*Malchus' Dilemma*

The excitement was building as the large group, armed with swords and clubs, approached the famous man who would be arrested. In this crowd was the servant of the high priest of Israel, Malchus, among many other religious leaders and Jews. He was commissioned to bring the long sought-after Jesus to his master, the high priest. Therefore, he was bold to wield the authority bestowed on him for the task. He watched with eager anticipation as the predetermined signal was given by an accomplice to hand Jesus over to him.

Suddenly, without warning, one of Jesus' followers, Simon Peter, attacked Malchus with a sword and cut off his right ear. The heart-pounding exuberance of conquest suddenly shifted to excruciating pain and seething anger at the assault. Equally without warning, the betrayed Jesus picked up Malchus' ear and placed it back where it belonged. As malicious and sudden was the attack, so endearing and gentle was the restoration.

Malchus faced the man, Jesus, for the first time and this encounter plunged him into a dilemma. Formerly, he wholeheartedly supported the arrest of a “criminal” to the Jews, but now questions arose within him concerning his mission and its consummation: to kill the man who healed him. Malchus continued to follow the proceeding, but his posture was no longer confident and assuming as the servant of the high priest. It was the Jewish officials and soldiers who now led the lynch mob while Malchus followed in bewilderment. He found himself sympathizing with the one whom he thought deserved to die.

They brought Jesus to the high priest for trial so Malchus also was there. Simon Peter had entered the same area and stood warming himself by a fire. This was the man who had attacked him, yet Malchus remained silent. Where was the animosity? The vengeance? It was one of his relatives who pointed Peter out, yet strangely no one accused Peter of anything but being associated with Jesus. They saw him in the olive grove where they had apprehended Jesus. They saw him brutally cut off Malchus' ear. Yet, there was no accusation, no revenge.

Biblical history for Malchus ends here. There is no further record as to how he responded. In other words, the Bible leaves that up to you. This story should grasp our attention because we have had a similar experience. We have rejected Jesus for so long. We have hoped He'd be removed from our lives. And then suddenly, something horrible or unendurable happens to us. We immediately blame God and well up with anger towards Him, and then equally abrupt comes a complete reversal of circumstances. For instance, maybe it was an imminent head on collision and miraculously there is no accident. Maybe you heard a devastating, life-threatening diagnosis only to turn into the deletion of some former bad habits, bringing in new healthier habits. Maybe you really messed up big time and deserved a harsh punishment, yet no one even seemed to notice. You scan your life. There were many such times.

The end of the story is up to you. Will you recognize the loving hand of a Savior or will you continue to follow your past thought about God or what others conclude? I believe the Lord Jesus purposely allows things to happen to us so He can intervene and show His love towards us. As for me, I'd like history to say that I not only thanked the Lord Jesus for saving me and healing me, but that I gladly followed Him despite what I had previously thought and despite how others feel about Him.

[ctr … based on the Gospel of John 18:1-27]