

Matthew Lesson 29

Matthew Chapter 26

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Memory verses for this week: *3 John 1:11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we studied the parable of the ten virgins and discussed the importance of being ready when the real bridegroom (Christ) comes to take out His bride, the church. We closed on the topic of the judgment of the nations.

In the first half of Matthew 26, Jesus prepared for and then ate the Last Supper. There He spoke of His soon-to-be-shed blood which would be the sign of the New Testament and the basis for the forgiveness of sins. It was then that He established the ordinance of the supper. He then went out to the Garden of Gethsemane and poured out His soul in prayer to God in anticipation of what was coming

I. Plot to Murder Christ

Mat 26:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

Mat 26:2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

After finishing the Olivet Discourse, Jesus foretold how in less than two days He would be betrayed to be crucified. Common tradition holds that Jesus was crucified on Friday of that week. However, as noted earlier in Matthew 12:40 Jesus clearly foretold that the Son of Man would be three days and three nights in the belly of the earth.

That makes it impossible for him to have been crucified on Friday. He was crucified on Wednesday of that week. The Passover could fall on any day of the week, and evidently was on a Friday of that year. Two days prior evidently put these events on about Tuesday of His final week.

Mat 26:3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

Mat 26:4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him.

Mat 26:5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

The active conspiracy to take and kill Jesus began in earnest. Caiaphas was high priest from A.D. 18 to A.D. 36. His father in law Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to A.D. 15, but was still called high priest by many. The Romans had installed Caiaphas over Annas for political reasons.

The leadership of official Israel assembled on that fateful Tuesday to directly plan the arrest and death of Jesus. They met at the **palace** of Caiaphas. This most likely occurred in the court yard. They conferred how they might do away with this Jesus of Nazareth. They further revealed the evil character of their hearts by seeking to take Jesus covertly, avoiding any outcry of the populace on a feast day.

Not only were they politicians at heart, they were cowardly ones at that. They wanted to eliminate this Jesus with a minimum of political expense. Though the common people may not have altogether believed upon Jesus, they viewed Him as a prophet and to that degree He was popular. Thus, the leadership sought a way to deviously and quietly seize and kill Him

Jesus forewarns the disciples of his coming crucifixion. It is sad, but the ones who were plotting to put him to death were the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes, the ones in leadership positions that should have known that He was the true Messiah. But they were cautious as to when they were going to kill him... not on the feast day unless the people have an uproar. It is sad how people think that the opinion of the people is so important, whereas what God thinks is not considered. This was not out of respect for God and the feast day, but rather for fear of the people and what they might do to them. In all of this, we need to keep in mind that Jesus went willingly to die. He gave his life a ransom for sinners, and it was only because that God allowed man to do this was he put to death by wicked hands. Jesus could have called a legion of angels and saved himself from the hour, but because of his love for us, he died, the just for the unjust.

Acts 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Acts 7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

Acts 7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Mat 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Mat 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Mat 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

II. Jesus Anointed by Woman of Bethany

Mat 26:6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

Mat 26:7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

This scene happened at Simon's house in Bethany. This lady anoints Jesus on the head with this oil. In the record of the event in John, he points out that she also anointed his feet. To anoint the feet was quite unusual but this revealed the special love this woman had for the Lord.

Mat 26:8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

Jesus had returned to the vicinity of Bethany and was resting at the house of Simon the leper. Simon may very well be one of the lepers Jesus had healed earlier in His ministry. (Pastor believes he probably was.)

There at came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat *at* meat.

By referencing John's account, we are led to understand the woman mentioned here probably is not Martha's sister Mary as indicated in a similar account in John 12. There, the events took place six days before the Passover, even before His triumphal entry. In the similar account several days earlier recorded by John, it was Judas who had been indignant at such an alleged waste. Here, the other disciples evidently picked up on that refrain as well.

Alabaster was a carbonate type of stone named for the town in Egypt whence it was chiefly found. It was carved into small boxes or vials which evidently was the case here. Contained therein was expensive, perfumed anointing oil.

This otherwise unidentified woman anointed Jesus therewith. This act of worship in Bethany evidently took place while the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem was convening at Caiaphas' house plotting against Jesus.

