were hidden from others. To receive His daily love and encouragement. To benefit from His wisdom. Judas was one of the 12! And this Judas leads enemies to Jesus. He's the leader in this setting. And oh, to do so by feigning your affections. How could this get worse? The kiss of greeting was the most formal and beloved way to greet someone. And that's what Judas does. People have been phony, for sure. But this. There seems to be no greater betrayal.

[Illustration] In our time, when you see a line of several police cars heading for one residence, you know there's something serious going down. They're coming to serve a warrant on someone dangerous. But that's what's going on here. Total overkill for someone who has been teaching peacefully in public for years. And if you've ever been burned by churches or religious people, notice how Jesus can

relate to you. Here are religious people and they are under the power of darkness.

Jesus faced the greatest betrayal alone. It was the greatest betrayal because of how Jesus is betrayed. Now notice that He was

[Subpoint 2] Alone, because His disciples don't understand.

[Illustration] In the thousands of hours I've spent in the wilderness I have rarely felt alone. Let me tell you when I've felt alone. When I was misunderstood. When I was known and mocked as "the Christian" in my college class. When I was at a wedding reception and only knew the person I came with. When I was in a gathering and everyone was talking about money and sales, and those things didn't really interest me. I was with people. But I was alone because people didn't understand me or what I was about.

And that's what Jesus sees here.

Let's read vv. 49-53

*And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But his is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

Jesus' disciples are finally awake. But Jesus is alone. Because the disciples don't get it. He has come to this moment on purpose. He's surrounded by disciples now but they don't understand Him. He's alone. John 18:10 tells us that it's Peter, who takes a swing with his sword at Malchus, the high priest's servant. And he fails miserably. Nobody teaching sword fighting self-defense courses tells you to aim for the ear. Peter and the other disciples don't understand Jesus. So the religious leaders are against Jesus. The Roman soldiers are against Jesus. And the disciples may be there, but they're so off base that Jesus is alone. Nobody else is getting arrested. Nobody else is getting betrayed. It's Jesus alone.

Jesus faced the greatest betrayal alone. It's the greatest because of how Jesus is betrayed. He's alone because His disciples don't understand. But there's more reason why Jesus is facing the greatest betrayal here.

[Subpoint 3] It's the greatest because it's Jesus

Look at v. 48

*...but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"*

Jesus is the divine Son. The universe exists because of Him. Betrayal is awful. It is usually the worst experience a human can live through. This means that Jesus can relate to us perfectly when we're the victims of betrayal. Still, every spousal betrayal, corporate espionage, act of high treason is tiny compared to this, the greatest betrayal. Why? Because everything created comes short of being all-satisfying. But Jesus is infinite in value and love and truth and goodness. He's the divine Son of Man. This is who is betrayed.

[Application] Please hear this warning. You can be religious like the leaders. You can seem close to Jesus- like Judas. And you can be under the power of darkness. These religious leaders were smugglers too. They loved their history of good works. But now it's all for nothing. Jesus is an enemy. Every sin we've ever committed is an act of betrayal. There is blood on our hands.

We're saved by Jesus alone because Jesus faced trials alone. He faced the greatest inner trial alone. And Jesus faced the greatest betrayal alone. Those were Scenes 1 and 2. Now,

### **[Scene 3] Jesus faced the greatest denial alone.**

Closely related to betrayal is denial. For the next several verses, Luke zooms in on Peter, but we'll notice that Jesus is right there in the background. Always within sight. And we'll see the greatest denial ever.

[Subpoint 1] The greatest because of how Jesus is denied.

Let's read vv. 54-60 and live there for a few moments.

*Then they seized him (Jesus) and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them.*

*Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while speaking, the rooster crowed.*

Peter is fooling literally no one. In our modern slang we'd hear things like, "Listen, lady, I don't know the guy." And, "Sir, you've got the wrong guy." Or, "I guess I've just got one of those faces." But the lies get deeper. Until, finally, "Hey, buddy, I just got here from out of town, I don't know anything about anything. I know nothing!" These are the worst sort of denials. Peter is fooling no one. You would think that after one lie, he'd cave. And admit it. But three times, in Jesus great hour of need. Jesus is denied by Peter.

