



“A Kiss, A Sword, & A Cup”
Luke 22:47-65

Idea: The Word of God is a sure and steady guide.

Intro: On June 30, 1859, a large crowd gathered on both sides of the Niagara Gorge. They were there to watch the famous French acrobat Jean François Gravelet, better known as Charles Blondin, cross above the Niagara River. On this day, he became the first man in history to walk on a tightrope across Niagara Falls from the United States into Canada. The tightrope was suspended 160 feet above the raging waters on one end and 270 feet on the other. It is estimated that over 100,000 people gathered to watch this daredevil walk the 1,100 feet across the falls without a safety harness or net.

The Niagara walk made Blondin famous and wealthy, and he was asked to perform for audiences worldwide. He would make seventeen subsequent and more daring walks across the Niagara Falls, which drew more and more crowds. He did such daring feats as crossing blindfolded, in a sack, on stilts, on a bicycle, and once he even carried a stove and cooked an omelet, midway. During one of his shows, Blondin walked backwards across the tightrope to Canada, and then he pushed a wheelbarrow back to the United States’ side.

Can you imagine walking a tightrope stretching over a quarter of a mile and spanning the breadth of Niagara Falls? There is no way in the world I would ever do something like that. Blondin, however, was different. He made it his practice and business. He thrilled audiences all around the world by walking tightropes.

Blondin was able to do these incredible acts largely because he trusted the sure and steady ropes upon which he walked. Today, you and I are not called to trust ropes to hold us up. Thankfully, God has given us something much more secure and trustworthy. He has given us His Word, which is a sure and steady guide. On our next stop in Luke’s Gospel, we will witness a kiss of betrayal, a sword of retaliation, and the early pouring of a cup of wrath.

Read Luke 22:47-65.

Inquiry: There in Gethsemane, Jesus had been agonizing in prayer over what awaited Him, while the disciples slept. Now it is time for everything He has been teaching and predicting for three years to come to fruition. None of the events of this night and the following few days will be coincidental. Each will be purposeful and predicated.

In verse 47, Judas Iscariot, who is “*one of the twelve*,” comes to Jesus with an armed crowd of religious leaders and Temple guards. He had conspired with the chief priests and officers to betray the Lord (22:3-6). Knowing Jesus’ pattern, he fully expected the Lord to be in Gethsemane praying on this night, so he comes as a friend to

betray Him with a kiss from Hell. As awful as this treachery is, it was in no way a surprise. Jesus had spoken clearly that one of the twelve would betray Him (Matt 26:21). He even took it a step farther and told Judas to do what he was going to do quickly (John 13:27). Judas betrayed Jesus just as the Lord said.

As Jesus is surrounded by the armed crowd, the disciples asked if they should use the swords they had brought with them. Before the Lord could answer, Peter drew his and cut the right ear off Malchus, the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). There is certainly seems to be no lack of heart on the part of Peter and the others. Peter was definitely a good man to have on your side. A soldier who served under George Washington, nicknamed “Mad” Anthony Wayne, is alleged to have told Washington, “General, I will storm Hell if you lay the plans.” The problem with Peter was that he did not listen to plans. He was more like the taxi driver who missed the directions and only heard the words, “and hurry,” so he took off at high speed in the opposite direction of the destination. When the passenger asked, “Driver, do you know where you are going?” the taxi driver replied, “No, sir! But we are going there very fast!” Peter and the disciples might have been willing to go to battle on this night, but Jesus was willing to go quietly with His accusers “*like a lamb that is led to the slaughter*” just as the Word of God predicted (Is 53:7). The “*power of darkness*” seems to be prevailing, but Jesus’ sacrifice will bring victory (Is 53:11) as the prophets have declared.

In verse 54, the armed crowd arrests Jesus and takes him away to stand before the chief priests. Over the next several hours, Jesus will endure six different trials before being condemned to be crucified. Three trials will be before the Jews, and three trials will be before the Roman authorities. Jesus is first taken to Annas, the former high priest who was an influential man in the nation and retained his former title (John 18:12-13). Annas then sent Jesus to Caiaphas, his son-in-law, who was the official high priest (Matt 26:57). Finally, at daybreak, He will be tried before the Sanhedrin and found guilty (22:66-71). The Jews did not possess the authority of capital punishment (John 18:31-32), so they will send Jesus to the Roman authorities for three more trials. It is at Caiaphas’s house that Peter denies knowing Jesus three times. He had proudly disregarded the Lord’s prediction earlier in the evening (22:33), claiming he was willing to face both prison and death for Christ. Now, however, Peter distances himself with each denial. Finally, with the third disavowal, the rooster crows just as Jesus had said. In that moment, as Jesus was being transferred again, He turns and looks at Peter (22:61). He had denied any connection to Jesus just as the Lord said.