Mat 26:9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the

poor.

We see the attitude of the disciples of what transpired. It appears that more than just Judas Iscariot was upset that the woman had used the ointment on Christ. They perceived it as waste. It was sad that Judas made a fuss that the money could have been used on the poor, since he was not truly concerned about the poor. If we speak out for something, we should mean what we say.

Apparently this was very expensive ointment that the woman used, but it was not wasted. I have heard teaching about verse 8 in John 12 saying that Jesus did not have compassion on the poor. That is not the case at all. This reference was pointing out that this was a one time offering that was needful. No one ever loved the poor (or the rich), like Jesus did.

Mat 26:10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

Mat 26:11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

Mat 26:12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

Matthew continues to record the complaint of the disciples. The word translated as **ointment** here (*muron muron*) is derived from the word (*murrah*) which is similar to the word translated *myrrh* in Matthew 2:11 at Jesus' birth.

(1) It was an expensive perfume-type of product often used in the embalming process to mask the odor of death. Jesus acknowledged that this woman did it for His burial.

(2) Perhaps the Holy Spirit had laid it upon her heart to so honor the Lord prior to His impending passion.

(3) Again, there is a clear implication of what lay ahead. The prospect of His death, however, seemed to again escape the disciples.

Jesus gently rebuked His complaining disciples in explaining that wherever the gospel would someday be preached, this anonymous woman would be remembered for what she did for her Lord. And indeed, even as we so speak, that prophecy is being fulfilled.

Matthew Henry also felt that Jesus loved the poor greatly.

Observe his reason; You have the poor always with you. Note,

1. There are some opportunities of doing and getting good which are constant, and which we must give constant attendance to the improvement of.

Bibles we have always with us, Sabbaths always with us, and so *the poor, we have always with us*. Note, Those who have a heart to do good, never need complain for want of opportunity. The poor never ceased even out of the land of Israel, Deu. 15:11. We cannot but see some in this world, who call for our charitable assistance, who are as God's receivers, some poor members of Christ, to whom he will have kindness shown as to himself.

2. There are other opportunities of doing and getting good, which come but seldom, which are short and uncertain, and require more peculiar diligence in the improvement of them, and which ought to be preferred before the other; "Me ye have not always, therefore use me while ye have me." Note, (1.) Christ's constant bodily presence was not to be expected here in this world; it was expedient that he should go away; his real presence in the Eucharist is a fond and groundless conceit, and contradicts what he here said, Me ye have not always. (2.) Sometimes special works of piety and devotion should take place of common works of charity. The poor must not rob Christ; we must do good to all, but especially to the household of faith.

Mat 26:13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

For what the woman did for Christ, she will forever be remembered in all the world for a memorial. Just like the widow who cast in all her living, we remember what she did here for Jesus Christ.

III. Judas Iscariot Sells out the Lord

Mat 26:14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

Mat 26:15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

Mat 26:16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

At that time, Judas began his wicked and notorious betrayal. Evidently while Jesus was at Simon the leper's house at Bethany, Judas slipped away back to Jerusalem and possibly met with the high priests, even as they were plotting at Caiaphas' house.

His basic offer to the high priests was, 'What are you willing to give *me*?' What a despicable deed to dicker over—the price for the Son of God. They finally came up with the price of thirty pieces of silver as prophesied in Zechariah 11:12-13.

Zec 11:12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if

not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

Zec 11:13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

Some authorities say this was the going price in that day for a slave. There no doubt, was contempt for Jesus in both the minds of the leadership of Israel as well as Judas.

Judas agrees to sell him for 30 pieces of silver, which would be approximately \$18 in American currency today. He sought opportunity to betray him. Oh that he would have sought opportunity to serve Christ and become a true disciple of the Lord.

IV. Preparation of the Passover

Mat 26:17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

Mat 26:18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

Mat 26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

The reference to the feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover is of note. The feast of Passover initiated the longer seven-day period of the feast of Unleavened Bread. When the disciples inquired of Jesus where they would so eat the Passover, He directed them to return into Jerusalem and find "such a man."

(1) We are not told who this man was, though Jesus evidently so instructed them.

