The image features a dramatic sky with a cross silhouette in the center. The text 'LENT' is written in large, white, serif capital letters, with '40 DAYS OF PRAYER' in smaller, white, serif capital letters below it. The background is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

LENT

40 DAYS OF PRAYER

THE ARREST


Good Morning Church!

Today we're continuing in our Lent Series: 40 Days of Prayer. Last week we looked at Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and TODAY we are going to see what what happens right after this prayer.

TODAY we are going to examine the circumstances surrounding THE ARREST of Jesus.

Jesus always knew that at some point the target on his back would get bigger & bigger ultimately culminating in his arrest.

And now in the Gospel story we have arrived at the event where Jesus will go from being a nuisance (*in the eyes of the religious leaders*) to now a CRIMINAL.



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Think on this...our world is so broken...that when **SINLESS PERFECTION** arrives...the people in charge wanted Him **ARRESTED**.

Make no mistake if Jesus was walking on this earth **TODAY**, the same exact thing would happen.

Modern society wouldn't be able to handle him.

Because if Jesus were alive today ***He would shame the proud.***

He would ***anger the self-righteous.***

Jesus would ***name the greedy*** and ***speak truth to the wayward in heart.***



Jesus has disrupted the power structure in Jerusalem and now they are **COMING FOR HIM.**

And as we examine the text this morning my hope for us as a church is that we will fall deeper in love as we see Jesus ON MISSION...ON MISSION for us.

Because you see friends in the busyness of life, we can lose sight of the fact that **what Jesus endured is the clearest demonstration of LOVE.** May His love, spur on our own.

PRAY:



By a show of hands how many of you have ever seen the TV show COPS?

Theme Song:

Bad Boys, Bad Boys, what ya gonna do? What ya gonna do when they COME FOR YOU !

Growing up in the 90's I used to watch COPS as a kid. Some of you may be horrified by that (*and for those of you who know me real well it probably makes a lot of sense*) When I was growing up my Dad was a COP so I gravitated to COP shows.

But this show in particular was REAL. To be honest COPS is one of America's first reality TV shows...started way back in 1989.



For those of you who've never see COPS....on this show you see real bad guys and bad girls committing crimes, getting caught, and the most exciting episodes are when they try to get away.

But the theme song really encapsuled the essence of why people tuned in each week. To find out ***“what people do when they come for you.”***

In almost every episode of this show the suspects run away, in most cases because they know they are guilty. They know if they are arrested and tried, they will be found guilty and condemned. And so in one last ditch attempt they run for their freedom, to avoid justice...and we get to sit back and witness it all.



And that really sets the stage for our text this morning.

Because **WHEN THEY COME FOR JESUS.**

He doesn't run.

He doesn't hide.

HE ENDURES.

Mark 14:43-52 (NIV)

⁴³ Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

⁴⁴ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.”

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If you haven't turned there already please turn with me to Mark chapter 14 starting in verse 43.

Read:

⁴⁵ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶ The men seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷ Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

LENT
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Continue Reading:

48 “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.


LENT
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Continue Reading:

⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him,⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

LENT
40 DAYS OF PRAYER

Continue Reading:

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Ok so Jesus has just finished dealing with the disappointment of his disciples falling asleep on him in the garden, when in walks another disciple Judas with a posse armed with clubs and swords, as if Jesus was some dangerous-armed-vigilante-criminal.

Think about how ludicrous this scene must have been. A man who has been healing the blind, curing leprosy, making the crippled walk again, restoring the faith of those who lost faith through their circumstances, and the response to this is clubs and swords?

This would be like if we sent the Terminator to teach Mr. Rogers a lesson. [none the less]

Those that we're wielding clubs and swords aren't just any normal thugs. This was an officially sanctioned arrest party. The Sanhedrin, made up of the chief priests, scribes and elders were involved.

45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him.

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Once again in verse 45 it says, **READ.**

The Greek verb “to kiss” here in this passage is an emphatic form of the word, which suggests that this wasn’t just a normal peck on the cheek, but rather that Judas either kissed Jesus more than once, or that he was extra expressive in the way he went about it.

A kiss of betrayal is way worse than just a normal betrayal. Why? It’s obvious, because kissing is only something you do with those you love and care about.

Illus:
I remember when my daughter (Ella) was a little girl, I told her that I was going to break the Guinness World Record for the dad who has given his daughter the most kisses. And so to this day when I have gotten behind on my kisses I will give her like 50 kisses at one time (it’s probably a bit awkward to watch).

45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him.

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But why do I do this? In part to annoy her :-)) But more importantly to let her know I love her, how important she is to me, it's a way of bonding that is special between the two of us.

What's crazy about this situation that Judas has placed himself in, is that he knows that Jesus loves him, Judas knows that he is loved and accepted by Jesus, but still he uses a kiss, a symbol of love to betray his Rabbi Jesus.

But church there is a deeper lesson in here for us today. It is too easy to say, aww, Judas wasn't a real disciple, Judas was possessed by the devil, Judas was being used, I would have never done that!

There are probably several reason why Judas responded the way he did here, but let me just focus on one. Because I think it's important to go inward and deeply understand Judas' betrayal.

