

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME THREE

STUDY TWELVE

An Enemy's Deceitful Kiss

Mark 14:43–52

You will at one time or another be kissed by a deceiver. Don't fall for it.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

It shocks us when we hear that a trusted government official leaked classified information to the enemy. How could this person turn against his or her own country and put the lives of innocent people at risk? We shake our heads in disbelief.

It's even harder to understand when the traitor is someone you know. Perhaps you owned a company, and, in exchange for a lucrative payout, a trusted partner secretly schemed with your competitor to force you into bankruptcy. Or maybe a close friend, or even a spouse, deceived you. It may have happened years ago, but your heart is still broken.

Whenever someone we trusted secretly betrays us, it hurts deeply, and we blame ourselves for not spotting the wolf in sheep's clothing sooner. The disciples must have kicked themselves for not seeing Judas for who he was.

All four gospels, however, make it clear that Judas' betrayal was no secret to Jesus! Around the table, He told them that "one of you eating with me here will betray me" (Mark 14:18). And when Simon Peter prompted John to ask the Master who it was, Jesus responded, "the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl" (John 13:26). Yet Jesus had just washed Judas' feet (13:3–5). Until the end, Jesus was reaching out to His enemy. What grace!

In our previous *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we saw Jesus struggling at Gethsemane and learned to surrender our will to the Father's plan just as Jesus did. In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll glean some wisdom as we witness our great Savior's most heartbreaking hour.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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Mark 14:43–52



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Our prayer is that God will open our eyes and ultimately our hearts to what this passage is saying to us today, in light of what it meant to those when it first occurred. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Echo this prayer for wisdom and understanding of God's precious truths.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

*Wounds from a sincere friend
are better than many kisses from an enemy. (Proverbs 27:6)*

This proverb contains two contrasting images: wounds from a friend that heal and kisses from an enemy that wound. *Friendly wounds* versus *wounding kisses*.

The unusual Hebrew word *petsa* for “wound” means “to cut into something.” What comes to your mind when you think of wounds from a sincere friend? What picture do you see when you imagine kisses from an enemy? What wisdom does this proverb offer?

Let this proverb frame our passage with insight into Judas' treacherous deed.



Observation: Judas' Betrayal, Peter's Reaction, and a Young Man's Flight

Picture the scene as you read [Mark 14:43–52](#). Use your observation skills to picture the expression on the faces of the disciples and the expression on Jesus' face. Try to feel their emotions as you imagine the scene unfold.¹

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Angry Mob—Mark 14:43, 46

It's the middle of the night, probably close to 1:00 in the morning. Describe what happened in Mark 14:43, 46. Why did Judas and those with him choose the cover of darkness?

If you check the record, you'll find that three times that very week Jesus had been teaching in the temple. He wasn't armed. He was available. Why the clubs and swords? —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Traitorous Deed—Mark 14:44–45

Judas knew this angry mob personally! According to Mark 14:44–45, what did he do as soon as they arrived? What additional information do we find in [John 13:27](#)?

The signal he gave them was, "The one I kiss, that's the one." What that tells us, too, is that the mob didn't know Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Conflicting Reactions—Mark 14:47–52

Picture the soldiers grabbing Jesus. What happened in Mark 14:47? What details did Luke and John include in their accounts, according to [Luke 22:50–51](#) and [John 18:10](#)? What questions did Jesus ask the mob in Mark 14:48–49? Why did Jesus say these things were happening?

We read of the reaction, and I find it significant here. The first reaction we see is one of the disciples. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Sense the fear that seized the eleven disciples! What did Mark say about them in Mark 14:50? What description did Mark give of the young man who was following Jesus? What happened to him in 14:51–52?



Interpretation: Discernment, Self-Control, and Hope

In [Mark 14:44–45](#), Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Explore the meaning of this gesture in Pastor Chuck's commentary [Insights on Mark](#), especially the section titled “The Antithesis of Love.” Look in your own Bible-study resources as well. Why do you think Judas used a kiss as the signal rather than simply pointing to Jesus? What do you understand about Judas' character, motive, and deception?