(2) Both Mark and Luke indicate the man would be bearing a pitcher of water. He may have been a servant.

(3) Some have thought that the house, which obviously was substantial, was the home of Mary the mother of John Mark. In any event it was there, the disciples made ready for the Passover.

This was the yearly passover held by the Jews at Jerusalem. The disciples

question where they might partake of the passover. Jesus gives instructions, and the disciples follow them.

Title: Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament

Author: Clarke, Adam

How astonishing is this, that HE who created all things, whether visible or invisible, and by whom all things were upheld, should so empty himself as not to be proprietor of a single house in his whole creation, to eat the last passover with his disciples! This is certainly a mystery, and so, less or more is every thing that God does. But how inveterate and destructive must the nature of sin be, when such emptying and humiliation were necessary to its destruction! It is worthy of note what the Talmudists say, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem did not let out their houses to those who came to the annual feasts; but afforded all accommodations of this kind gratis. A man might therefore go and request the use of any room, on such an occasion, which was as yet unoccupied. The earthen jug, and the skin of the sacrifice, were left with the host.

V. The Last Passover

Mat 26:20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

Mat 26:21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Jesus sits down with the 12 disciples and announces that one of the 12 would betray Him.

Mat 26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

Mat 26:23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

Mat 26:24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Mat 26:25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Jesus clearly had returned to Jerusalem from Bethany whence He had been. The reference to 'dipping in the dish' likely referred to dipping bread (as a sop) into a bowl of broth. All at the table would do so for that was a typical table custom of that day. Judas apparently had just done so.

As they began to eat the Passover meal, Jesus told them that one of them would betray Him. Each asked dutifully if it was he. Judas evidently followed course so as to conceal his identity. Jesus indicated it would be better if His betrayer had never been born. When Judas asked, "Is it I?," Jesus answered, "Thou has said." He in effect had said 'yes' to Judas. But evidently the rest of the disciples did not pick up on it.

Since each man turns and questions, "Is it I?" I guess this shows that even Judas could act religious, having never been truly saved. Many sit in church pews today and appear to be righteous, but inside have never experienced the life-changing conversion of the new birth. It is a one on one decision that every man and woman must make.

We must personally come to Christ, forsake and repent of our sins, and ask Him to come into our heart and save us. When we do, we are saved. We have witness in ourselves as His spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are saved.

Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Rom 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Jesus says that it would have been better if Judas had never been born than to live and die without Christ. If any person comes into this life and never experiences salvation, it would have been better had they never have been born.

In my daily bible reading, I read these verses in Psalm 107 today. It mentions many times in the scriptures "*Oh that men would Praise the Lord for His goodness!*"

Psa 107:14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

Psa 107:15 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

Psa 107:16 For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

...

Psa 107:27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.

Psa 107:28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

Psa 107:29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

Psa 107:30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

Psa 107:31 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

VI. Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

Mat 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Mat 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mat 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Notice that before Jesus ate of the bread, He blessed it. We ought likewise so to ask the Lords blessing before we eat. As He distributed the unleavened bread to the disciples, He said, "*Take, eat; this is my body.*"

It was obvious the bread in His hand was not His literal body, but rather a *symbol* of His body. The same remains true today in the Lord's Supper. As Jesus drank of the fruit of the vine He said, "*This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*"

Again, the reference is obviously symbolic. To this point, no blood had been shed. Rather, the grape juice product in the cup clearly was a symbol of His impending shed blood. The words *covenant* and *testament* are both translated from the word (diayhkh) *diatheke*. In the case of a testament (a will), it became of force after the death of the testator.

This clearly is the *new covenant* foretold in Jeremiah 31:1. Jesus' taking of the cup clearly identified it as a symbol of the covenant (testament) about to be

entered into. Moreover, Jesus went on to say that His blood would be shed *“for many for the remission of sins.”*

The shed blood of Jesus Christ is the basis for forgiveness of sin. Romans 3:24-25 indicates that Christ’s shed blood is essential for not only the sins of the future, but also for sin prior to Calvary, back to the first man. Jesus told His disciples He would not again partake of the Passover supper (drink of the fruit of the vine) until the day when He was established in His Father’s kingdom. The disciples most likely did not fully understand the prophetic significance of that statement.