45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him.

LENT
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What we see in the Gospels is unlike the other disciples that called Jesus “Lord,” again and again. Judas never used this title for Jesus, but instead called him “Rabbi,” which tells us that Jesus was nothing more than a teacher to Judas.

While other disciples at times made great professions of faith and loyalty to Jesus...we don't ever see Judas respond in this way.

And so you see Church, Judas' this lack of faith in Jesus is ***at the foundation*** of this kiss of betrayal.

Now, it's easy to beat up on Judas. There isn't anyone who comes to his defense. Of all the Apostles the name Judas hasn't been used much in Western Culture.

But I am going to contend that we all have a little Judas in us.

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What I mean by that is we all struggle with enduring faith and just like Judas the reason we struggle is often because our FOUNDATION is weak. We cannot endure rocky times because the basis of our faith is shallow.

Illus:

You likely remember the heartbreaking & tragic results from the 7.8 & 7.5 magnitude earthquakes in Turkey & Syria last month. Over 44,000 people lost their lives in the rubble.

To make matters worse many of the buildings that came down were brand new. Perhaps you'd expected that these buildings were old and decrepit. That wasn't the case, in fact some of the buildings were only a year old.

And so how did this happen.



Here is a picture of one of the buildings that fell before and after the collapse.

This building should have been built to withstand a 7.8 magnitude earthquake.

Regulations called for it to have high-quality concrete reinforced with steel bars down to the foundation...columns and beams should have distributed energy effectively to absorb the impact of the earthquakes.


Structural engineers the world over knew that much of the death and destruction was avoidable...but instead of the foundation of these buildings absorbing the damage, instead the foundation crumbled.



Friends you know that Jesus himself was often fond of using physical examples to describe spiritual realities and that is what is in view here.

Judas' faith was shallow at best, and so when tested, he failed the test...he fell.

Church family think back to a time in your life where your faith was shallow but God grew it. I remember being tested as a young Pastor especially in 2011, God took our church in Colorado through some difficult times in ministry and I didn't have enough faith to believe that God was going to overcome our circumstances. God showed me that it wasn't about me (what I thought the foundation was) but that it was all about him (the true foundation). God grew me in ways that I wouldn't have been able to imagine if I hadn't walked through that pain/journey.

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And I know that many of you have a similar story of testing that God has walked you through that you wouldn't want to experience again but you wouldn't change for the world because you grew a deeper/stronger foundation you didn't have before.

Friends what is happening in your life right now that God is using to deepen your foundation? What circumstance is God trying to use to make you stop relying on yourself, and to deepen your FAITH in what he can do?

[Pause]

There is another testing going on in this passage, *[we just looked at what's going on with Judas but]* Jesus is being tested as well, and as we dive back into verse 48 let us witness the strength of His foundation.

⁴⁸ “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? ⁴⁹ Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”

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Re-Read: 

The world’s most perfect person ever is being arrested for only ever doing good and his response? **“THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED.”**

You see Church Jesus is laser focused on His MISSION. He knows that he is here to suffer and die for the sins of the world, and so even though EVERYONE has deserted him and he’s feeling the pain of that rejection, He soldiers on.

It’s significant that Jesus used the wording **“THE SCRIPTURE MUST BE FULFILLED.”** Why? Because in this we see Jesus’ unshakable stand. No matter what it may cost Him, no matter how much He may have to suffer *in obedience to the Father*, no matter what else may happen, the Scriptures absolutely *must* be fulfilled.

48 “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”

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Jesus has at his foundation, his core, obedience to the father.


Everybody has left him...***it doesn't matter.***

He is going to experience excruciating pain...***it doesn't matter.***

And you see what's happening in this passage is a contrast of sorts.

Judas who would betray for 30 pieces of silver, contrasted with the person of Jesus Christ who would not betray his Father for anything.

And now in this story Jesus is all by himself and we are left to ask ourselves.....who do we want to be in this story. Which path do we want to pursue?



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THE ARREST

Judas is living for himself, he wants to follow Jesus for what he thinks he can get from him.

Judas understands that Jesus is popular and has amassed a following, and could likely be the next Emperor of Rome...Judas is along for the ride.

But as soon as things begin to turn and the going gets tough, Judas quickly turns to see how he can turn Jesus' [seeming] misfortune into a positive for himself. And short monetary gain was enough for him.

Church none of us want to be Judas, we all want to be like Jesus. But the problem is that it's **easy** to be like Judas and most people take the easy road in life. Jesus tells us in **Matthew chapter 7** that... *Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

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And so it seems like we have a choice, we can live mainly for ourselves, dabble in the things of God when it's convenient, when it doesn't intrude on what we want, when we are getting what we want from it.

This is easy, Jesus says this is what most people do. But there is NO reward for dabbling.

But we can also choose to **go all in** like we see Jesus doing here. If we **go all in** we aren't living for the moment we are living for eternity. If we **go all in** we aren't swayed by public opinion because our decision making is rooted in God's unchanging word. If we **go all in** we aren't living for ourselves because we now live for Him.

