



Wounded by Friendly Fire

Luke 22:47-51; John 18:10-11

Introduction

In recent conflicts a new term has been coined to describe the unfortunate phenomenon of soldiers being wounded or killed by accidental fire from their own side. This term is 'friendly fire'. It is a sad fact that many Christians have been wounded by friendly fire from other Christians and are living with the consequences, sometimes many years later.

The passages above depict the events surrounding the arrest of Jesus. It is interesting the certain details have been preserved for us by the Holy Spirit. Why are we told that Peter tried to defend Jesus by attacking Malchus and cutting of his ear? Why are we allowed to witness Jesus' tender care for Malchus as he heals his wounds? Are there parallels in this story for us today?

Peter was close to Jesus but acting without His consent. He acted instinctively, believing his actions to be right, but he didn't listen to Jesus and ended up hurting those around him. Malchus was injured at the hands of an over-enthusiastic follower of Jesus, but found healing at the hands of the One he had come to arrest. In the midst of His own suffering, Jesus lovingly dealt with



both Malchus and Peter – one with healing and the other with loving correction.

How many people are in the same boat today? – perhaps not hurt physically, but wounded no less significantly by those who are supposed to be representing Jesus. These emotional and spiritual wounds, if left to fester, can become infected and cause us to experience negative side-effects: i.e anger, bitterness, resentment, hard-heartedness and cynicism.

God wants those who have been wounded to find a safe place to experience Jesus' healing touch – to let down barriers, to forgive those who have hurt them and to learn to trust again.

Life Group questions...

- 1. In what way can you relate to Peter? In what way can you relate to Malchus, the servant of the High Priest?**
- 2. Have you ever been wounded by 'friendly fire' in church life? How has this affected you?**
- 3. Read Psalm 41:9. How would you respond to a believer who told you they were never coming back to church because they've been so badly hurt at the hands of other Christians in the past?**
- 4. If a wound remains open, it is more prone to infection. How do we deal with emotional/spiritual wounds that have not healed properly?**
- 5. How can we protect ourselves from taking offence? What role does grace play in our relationships with each other?**
- 6. Spend some time in quiet before the Lord and allow the Holy Spirit to show you if there are any church-related wounds that need healing in your life? Have you wounded anybody yourself? Is there anyone you need to forgive? Is there anybody you need to ask forgiveness from?**