All of this took place as Jesus had predicted. He had told the disciples after the transfiguration experience and other miraculous events that the Son of Man would be given over into the hands of men (9:44). So, when Jesus is arrested in the garden, it happened in fulfillment to the Word of the Lord. Today, from this event and everything leading up to it, I want us to see and understand that the Word of God is a sure and steady guide. There are two ongoing principles for us to understand.

1. Everything God says can always be trusted.

I wonder if we really believe this principle. The Bible is full of miraculous stories. It describes things that blow our minds like water turning to blood, food forming on the ground with the dew, axe heads floating, and the dead rising from the grave. For those reading the Bible with us this year, we read on Saturday about seven miracles in 2 Kings 3 and 4. There is a ton of action packed into those two chapters. It all begins with Elisha the prophet telling the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom, who had run out of water in their march against Moab, that the streambed would be filled with water and that they would defeat Moab (2 Kings 3:16-18). The next morning there was water, and they were victorious. Then a widow who could not pay her creditor asked Elisha for help. He told her to gather as many bottles as she could and to pour her small jar of oil into them until all the bottles were full. She did so and sold them to pay her debt (2 Kings 4:1-7). The prophet then told a Shunammite woman who had no son that the following year she would bear a son, which came to pass (2 Kings 4:17). Several years later that boy tragically died, and Elisha resurrected him from the dead (2 Kings 4:35). The final two miracles involved food. There was a famine in Gilgal, so food was scarce. A servant picked a wild gourd to make a stew. The gourd was poisonous, and it made everyone sick who ate the stew. Elisha

poured flour into the pot of stew and made it safe to eat (2 Kings 4:41). Finally, the prophet multiplied twenty loaves of barley bread and grain to feed a hundred men (2 Kings 4:44). In each miracle story what the prophet of God said became a reality. The same is true with the events that happened to Jesus in the garden. Have you ever wondered why the Bible tells miraculous stories? There are many reasons for them, but one reason is because they remind us that everything God says can always be trusted.

¹⁰*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.* – Isaiah 55:10-11

The Word of God is a sure and steady guide. Do you believe this? When the rug of life is pulled out from under your feet, do you still believe you can trust what God says about you? His Word is sure and steady because it comes from a sure and steady God. This reality sets up the second ongoing principle.

2. God's Word will be fulfilled in your life.

According to Isaiah, what God says in the Bible about you will not return empty. It will accomplish God's purpose in your life. Allow me to lay before you just four areas of fulfillment:

- Salvation is promised for those who call out.
"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." – Romans 10:13

Today, every sinner who is outside of a relationship with the God who created them can call out to Jesus in repentance and faith and fully expect to be heard and redeemed. The offer is freely extended to all with the promise of fulfillment.

- God's abiding presence is ensured for His children.
"I am with you always, to the end of the age." – Matthew 28:20b

Today, every believer can expect God to walk with them through the ups and downs of life. He is there on the mountain tops when things are easy and good. Likewise, He is present in the valley of the shadow of death (Ps 23). God is an ever-present help in trouble (Ps 46:1). The promise is made, and it will be fulfilled.

- Discipline pledged when there is sin.
"For the Lord disciplines the ones he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."
– Hebrews 12:6

Today, as a believer you should welcome the Lord's hand of discipline in your life. It is a sanctifying work that reminds us that we are children of the High King. As such, it lets us know that we are loved. The discipline of the Lord assures us that our discipleship will be fulfilled.

- Resurrection and eternal life are confirmed for believers.
"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" – John 11:25-26

Today, every believer can face death securely, knowing that the grave is not the end for them. There is a life beyond it. As bad as it may seem, death is the doorway to resurrection life. Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6a). Resurrection and eternal life are found exclusively in Him, and His resurrection from the dead verifies its fulfillment in us.

Conclusion: From a kiss, a sword, and a cup we are reminded that God has given us a secure and trustworthy foundation upon which to build our lives. He has given us His Word, and it is a sure and steady guide. Those people who gathered on the cliffs of the Niagara Gorge were fascinated by Blondin's fearlessness. The huge crowd that watched him cross Niagara Falls on July 15, 1859, were mesmerized by his ability to walk backwards to Canada and return pushing a wheelbarrow blindfolded. After completing the crossing, he asked for some audience participation. He had proven that he could cross while blindfolded, so he asked for a volunteer to get in the wheelbarrow and take a ride across the Falls with him. As Blondin was making his appeal, he noticed one little boy staring at him in amazement. So, he asked the boy, "Do you believe I could take a person across in the wheelbarrow without falling?" The boy quickly replied, "Yes, sir. I really do." Blondin then said, "Well then, get in, son."

No one was willing to get in the wheelbarrow that day. The story of Charles Blondin paints a real-life picture of what faith actually is. The crowd had watched his daring feats. They said they believed, but their actions proved they truly did not.

It is one thing for us to say we believe in God. It is true faith, though, when we believe God and put our faith and trust in His Son, Jesus Christ. There is no need to worry; Jesus has carried many across to Heaven's gates. He can be trusted for salvation! And if we are willing to trust Him with our eternity life, then we can also trust Him with our life here and now.