

Luke 22:35–46 — It Is Enough

The Sword of the Spirit, the Will of God, and the Sufficiency of Christ

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:35–46

“And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

When I Sent You Without Purse and Scrip

The Lord opens this passage with a question designed to provoke thought: when he sent them out without purse, scrip, or shoes, did they lack anything? They said nothing. And yet by the world's reckoning they lacked everything — they had no money bag, no travelling provision, no shoes. What filled the gap? God provided for them along the way. And more than that: they had the words of the Lord Jesus. Every word he spoke was the Lord's word, the Father's will made audible. A person who has the will of God revealed to him lacks nothing that ultimately matters, regardless of what the world's assessment of his resources might be.

Verse 42 illuminates this from the other direction. "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." The Lord Jesus himself, in the deepest moment of his agony in the garden, turned to the Father's will and found sufficiency there. What did the Lord Jesus lack? Nothing — because he had the Father's will. That is the connection the passage draws between the question about the purse and the prayer in the garden. The will of God is the provision.

But Now: A Profound Change

The word therefore at the start of verse 36 makes a connection, and the word but signals a contrast: the former sending without provision belongs to a different condition from what is now coming. Therefore, but now — a profound change is being indicated. What has changed? The verse 37 explains: "For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors." Isaiah 53:12 is being quoted: "he was numbered with the transgressors." This was man's assessment — they took him and crucified him among criminals, and they intended his grave to be with the wicked. But God overturned that, and the Lord Jesus was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man.

Sin is lawlessness; the Lord was reckoned with the lawless. The contrast with verse 42 — not my will but thine be done — could not be more stark. He was perfect submission to the will of God, the exact opposite of insubordination and lawlessness. And yet he bore the reckoning of the lawless in his death.

Sell Your Garment and Buy a Sword

The instruction to sell a garment and buy a sword is not straightforwardly about weapons, and the response of the disciples — “Lord, behold, here are two swords” — makes clear that they took it literally and entirely missed the point. The Lord’s response does not endorse their interpretation. He does not say “good, two will do”. He says “It is enough” — and the it, not they, is telling. He is not reckoning swords; he is saying that this conversation is at an end.

Ephesians 6:17 gives the key: “take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The sword worth having is the word of God. And a garment is the outward thing by which a man identifies himself in the world — the merchant’s coat, the farmer’s working dress, the clerk’s suit. To sell your garment and buy a sword, in this moral reading, is to give up your worldly identity and reputation in exchange for the word of God. The Bible is purchased at that price: not merely dollars for a book, but the cost of what it means to stand for the truth of God in a world that does not want it. “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23).

An old brother once said to a young man he knew: “I had to work for what I know.” Paul told Timothy to devote himself to the reading of the word of God, to give himself wholly to it so that his profiting would appear to all (1 Timothy 4:13–15). The sword of the Spirit is not passively received; it must be bought — bought with the effort of study, bought with the willingness to have the word shape and judge and form the soul, bought at the cost of standing for it when the world or Christendom would rather have something else.

It Is Enough

The word enough appears in a remarkable place in the Old Testament. In Genesis 45:28, when Jacob heard that Joseph was alive, this man who had cut corners, made deals, and manipulated his way through life was suddenly brought to rest: “Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die — it is enough.” Not a new business deal. Not a legal contract. Not another bargain with God. Just the news that the one he loved was alive. It is enough.

The natural heart knows no such sufficiency. Ask a child how many cookies are enough; the answer is always one more. John D. Rockefeller, asked how much money was enough, said: one dollar more. To the natural man, nothing is ever enough — because the natural man is looking for satisfaction in the wrong direction. But to the one who has Christ as Saviour, to the one who has the will of God made known to him, to the one who has the word of God as his sword: it is enough. Not two, not a stockpile, not a well-funded defensive arsenal. It. Is. Enough.

The thought connects naturally with verse 42: not my will, but thine, be done. The will of God revealed in his word, made good to the soul by the Holy Spirit — that is enough. Just that. The Lord Jesus had the Father’s will and lacked nothing. The disciples were sent without purse and scrip and shoes and lacked nothing. The Christian who has the word of God as his sword and the will of God as his portion is in that same company.

They Didn’t Get It

The disciples’ response — “Lord, behold, here are two swords” — was not what the Lord was looking for, and the Lord’s reply closes the conversation rather than affirming them. They had rummaged in the corner and come up with swords, thinking that was the answer. The Lord had been speaking of something else entirely. The same pattern appears in Mark 8, where the disciples heard the Lord

warn against the leaven of the Pharisees and immediately reasoned that it was because they had forgotten to bring bread. In both cases the response shows that what the Lord said passed over their heads and landed on a literal, earthly level. In both cases, the Lord's actual subject was something far more important.

The Garden: Not My Will, But Thine

The passage closes with the scene in the garden — the Lord withdrawn a stone's cast from the disciples, kneeling, praying. “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” There is in that prayer a perfect model of the sufficiency of the Father's will. The cup is real, the agony is real — so real that an angel came from heaven to strengthen him, so real that his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. And in that extremity, the will of God was enough. He had it, and he rested in it.

The disciples, by contrast, were found sleeping for sorrow. They had not entered into what the moment required. The Lord says to them: “Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” The answer to temptation is not the sword in the corner. It is prayer. It is the will of God. It is enough.

Not my will, but thine, be done. It is enough.