The Lord’s Supper is a symbol of the broken body of Christ at Calvary. The bread symbolizes his broken body, while the cup is a symbol of his shed blood. The Lord’s Supper should truly only be observed by the local church and the members of that local church as Christ set the example here with His first church. Christ promises that he will come again and drink the fruit of the vine again in His Father’s kingdom. It is important to note that BEFORE they partook of the Lord’s supper, Judas Iscariot went out from their presence.

John 13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

John 13:27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

John 13:28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

John 13:29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

John 13:30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

VII. Jesus Foretells of Peter’s Denial

Mat 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Mat 26:31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

Mat 26:32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Mat 26:33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended

because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

It was the custom of the Jews upon completion of the Passover supper to sing a portion of the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 115-118). These are essentially the hallelujah (praise the Lord) psalms. Though we are not told which psalm they sang here, no doubt one of those mentioned above was sung.

They after began the short commute from the city itself down across the Kidron Valley toward the Garden of Gethsemane. It was at this time that Jesus shared with His disciples what John recorded in chapters 15-17.

Jesus then indicated how before the night was over, they all would be offended in Him. Jesus quoted from Zechariah 13:7.

Jesus while speaking said, *"But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."* The Lord clearly implied His death and even more clearly His resurrection.

He instructed them that He would go to Galilee then. After His resurrection, the angel at the tomb directed the women there to remind His disciples that He would go to Galilee. See Matthew 28:7. That evidently was fulfilled in John 21:1-14.

Jesus warns the disciples that he would soon be smitten. But he also promises that he would be resurrected and would come and see them in Galilee. Peter makes a bold statement and says if others were offended, he would never be. We need to be careful when using the word NEVER. We may find ourselves doing exactly what we don't want to do. Peter was the FIRST one to be offended when Jesus was arrested. It is important that we realize that when things get rough, it is only by the Grace of God we will be faithful and stand strong. None of us in the flesh can do much, but with God's Grace, we can stand strong. When young David faced Goliath, he came in the power of the Lord, and he won that battle against great odds.

1 Sam 17:45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

Mat 26:34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Mat 26:35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Peter impulsively denied he would ever be offended because of Jesus. The rest of the disciples said the same. Peter and John became scarce soon after. The

Lord told Peter that Before the rooster would crow the next morning, Peter would indeed have denied Him three times.

Peter said unto him, *"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee"*. The rest of the disciples chimed in with Peter. Peter did follow Jesus at a distance after He was arrested. With the exception of John, the other nine forsook Him and fled.

Jesus tells Peter that he would deny Him three times before the cock would crow. Not only did Peter say he would not deny him even if he should die, but ALL the disciples said this. As I said earlier, we need to realize without God's Grace we may or may not do what we say we will do.

VIII. The Agony in the Garden

Mat 26:36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

Mat 26:37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Mat 26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

They here arrived at the garden of Gethsemane which literally means an 'olive press.' This was at the western base of the Mount of Olives adjacent to the Kidron Valley, just across from the Temple complex on the other side of the valley.

He instructed the main body of His disciples to sit in a specific place. He took His inner circle with him (Peter, James, and John). These were the same three on the mount of transfiguration. As Jesus focused on what lay immediately ahead, He became sorrowful. Matthew records how he became very **heavy**.

As He realized the focal point of His betrayal, total rejection by His own people, and becoming sin for us who knew no sin; His humanity could scarcely bear the load. He told the three at hand, *"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here, and watch with me."*

(1) In this statement is a mention of His impending crucifixion. The terrible burden upon Him took him close to death then and there.

(2) In Luke's account, we are told that God sent an angel to strengthen Him. See Luke 22:43.

(3) The disciples however evidently did not catch the import of it. He thus instructed them to watch and wait for Him.

It appears that Jesus and his disciples came to this garden often to pray. He took Peter, James, and John (those who were in his special inner circle of close friends), and asks them to watch. It says he became exceeding sorrowful as He knows his time is drawing near to go to the Cross.

