

Sermon or Lesson: How Jesus Interacted With His Disciples, Part 10 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Utilizing Seemingly Unreasonableness To Accomplish Divine Purposes

PASSAGES: Luke 22:35-38, 49-53; Matthew 26:50b-56. (cf. Mark 14:46-52; John 18:10-11)

INTRO: Does your work supervisor (or school teacher or professor) ever give you an assignment that is so bizarre or unusual that you just do not see any reasonableness in it? Perhaps in those moments, you question their sanity or intelligence. With reluctance, you proceed doing the assignment while continuing to question its validity. Later after the assignment has been completed, you learn or discover the undisclosed true intention and purpose of you doing the assignment, and you realize that the assignment was indeed proper and of value.

In His interaction with His disciples, Jesus used a similar approach, utilizing seemingly unreasonableness to accomplish divine purposes.

READ: Luke 22:35-38

[Lesson Questions:

- - Does anything seem unreasonable or unusual about Jesus' instructions here? Why?
- - What is the reason for this change that is cited by Jesus?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus' instructions here seem unusual or unreasonable, particularly in regard to carrying a sword.

- - Jesus told the disciples to take a purse and a bag, which He previously told them not to take. (vv.36,35; see Matthew 10:9-10)
 - - He also told them to take a sword, and they were to buy one if they did not have one (v.36). This sounds contrary to the concept of sending them out in full dependence upon God as sheep among wolves, being innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16). Likewise, this instruction seems to contradict Jesus' teaching not to resist an evil person who strikes you in the face (Matthew 5:39). But note that they were not instructed to use the swords - just to take them.
 - - The reason for this change that is cited by Jesus sounds bizarre - "And he was numbered with the transgressors" (v.37) - quoted from Isaiah 53:12.
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READ: Luke 22:49-53

[Lesson Questions:

- - Compile a list of the important details of this recorded event that relate to the disciples having swords.
- - What role or effect transpired as a result of the disciples having swords in their possession during this situation?]

SECTION POINT: For this situation only, God ordained and purposed that the disciples would use their swords as they did but no further, so that these actions of the disciples would be in the circumstances of Jesus' arrest.

A list of the important details of this recorded event that relate to the disciples having swords is:

- - v.49 - When Jesus was being arrested, the disciples asked if they should use their swords.
- - v.50 - One of the disciples cut off the right ear of the servant of the high priest.
- - v.51a - Jesus told them "No more of this", commanding the disciples were no longer to use their swords. But this does seem to indicate that the disciples were to use the sword as they did in this event up to that point. The Greek supports this indication, with the literal meanings of the Greek words "Allow until this" which is translated as "No more of this" in the *NIV* (Strong's #1439, #2193, #5127).
- - v.51b - Jesus graciously healed the man's ear, even though the man was one of those who came to arrest Him.
- - v.52a - This undeserved healing was performed in front of "the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders" in the crowd who came to arrest Him (some of His enemies).
- - vv.52b-53a - Jesus questions the crowd's bringing swords and clubs to arrest Him, stating that He has not been leading a rebellion and previously He has been present peacefully in public areas where they could have arrested Him.
- - v.53b - God has ordained that this would be the circumstances and event in which Jesus was arrested.

READ: Matthew 26:50b-56

[Lesson Questions:

- - In this passage, what reason is cited by Jesus as to the purpose for previously instructing the disciples to carry swords?
- - Referring back to Jesus' quote in Luke 22:37 of Isaiah 53:12 "And he was numbered with the transgressors", what, then, can be concluded about why the disciples were to be carrying swords, particularly during the arrest of Jesus?]

SECTION POINT: Jesus gave the disciples the seemingly unreasonable instruction to carry swords because God had distinct purposes He wanted accomplished by the disciples doing this.

- - vv.54,56 - The reason cited in this passage by Jesus as to the purpose for previously instructing the disciples to carry swords is so that Scripture prophecies would be fulfilled saying that it must happen in this way.

Referring back to Jesus' quote in Luke 22:37 of Isaiah 53:12 "And he was numbered with the transgressors", a sound conclusion about why the disciples were to be carrying swords during the arrest of Jesus is that:

- - God wanted to accentuate that Jesus was incorrectly considered by the armed crowd to be among transgressor criminals during the time of His arrest and incorrectly regarded as being one Himself and leading an armed rebellion even though instead He was, in reality, perfectly sinless, innocent, peaceful, and gracious, especially during His unwarranted arrest.

OTHER SEEMINGLY UNREASONABLENESS (if sermon or lesson time allows):

- - John 12:6 - Judas is a thief, unbeliever, and ultimately a betrayer but yet is allowed to continue to hold a disciple's position on Jesus' ministry team; this would be a formula for total disaster in any church today.

- - John 20:24-29 - Thomas is individually publicly confronted and rebuked before the other disciples about his gross unbelief; in any church today, this would result in harsh or angry interaction and division among the church's leaders.

- - Luke 22:39-46 - During the night right before His arrest, Jesus repeatedly instructed the disciples to "pray that [they] would not fall into temptation" (vv.40,46), but they fell asleep due to exhaustion from sorrow (v.45); this seems unreasonable to expect that the disciples should or could stay awake and pray while utterly exhausted, but it was intended for their own good.

BIG IDEA: On occasion, God does ordain that His people should comply with His seemingly unreasonable directing - having perseverance, patience, and faith that He has some good purpose(s) to accomplish.

APPLICATIONS:

- - On occasion, does God, through the approaches of a church's leadership, direct a church to engage in seemingly unreasonable, unusual, or unorthodox activities or initiatives?

- - Can you think of any situations in which this has happened, and what were the end results - especially in regard to whether the church fully complied or less?

- - In your church or ministry, what responsibilities do this technique of God hold for you, for the members, and for the leaders individually and corporately?

- - At times when it appears that God may be moving the leadership of your ministry or church to pursue a seemingly unreasonable, unusual, or unorthodox direction, do you readily comply? Or do you question and object and complain and grumble and resist and sabotage and bad-mouth and wander off? Why?

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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