I continue to find it interesting how Judas thought. What attracted him to Jesus was the hope of overthrowing Rome. He's a zealot. He's from Judea—the hotbed where this kind of thing fomented. He anticipates there'll be a turning point in Jesus' style where He will turn from gentleness and compassion to aggressiveness, where He will use His supernatural powers to remove Caesar from the throne and establish His kingdom. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Peter swung a sword to protect Jesus, but violence wasn't the answer. Explain the significance of Jesus' response to Peter and His healing of the man's ear. What meaning would the persecuted believers in Rome have understood?

You know, in unguarded moments, the flesh would take over in Peter's life. It's important that we control ourselves in moments when we would normally flash. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Read the interesting article “[John Mark](#)” in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at [biblegateway.com](#). What evidence points to Mark as the mysterious young man who fled?

Now the reason I suggest it was Mark is because his is the first of the gospels. How else would we know of Jesus' writhing in anguish in the garden as He prayed? The disciples were all asleep. He saw it; he recorded it. He knew what happened. He listened to Jesus. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Walking in the Power of the Holy Spirit

The four gospels help us see Judas from different angles. Though Jesus' disciples were with Judas for about three and a half years—eating, ministering, and traveling with him—they didn't see Judas' true nature. According to [John 14:16–17 and 16:7–15](#), why did Jesus promise that the Helper—the Spirit of truth—would come? How essential is the Holy Spirit to our ability to walk in truth and discernment? What common message do [Proverbs 27:6 and Mark 14:43–45](#) convey to us?

Every proverb has a point. And what it's encouraging is discernment. “Don't be taken in,” we say to our teenagers as they are beginning to date. “Don't be taken in by words of flattery. The boy may have other things in mind than just making you feel good.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Compare Peter's reaction in our passage with Paul's admonition in [Romans 12:14–21 and Galatians 5:16–23](#). How can we believers avoid acting on our fleshly reflexes? Why is the Holy Spirit's assistance necessary for us to display self-control?

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It takes Spirit-filled *self-control* to hold back our anger. We need *divine wisdom* to embrace truth and correction, *supernatural strength* to tame the flesh, and *patience* to wait on God to do what only He can do. All these virtues—self-control, wisdom, strength, and patience—flow from the Holy Spirit.

The story of John Mark resembles many stories of second chances in Scripture. What can mentors and parents learn from [Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5–13; 15:36–40; Colossians 4:10; and 2 Timothy 4:11](#)? What other accounts in Scripture communicate the same truths?

You know what it reminds me of? This is like the artist's signature in the dark corner of the canvas, as Mark records his story. It's as if he's saying, "I was there. I saw it all." Isn't it interesting that when Mark grew up, he became ultimately a missionary and then a writer of the first gospel. Parents, there's hope. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Some Lessons I Must Never Forget!

As you reflect on the biblical principles from our study, consider these three realities. First, *there are still deceivers who want to kiss you*. What insights has the Holy Spirit given you from this Bible passage that now equips you with more God-given discernment?

It takes God-given discernment to know when you've got a Judas near.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Second, *your flesh, like Peter's, will still react in anger*. Though we know to “never pay back evil with more evil” (Romans 12:17), getting back or getting even when we've been wronged is often a knee-jerk reaction. How do you keep from yielding to the strong impulse of retaliation?

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The longer you live, the more you realize the time you spend retaliating is wasted effort. It doesn't make the conflict go away. You become even more angry, and your enemy is even more an enemy. Your flesh will still react in anger. Don't yield to that. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Third, your son or daughter will still act out on his or her own. Imagine the efforts that Mark's mother, Mary, must have exerted to keep him in his bedroom. What attitude should parents or grandparents adopt to deal with curious children or grandchildren? How has God's transforming power touched the life of someone you know? Express your gratitude for God's surprising grace!

It takes long-range parental vision to see beyond the moment.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Let's take heart—we who have hotheaded Peters and impetuous John Marks in our families. God's not through with them yet, nor is He through with us!



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Open my eyes to spot those who genuinely love me. Equip me with a long-range vision to see beyond the moment. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](https://www.insight.org/how-does-pastor-chuck-swindoll-study-the-bible)" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org).

For the 2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2011, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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