Jesus faced the greatest denial alone. It's the greatest because of how Jesus is denied. Now notice

[Subpoint 2] He's alone because Peter was His most passionate disciple.

Peter, which means "rock," has crumbled. He had promised earlier in the chapter that he was willing to go to prison or death for Jesus.

[Illustration] Many of us have had the younger sibling, cousin, or neighbor who would follow us around. Like a puppy. Whether you wanted them with you or not, there they were. Stepping on your heels. Always want to know what you're doing. Always wanting to be near you. Helping you. You couldn't get away from them. But that also meant that you could count on them. That is how Peter relates to Jesus in the gospels.

[Exposition] In the gospels it always seems like Peter wants to be close to Jesus, but now he can't get far enough away from Jesus. At least he wants that in the minds of those nearby. Jesus is to suffer this denial alone. John was nearby too, but John wasn't being denied by Peter. Only Jesus. Peter and the others were told twice by Jesus to pray that they may not enter into temptation. There is no evidence that Peter prayed. And temptation came. And Peter, Jesus' most



passionate disciple, denied His master. If Peter denied His master, then Jesus must really be alone.

Jesus faced the greatest denial alone. Because of how Jesus is denied. Because Peter was His most passionate disciple. And finally,

[Subpoint 3] Greatest because it's Jesus

Look at vv. 61-61

*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." And he went out and wept bitterly.*

Jesus has only related to people perfectly. He has only treated people with love. He has only sought God's glory. He has never wronged anyone. He deserves the greatest possible loyalty. This is "the Lord" Luke tells us. But Peter denied Him. This is the One who prophesies the future as we see here. If there's anyone who Peter or we would most want to be in our presence, it's Jesus. Jesus is the life of the eternal party. Peter had experienced this to some degree. To be separated from Him is to be in Hell. And Peter wants to get away from Jesus. And Jesus sees this and looks at Peter.

[Illustration] Whenever someone from one area of your life meets someone from another area of your life, there's often a qualification. "Uncle Albert means well, but, you know, maybe tune him out when he says that everyone is dumb who doesn't buy a car engineered by Germans." Or "Angela is great at what she does. But she can go a bit overboard in her obsession with her cats." So our qualifications are all a type of have mini-denial.

But Jesus has nothing wrong with Him. The deeper you know Him the better you find Him to be.

[Application] Jesus endured all these trials. Inner trial, betrayal, denial all alone. And this is what we deserve. Jesus knew what He was getting into. And He did this because it would make our Triune God look marvelous! And He would save us! There is no one else like this!

Marvel at who Jesus is and what He's done. He did it all. Everything. He's endured all of this and more. He's going to suffer as our substitute on the cross. Nobody

has suffered like this man. And the deepest explanation we have from God is in John 3:16- that it was sign of love. Proof of love. For all who believe. That love is attached to you. And since Jesus did this alone, you can't lose it! Because you never earned it to begin with. If you aren't a Christian, you need this Jesus.

You are always being tested if Jesus is enough. Jesus, yes. But what can we add? If it's to bring satisfaction or salvation to our souls, the answer must be: Nothing. What can I smuggle in with Jesus? A nice house. More time for my hobbies. Children that make me happy. An agreeable spouse. My good works and reputation. No. Wrong. Jesus is enough. We know this because God's plan involved Jesus doing this work alone. He didn't and doesn't need our help. Christian, this is your Savior. Don't you love Him? Don't you want to love Him? Don't you want to be satisfied with Him? He's done it all. That means He's done enough.

[Conclusion] When you enter back into the United States. You are asked, "Do you have anything to declare?" And one of the main reasons they ask that is to see if you might be smuggling things into the country. Here's a goal for our church: to be a group of people who aren't smugglers. Who declare their struggles instead of their good works. You look at people and say, "I need to declare that I am in the grip of an addiction- sex or porn or gambling or drugs or my phone. I'm not smuggler. I'm not going to hide it anymore." Or, "I had an abortion or I'm single because I only feel attracted to people of the same sex." Or, "I have been deeply wounded by churches in the past, I'm not sure I can trust Christians again. But the first step I'm going to take is to not going to hide that from you anymore." And here's why you can do that. Because you have contributed nothing to your salvation. You are saved by Jesus alone.