Mat 26:39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Mat 26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Mat 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Notice the intensity of His prayer. *"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed."* It was not on His knees, but on His face He fell. In the frailty of His humanity, He cried out, *"O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."*

He knew what He faced and humanly He was in as much agony as any man. His reference to "this cup" was referring to the bitter agony of the cross unto death. In His Deity, He prayed, *"Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."* The clear purity and holiness of His Divine nature shined through as He yielded Himself in total submission and obedience to the will of His heavenly Father.

The Lord returned back the short distance to Peter and the others and found them sleeping. Herein is a profound principle concerning prayer. *"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."* As we watch, that is, as we are mentally disciplined to focus upon that which we ought and as we pray without ceasing, we will not enter into temptation.

As long as we are in a spirit of prayer, we will not walk in the flesh. Hence, we then are impervious to temptation. Unfortunately, the flesh is weak though the spirit is willing. The disciples had undergone a long day. It now in all likelihood was late at night. They couldn't keep their eyes open. Though just hours before they had professed their allegiance to Jesus in spirit, in their flesh, they couldn't even stay awake. At the most crucial hour in the Lord's journey, His closest associates slept.

Jesus prays first in verse 30 that if it were possible, that God would let this cup pass from Him. He was not asking to not go to the Cross, but rather to let it happen now if it be the Father's Will. He was ready to drink the bitter cup, but

even yet, he says “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” That is how we need to face each day. Let God by the Holy Spirit guide us as to what we should do, and try our best to do what God would have us do.

Jesus returns and finds them all asleep.

Mat 26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Mat 26:43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

Jesus again returned to effectual, fervent prayer referring to what lay ahead as a cup. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, *“O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”*

Notice the tone of His prayer changed from verse 39. He there asked that the cup might pass from Him. He acknowledged its inevitability and simply prayed that God’s will be done. Upon returning, the Lord found the disciples sleeping.

Jesus was to drink of the bitter cup of suffering for sin. No one else could drink this cup, and had Jesus not done it, we would have no hope for salvation today. He took upon Him our sin that we might be made righteous before God. Again he returns and finds the disciples sleeping.

Mat 26:44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Mat 26:45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Mat 26:46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

A third time He prayed like unto the previous prayer. It may be Jesus implied, ‘Go ahead and sleep. You have missed your opportunity to minister to me in my hour of need. It’s too late now.’

In this third prayer that Christ prays to the Father, he says the same words concerning the cup passing from Him if it be possible. He finds the disciples sleeping, and he tells them to sleep on now. He tells them later that the hour is at hand when He would be betrayed into the hands of sinners. We know at other times they could not take the Lord because it was not yet time. But now the time has come, and Christ tells them the betrayer is at Hand.

IX. The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Mat 26:47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

Mat 26:48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

Mat 26:49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

Mat 26:50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

As Jesus was rousing His sleepy disciples, Judas returned. Notice that Judas is described as “one of the twelve.” His treachery is all the more as we are reminded of his status as one of Jesus’ chosen and trusted disciples. He brought with him an armed party from the Jewish authorities.

Some have presumed this group to have included borrowed Roman soldiers and the Jewish Temple police. John 18:3 hints at the former. The eight drowsy disciples at the entrance to the garden evidently did not hinder them. Judas had previously tipped off his accomplices how he would identify Jesus—a kiss in the dim light of night. He then proceeded to greet Him piously, pompously, and hypocritically.

What incredible, despicable duplicity. The betrayal of Judas only reveals the utter depravity of the sinful human heart. He knew what he was doing, and he did it anyway!

After being identified according to the planned kiss, the guards took Jesus into custody. Even in betrayal, He extended kindness to His betrayer. Jesus’ use of the word translated as **friend** (etairov *hetairos*) is of note. It is a word of comradeship and not the common word for *friend* (filov *philos*).

Judas was being led by his father the Devil in this act. Christ told the disciples before Judas came on the scene that he would identify the traitor. The whom he was to kiss would be the one who would betray him.

