

Ebenezer Baptist Church

Small Group Discussion Guide

Sermon Title: Caught in the Crossfire

Preacher: Reverend Rapheal G Warnock, Ph.D.

Mark 14:43-52

43 Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. 44 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. 47 But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 48 Then Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? 49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled." 50 All of them deserted him and fled. 51 A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

Sermon Notes

The message reflects on the drama, violence and betrayal that took place the night Jesus was betrayed; and the implications for a young bystander who became "caught-up-in-the-crossfire". Pastor Warnock described crossfire situations as predetermined structural and social situations such as:

- The social care for the poor being decided by a compassionless political class
- Children born into poverty
- Boardroom politics that impact non-board members

In the text, Jesus had been profiled because He'd wielded the non-violent weapon of love which threatened the powers that be. He was set up, betrayed and criminalized by rivaling religious and political entities that wanted Him dead because of the power of his words. The Gospel of Mark, chapter 14, captures the agony of Jesus' emotions as He traveled in prayer throughout the night while his disciples failed to pray just one hour with Him.

The sermon begins at verse 43 while Jesus was speaking to the disciples about the weakness of their flesh and the willingness of the Spirit of God. Judas showed up with the armed mob and a crowd of onlookers to arrest Jesus when mayhem broke out. His disciples and the crowd ran from the armed guards.

In the midst of the chaos, the gospel writer turns his attention from Jesus to focus on the strange events surrounding an unnamed, linen clad, young man (perhaps himself), being pursued by the armed guards. The young bystander's interest in Jesus brought him from the peripheral of faith into the crossfire of persecution along with the master. He escaped capture by his willingness to shed his garment and run freely into to his future. Jesus remained bound but the young man went free.

The sermon admonishes us to be like the young man by:

- 1) Moving in from the peripheral
- 2) Merging our marginality with Jesus'
- 3) Abandoning your old-stuff and embrace your new life in Jesus

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Discussions Questions:

- 1) What emotions are triggered when you think about the betrayal of Jesus?
- 2) How has your faith helped you when you were caught in the crossfire of persecution? What did you do?
- 3) Has God ever interrupted your story to highlight someone else?
- 4) How does nakedness symbolize freedom?
- 5) Talk about how you've let go of "old-stuff" to embrace your new life?