**Thesis:** When God made mankind, He made us in His image. He designed us to be representatives of His character and nature. But with the fall of man, sin has swept across God’s good creation like a swarm of locusts. And as a result, God’s greatest creation, us, has been fractured. And though we may still be made in God’s image, the ugliness of sin finds ways to slip through the cracks. But Jesus can make us mend us and heal us from our hurt.

**Introduction:** This is the Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_\_\_, your host from Pray.com. I’m stoked to be back with you. We’re nearing the end of our stories of Jesus and the outcasts of life, so make sure you follow the podcast to stick around to the finish!

**Context:** Today’s epic narrative begins after a quiet night of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus and the disciples have settled into the upper room of a home in Jerusalem. He washes their feet, demonstrating His humble servant’s heart, has shared the Passover meal with them, institutes the Lord’s Supper (or as we might know it, communion), and concludes by giving them powerful words of encouragement. He knew this would be their last meal together before His death, and He wanted to prepare them for the days ahead. At the conclusion of the meal, Jesus takes His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, a place they had often gone to together. The garden was nestled at the foot of the Mount of Olives, a lustrous hill filled with olive trees. This spot was also filled with highly sought after tombs as a place to honor lost loved ones with a beautiful final resting place. With the irony not lost on Jesus, this was the place He would share His final moments with the disciples before His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion.

**Message:** Life with other people is messy, and this reality is no different for the people of God. Though the Church is a vibrant community filled with God’s love, it’s also composed of imperfect people. Though we aim to show everyone the tender care and love of God, there are times we fall short. And the people who are on the receiving end of that are often left hurt, bruised, and scarred.

Such is the experience of Malchus, a temple guard who finds himself at the wrong end of Peter’s sword. Hurt by one of Jesus' followers, he projects his pain and anger onto the Lord Himself. There are many Malchuses in our world. People who have been cut off from hearing the gospel because of cutting words or betrayal from a member of the church. Countless individuals have found themselves wronged in the name of God. But our story today reminds us that those ones don’t have to stay hurt. Though people may harm us, Jesus wants to heal us.

Our story begins with Judas’ private meeting with Caiaphas, the chief priest of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. This was the moment he locked in his decision to betray Jesus, the man who called him a friend. Caiphas sends Judas with a large detachment of Roman soldiers and officers from the temple guard. Though they may not have known what to expect in their apprehending of Jesus, they were going to prepare themselves for anything. They weren’t going to let Jesus continue to spread His message any longer. As they enter the garden, they’re faced with Jesus and His ragtag team of disciples. No armies formed from the masses ready for revolt. No mobs waiting to be set loose with violent revolution. Just twelve men enjoying the calm of the night. This quickly changes when Peter jumps into action to defend Jesus and cuts off Malchus’ ear. Peter likely thought he was taking an incredible leap of faith to defend Jesus. The only problem is, Jesus doesn’t need us to defend Him. Moments prior, Jesus had just sent the troops flying onto their backs. His act of boldness, as noble as it may have seemed, wasn’t what the Lord was calling him to do. It’s unfortunate to see Peter in this place.

In *Matthew 16*, Jesus foretells his death to the disciples, only to have Peter pull Him aside and rebuke Him. With fiery words that were sure to penetrate Peter’s heart, and pride, Jesus says, *“ ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.’ 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.’ “*

Peter knew that Jesus had to die, yet he allowed his own inflated sense of importance get in the way. Maybe Peter’s heart was in the right place, wanting to protect his Teacher, but the wrong actions taken with the right motives are still wrong. What Peter didn’t understand is that people aren’t the enemy. God calls us to prepare for battle, but it isn’t a battle against people.

*Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

We have one enemy, and that’s Satan, the one who stands opposed to God’s will on every front. This is why Jesus rebukes Peter in the way that He did in *Matthew 16*. People aren’t the enemy. The ones opposed to Jesus are just lost and we have to view them as such. Not with pity, but with eyes of compassion. They’re an opportunity to see more souls won to Christ.

For three and a half years, the disciples had seen Jesus rise and fall in the eyes of various groups of people. They saw Him praised by the masses and persecuted by the religious leaders. They understood how He had rattled the cage of Jewish customs, culture, and tradition. They witness the strife that had built up between Him and the religious elite.

For all they had witnessed, they were learning that their faith was going to offend some. But during that same time as they walked with the Messiah, they had gleaned from the loving work of Jesus. They would have learned that Jesus never wanted their faith to be a reason to harm people as He preached on peace and loving our enemies, as He healed and raised people from the dead, and as He intentionally sought out the outcasts of the world to reach them with His good news of great joy. Our faith may offend others, but it should never hurt them. If it does, perhaps it’s not faith we’re operating out of. Our faith is a means to overcome the world in Christ’s victory of sin and death, and frees us up to love in the same way that Jesus loved.

But there will be times where the people of God don’t reflect His heart. Times where those outside the church are hurt by those inside the Church. Times that the Peter’s of the world cut off the metaphorical ears of the Malchuses of the world. Whether you’ve ever found yourself as a Peter or as a Malchus, the good news is this: Jesus can right the wrongs of His people. As Malchus lies in the mud created from his own blood, Jesus pauses in the middle of the commotion, calmly picks up Malchus' ear, and heals the young temple servant. The final miracle Jesus performed before His crucifixion was healing someone hurt by one of His own disciples. He didn’t display His divine power by disposing of His enemies with a single word. Instead, He takes one last chance to prove that He was the Son of God by showing that He not only operated in the power of God, but with the heart of God. This was a final act of love for one man before performing the greatest act of love for all mankind by dying on the cross.

The Church is the last place we want to be hurt. But unfortunately it happens. But knowing that Jesus heals our hurt reminds us that even though people aren’t perfect, our Father in heaven is.