Mat 26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

Mat 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Mat 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Though Matthew does not record who, John's Gospel notes that it was Peter who drew a sword and assaulted the high priest's servant (Malchus, according to John's account). It may well be that Peter had in mind to take off the fellow's head. When he ducked, Peter only got his ear. Jesus gave wisdom that extends to this day. *"They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."*

As Jesus was in the process of being arrested, He told Peter that if He so desired, He could request and receive 12 legions of angels. Angels probably are not organized into legions as such. However, Jesus used this Roman military term to help Peter understand the significance of which He spoke. A Roman legion of that day was comprised of 6,100 heavy infantrymen and 726 cavalrymen. Moreover, one need only recount the might of a single angel. During the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, one angel slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (II Kings 19:35).

Mat 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Mat 26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

Mat 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

Twice in these verses, Jesus referred to fulfilling Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus reminded His antagonists that He had sat in the Temple teaching throughout that very week. Yet they made no move then. Their cowardice and duplicity was only amplified by operating under cover of darkness. And indeed, men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. One of the saddest sentences in the Bible is *"Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled."*

All these things happened to fulfill the scriptures. Jesus questions why they come out in the middle of the night when each day he stood in the temple teaching, and they never lay hold on him. But it was due to several reasons. One, they feared the people. Secondly, they felt strong with this large number of soldiers coming in the middle of the night, they could easily take him. And lastly, it was now time. Until God chose the time, Christ would never have been taken.

He goes willingly because the scriptures had to be fulfilled. And as he fulfills the scriptures, we see all the disciples forsaking him and running away. Just earlier, all said they would NEVER forsake him, but now they all turn away.

Luke 4:28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

Luke 4:29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto

the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

Luke 4:30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,

X. Jesus Brought Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin

Mat 26:57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

Mat 26:58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Jesus was taken to the high priest's palace whence were gathered the scribes and elders of Israel. Though the term *Sanhedrin* is not noted as such, this evidently was the meeting of the same. The Sanhedrin was the national council or assembly of Israel in that day, similar perhaps to the United States Senate and Supreme Court put together.

Under the dispensation of Rome, they issued the civil and religious law of the land and served as the Supreme Court as well.) Matthew's account implies that they were already waiting for the arrival of Jesus. They undoubtedly had been made aware of Judas' plans for betrayal.

They represented the highest level of official Israel. They holding proceedings in the darkness of night and the wee hours thereof, only portrayed the sinister nature of their motives. By the time most of the city had arisen and began their morning the next day, Jesus had been arrested, tried, convicted, and was on His way to the cross.

Peter followed the company that took Jesus to be tried. The residence of Caiaphas has been uncovered in modern east Jerusalem by archaeologists. It was built upon a steep hillside overlooking the Kidron Valley to the east. In collating other references to Peter's half-hearted following, there is an antithetical illustration of Psalm 1:1 of walking with the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and finally sitting in the seat of the scornful. He surely was not blessed in his deed.

We find Jesus being taken before the High Priest which is Caiaphas at this time. If you remember when we studied Hebrew History, the very first High Priest was Aaron. Peter does not come near, but follows from a far off. I'm afraid that is the way many of us follow Jesus today. Many times we want to just blend in with the crowd like Peter did here... he goes in and sits with the servants to see what would transpire. These servants were the enemies of Christ. When we try to associate ourselves with the world, we are partaking of Satan's crowd.

John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John 17:14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

John 17:18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

John 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Mat 26:59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

Mat 26:60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

Mat 26:61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

Mat 26:62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

As often is the case, malfeasance is nurtured by deceit. It should be recalled it was the middle of the night. No wonder they had trouble finding someone to cooperate in perjurious testimony. Though the ninth commandment was to not bear false witness, the spiritual leaders of the land sought exactly that. Yet, they could find none.

It is of note that they had already determined their goal and verdict. They sought “to put him to death” before they even began their crooked proceedings. Finally, in the middle of the night, they found two characters who twisted the context of a statement Jesus had made three years earlier recorded in John 2:19-22.

These claimed, *"This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days."*

There, His intent was that His body would be destroyed and raised three days later. It was and He did. The high priest pressed Him for an answer to these accusations but Jesus provided no answer.

