

“Beat It” by Michael Jackson
Matthew 26:47-56

Today’s song is a story about a young man who’s drawn into gang violence and must make a choice between fighting and running away. For kids in an urban setting this is more than a song, it’s a routine part of life. Gangs are no longer restricted to urban centers, however. Wythe County has seen an upswing of gang activity and we can no longer say we’re immune to this issue. As adults we need to love kids more, and be especially sensitive to kids who are at risk to dropping out, to drug and alcohol use, or being involved in gangs. You can’t *personally* save every kid, but you can pour your life into one kid and really make a difference.

Let’s listen to the first two verses of the song and identify some of the underlying decisions:

[1st Verse]

They Told Him Don't You Ever Come Around Here
Don't Wanna See Your Face, You Better Disappear
The Fire's In Their Eyes And Their Words Are Really Clear
So Beat It, Just Beat It

[2nd Verse]

You Better Run, You Better Do What You Can
Don't Wanna See No Blood, Don't Be A Macho Man
You Wanna Be Tough, Better Do What You Can
So Beat It, But You Wanna Be Bad

[Chorus]

Just Beat It, Beat It, Beat It, Beat It
No One Wants To Be Defeated
Showin' How Funky Strong Is Your Fight
It Doesn't Matter Who's Wrong Or Right
Just Beat It, Beat It (x4)

There’s a LOT going on in this song ... these first two verses and the chorus deal with seven issues many of us deal with every day.

- 1) Dealing with aggression. “The fire’s in their eyes...”
- 2) Dampening your aggression. “Don’t wanna’ see no blood, don’t be a macho man.”
- 3) Discovering an escape route. “You better run, You better do what you can.”
- 4) Deciding the limits of your toughness. “You wanna be tough, better do what you can.”
- 5) Diagnose (think carefully about) possible defeat. “No one wants to be defeated.”

- 6) Displaying your strength with integrity. "Showin' How funky strong is your fight."
- 7) Dropping your need to be right all the time. "It doesn't matter who's wrong or right."

This whole discussion reminds me of an event in the life of Christ ... when His gang (the disciples) are confronted by Judas' gang (the Temple guards) in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:47-56 (NIV)

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him."

⁴⁹ Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

⁵⁰ Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

⁵¹ With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵² "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword."

⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

⁵⁴ But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me.

⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Let's look again at the 7 key issues this song addresses in light of this passage:

- 1) Aggression. Jesus walked into that garden knowing the other gang was coming.
- 2) My aggression. v 52, Jesus said, "put your sword away, that's not how I roll." [He *could* roll with twelve legions of angels.]
- 3) Escape. v. 56, " ... then all the disciples deserted him and fled." This doesn't endorse running away, but they did live to establish the New Testament church.
- 4) Toughness. v. 48-49, Jesus was tough enough to stand there and receive the kiss of his betrayer ... whom he still loved.
- 5) Defeat. v. 56, this fulfilled prophecy, it was not defeat. Adopt the long view of life.

- 6) Strength with integrity. v. 55, Jesus directly addressed the crowd.
7) Being right. v. 50, Jesus told Judas to do what he must, knowing what was “right” was difficult to see at that moment.

Let’s finish the message today by listening to verses 3 and 4, with the chorus again:
(play snippet 2)

[3rd Verse]

They're Out To Get You, Better Leave While You Can
Don't Wanna Be A Boy, You Wanna Be A Man
You Wanna Stay Alive, Better Do What You Can
So Beat It, Just Beat It

[4th Verse]

You Have To Show Them That You're Really Not Scared
You're Playin' With Your Life, This Ain't No Truth Or Dare
They'll Kick You, Then They Beat You,
Then They'll Tell You It's Fair
So Beat It, But You Wanna Be Bad

[Chorus]

Just Beat It, Beat It, Beat It, Beat It
No One Wants To Be Defeated
Showin' How Funky Strong Is Your Fight
It Doesn't Matter Who's Wrong Or Right

This part of the song talks about fear. Truth or dare. Fairness. Wanting to be bad, funky strong, and brave all at the same time. When we face the pressures and uncertainty of life we need Jesus to inspire us to be

- strong like Him
- tough like Him
- humble like Him
- victorious like Him

How about that phrase, “Just beat it! Beat it! Beat it! Beat it!” Actually, I couldn’t agree more ... Proverbs 18:10, “The name of the LORD is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe.”

Run to the Lord! Beat a path to Him, and you’ll be doing just fine.

A closing prayer ... “Dear God, in our daily grind help us to run to You and experience Your peace. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

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[Chorus x 6]

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