Friends as I say these words, I soooo want to live for Jesus, but this is hard, and most people do not live this way. They don't even attempt this path.

**"There can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience in following Jesus, no wholeness in the Christian life, apart from an immersion in, and embrace of, community. I am not myself by myself."
- Eugene Peterson**

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But this is one of the main reasons why we have THE CHURCH...we will fail to live as Christ on our own.

But together, mutually encouraging one another, being accountable to one another, loving one another we can walk that narrow road together. Amen!

Eugene Peterson once said..."There can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience in following Jesus, no wholeness in the Christian life, apart from an immersion in, and embrace of, community. I am not myself by myself." - Eugene Peterson

We are blessed to have a great and growing community here at Brandywine. It is something to be treasured. You and I can grow to become who God created us to be, and we need one another. Not TikTok, Not Virtual Reality, Not ChatGPT. Our world is driving us toward isolation, and The Church is the antidote.

⁵⁰ Then everyone deserted him and fled.

⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him,⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

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Speaking of isolation...moving on, as we look at our last bit of text we see Jesus experience the devastation of isolation.

Re-Read: 

I wonder what was going through Jesus' mind as he saw the same men who GOT OUT OF THE BOAT ON THE SEA OF GALLILEE TO FOLLOW HIM, now running away from Him.

You see it wasn't just Judas who turned on Him, it was everyone. The text does tell us that Peter cut one of the henchmen's ears off. But even now Peter has run away too. To underline the complete abandonment of Jesus by his follower, Mark tells us that one of Christ's young followers runs away naked, leaving his "***linen cloth***" behind. He was so afraid to be associated with Jesus in this moment that he didn't seem to be bothered that he was nude.

⁵⁰ Then everyone deserted him and fled.

⁵¹ A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him,⁵² he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

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And so why does Mark tell us these things, why is it important?

There are at least two things in my mind.

Number one, I think Mark wants us to know that being associated with Jesus will cost us something. The Cost of Christian Discipleship is high.

But, number two, I also think that Mark is wanting us to sit in the isolation and abandonment that Jesus must be feeling now.

We often think of the crown of thorns and the cat of 9 tails when we think of what hurt Jesus during his Passion. But this had to stand out amongst the pain. Nobody likes the feeling of rejection, not even Jesus.



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And you know as I was preparing this sermon and thinking about my own life, I was thinking about the times in my life *[since giving my life to Jesus]* where I have run away from Him.

I think about the sins I've knowingly committed. I think about the opportunities I knowingly avoided. And my heart breaks because I don't ever want to see myself as one who would **EVER RUN AWAY FROM JESUS!**

[Pause]

Friends, I want to be like Jesus...I want to know **THE FATHER'S** will for me **AND I WANT TO DO THAT** whatever it is. How cool would it have been if instead of running away, and instead of hacking ears off...the disciples had been resilient and said in unison, **THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED.**



And you know friends we can learn from this. Because before you and I know it, an opportunity is going to arise that will test our discipleship to Christ and we need to be ready.

Will we run, will we fight, or will we be resilient?

And so I want to end our time this morning by discussing how to become a resilient disciple from the context of this mornings text Mark 14:43-52.

Resilient Disciples

Deny Themselves

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The first thing we can learn from this text is that ***Resilient Disciples Deny Themselves.***

Just like you won't become an Olympian with a bad diet and little exercise. You will not be a resilient disciple for Jesus if you cannot deny yourself the pleasures of this world for the glory of heaven.

Judas couldn't deny himself, he failed the text.

As we are in a season of Lent, many of us are in a season of denial. May we gain the spiritual strength by the power of the Holy Spirit, to deny the flesh and live for kingdom priorities.

Resilient Disciples

Get Prepared

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The second thing we can learn from this text is that *Resilient Disciples Get Prepared.*

One of the reasons why Jesus was able to stand up to this trying moment in his life is because He was prepared for it. Jesus had deliberated with His Father in the garden, and so when the time of testing came His response was, THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED...I'M READY.

You see often friends we expect things to go well in our walk with the Lord, but we often do not sufficiently prepare for the difficult moments in life, and when they arise we can sometimes fail the test because we haven't deliberated.

Deliberation is the long and careful consideration or discussion...its what a jury does. We cannot expect a lifetime of quick popcorn prayers to build resilience in us. A deliberative prayer life will ready us for the unexpected, so when our time of testing comes, we pass the test.

Resilient Disciples

Dedicate Themselves


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The third thing we can learn from this text is that ***Resilient Disciples Dedicate Themselves.***

Jesus knew **WHO** He was and He knew **WHOSE** He was. Jesus knew that He came from the Father and that He was going back to His Father, He was dedicated to God the Father in such a way that there weren't really any decisions that had to be made....the decision had already been made. And friends it can be like that for us to.

And while Jesus' dedication was resolute. The disciples, not so much. They didn't know whether they were coming or going.

Church Family as you dedicate yourself to the things of God, you will notice a change, you will notice that you aren't as easily shaken or rattled. You can stand under the weight of the world because HIS yoke is easy HIS burden is light...HE will carry you.



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