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

John 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

John 2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

Mat 26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

Mat 26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Jesus did not dignify their tirade with a reply, He held his peace. He stood in the dignity of silence. In pompous exasperation, the high priest, in affect, told Jesus he was placing Him under oath.

To ignore that question would be the same as to denying it. Therefore, Jesus replied, *"Thou hast said."* It was an affirmative to the question without answering in the first person.

Jesus then spoke. *"Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."*

Not only was He the Messiah, the Son of God, but the day was coming when He would return with the authority of the right hand of God in the clouds of heaven.

Implied was His Deity, His royalty, and His power. Moreover, there is definite allusion to Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13, both bespeaking His royal Deity. Curiously, Jesus chose to refer to Himself one final time as the Son of man. His earthly humanity was about to cease. It was the last time He used the term prior to His death. As the God-man, He was about to make His great redemptive sacrifice.

Mat 26:65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken

blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

Mat 26:66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

Mat 26:67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

Mat 26:68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

Their legal prejudice now had a shred of legitimacy. They could accuse Him of blasphemy. He had ascribed Himself as the Messiah, the Son of God. They could justify their action with that. Whereupon, the preconceived judgment was given. *“He is guilty of death.”*

The rending of clothes by the high priest was the Jewish custom to show abhorrence to the hearing of blasphemy. He thus signaled to his cohorts how they should react. Jesus was convicted for stating the truth.

Whereupon the doctors of divinity, the spiritual leaders of God’s chosen nation began to instigate the basest form of human indecency. There are few insults lower than spitting in another’s face. Moreover, these were the noble leaders of the nation acting so intemperately.

Few courts of the vilest of godless nations stoop to such judicial indiscretion. Their bitter hatred, jealousy, and vindictive spirit became evident as they sarcastically urged Him to prophecy, “Who is he that smote thee?”

There seems to be evidence of demonic maliciousness in their malevolent glee. It all was done under the power of darkness in the middle of the night when Satan’s power is greatest. They reacted in the most base form of human depravity.

They condemn Christ to die and he is mocked by the crowd and the soldiers. They spit in his face and beat him with the palms of their hands. Oh what Christ suffered for us in those last hours of His life.

Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

XI. Peter's Denial

Mat 26:69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

Mat 26:70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

Mat 26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

Mat 26:72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Mat 26:73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Mat 26:74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Mat 26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

The bitter and ironic antithesis of Psalm 1:1 is found here.

Psa 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Psa 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Peter begins the process of denial spoken of earlier by Jesus. Peter not only denied Jesus, but did so with an oath on the second denial. On the third and final time, Peter began to curse and to swear, saying, "*I know not the man.*"

Peter on three occasions denied his Lord, even cursing as he did so. In modern vernacular, his reply in verse 70 might be, 'I don't know what you are talking about!' Likewise in verse 72, he in effect said, 'By blank, I don't know the guy!' Finally in verse 74, it might be paraphrased, 'Blankety-blank, I said, I don't know the guy!' And immediately the rooster crowed.

(1) The matter about Peter's speech may be a reference to the way Galileans pronounced words or it may be a reference to his local accent. Galilean dialect slurred their gutturals.

(2) In any event, Peter's speech patterns betrayed his origins and hence his association with Jesus.

With that remembrance, Peter's heart was pierced. *"And he went out, and wept bitterly."*

(1) Perhaps the Holy Spirit pointedly brought to Peter's mind what Jesus had said the night before.

(2) What a painful memory Peter would bear for the rest of his life. In his Lord's hour of crisis, he had not only failed Him but denied him in foul fashion. See Matthew 10:33.

Peter had said he would never deny the Lord, but when the damsel says he is one of those who were with Christ, he denies it. Each time, he denies that he is a Christian, and finally began to curse and swear. After denying the Lord three times, then he heard the cock crow. How many times could you and I be a witness for the Lord, but we similarly deny Him and don't speak up. There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent.

God help us to recognize when we should speak up, and give us the courage to do so. When Peter remembered the words of Jesus, he went out and wept bitterly. He repented of his sins and asked God to restore his fellowship. Peter felt defeated that night, but God was not through with this man. He was used on the day of Pentecost to preach the message that led over 3,000 people to be saved. (Acts Chapter 2)

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.