

Matthew Chapter 26

Reflection:

The people of Israel were waiting for the Messiah, their king.

Matthew begins his book by showing how Jesus was a descendant of David.

But Matthew goes on to show how God did not send Jesus to be an earthly king but a heavenly king.

His kingdom would be much greater than David's because it would never end.

Even at Jesus' birth, many recognized him as a king.

Herod, the ruler, as well as Satan, were afraid of Jesus' kingdom and tried to stop him; others worshipped him and brought royal gifts.

We must be willing to recognize Jesus for who he really is and worship him as king of our lives.

Matthew 26 depicts devotion and betrayal, prayer and fear, courage and denial.

Religious leaders plot to kill Jesus

Matthew 26:1-5 KJV

[1] And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, [2] Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. [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, [4] and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. [5] But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. [5] But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

This passage reminds us that following Jesus is not only about what we say we believe, but how we respond when pressure comes into our lives... (Talk is cheap, action is where it's at!!!)

Caiaphas was the ruling high priest during Jesus' ministry. He was the son-in-law of Annas, the previous high priest. The Roman government had taken over the process of appointing all political and religious leaders. Caiaphas served for 18 years, longer than most high priests, suggesting that he was good at cooperating with the Romans.

He was the first to recommend Jesus' death in order to save the nation (Jn. 11:49-50).

A woman anoints Jesus' feet with expensive oil

Matthew 26:6-13 KJV

[6] Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, [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. [8] But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? [9] For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. [10] When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. [11] For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. [12] For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. [13] Verily I say unto you, Wherever 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.

A woman anoints Jesus's feet with costly oil. Some see it as wasteful, but Jesus calls it beautiful.

At the same time, Judas agrees to betray Jesus for money.

One person gives their best; another sells out the Lord.

This contrast forces us to ask an important question: What is Jesus worth to me?

Principle: True worship is never wasted. Jesus always knows the heart behind the act.

Application: Our devotion to Christ may not always be understood by others, but it is always seen and valued by Jesus.

Judas agrees to betray Jesus

Matthew 26:14-16 KJV

[14] Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, [15] and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they negotiated with him for thirty pieces of silver. [16] And from that time, he sought opportunity to betray him.

Why would Judas want to betray Jesus?

Judas, like the other disciples, expected Jesus to start a political rebellion and overthrow Rome.

As treasurer, Judas certainly assumed (as did other disciples) that he would be given an important position in Jesus's new government. But when Jesus praised Mary for pouring out perfume worth a year's salary, Judas may have realized that Jesus's kingdom was not political or physical, but spiritual. Judas's greedy desire for money and status could not be realized if he followed Jesus, so he betrayed him in exchange for money and favor from the religious leaders.

Matthew alone records the exact amount of money Judas accepted to betray Jesus (30 pieces of silver; the price of a slave (Exd. 21:32) - Prophecy fulfilled.

The religious leaders planned to wait until after the Passover to take Jesus, but with Judas's unexpected offer, they accelerated their plans.

Disciples prepare for the Passover

Matthew 26:17-19 KJV

[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? [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. [19] And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

The Passover took place at one night and at one meal, but the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was celebrated with it, continued for a week. The people removed all yeast from their homes in commemoration of their ancestors' exodus from Egypt, when they did not have time to let the bread dough rise.

Thousands of people poured into Jerusalem from all over the Roman Empire for the feast.

Jesus and the disciples have the last supper

Matthew 26:20-29 KJV

[20] Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. [21] And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. [22] And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? [23] And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. [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. [25] Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. [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. [27] And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; [28] for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. [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.

The Passover meal and Gethsemane: Jesus, who would soon be the final Passover Lamb, ate the traditional Passover meal with his disciples in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. During the meal, they partook of the wine and bread, and then went out into the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Jesus was arrested in the Garden and taken to Caiaphas's house.

[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.

*Each name used for this sacrament brings out a different dimension to it. It is the **Lord's Supper** because it commemorates the Passover meal Jesus ate with his disciples.*

*It is the **Eucharist** (thanksgiving) because in it we thank God for Christ's work for us.*

*It is **Communion** because through it we commune with God and other believers.*

As we eat the bread and drink the wine, we should be **reflective** as we recall Jesus's death and his promise to come again, **grateful** for God's wonderful gift to us, and **joyful** as we meet Christ and the body of believers.

[28] for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

How does Jesus's blood seal the new covenant (testament)?

- *People under the old covenant (those who lived before Jesus) could approach God only through a priest and an animal sacrifice.*
- *Now, all people can come directly to God through faith because Jesus's death has made us acceptable in God's eyes (Rom. 3:21-24).*

The old covenant was a shadow of the new (Jer. 31:31), pointing to the day when Jesus himself would be the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin. Rather than a lamb without blemish slain on the altar, the perfect Lamb of God was slain on the cross, a sinless sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven once and for all. All who believe in him receive that forgiveness.

[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.

Again, Jesus assured the disciples of victory over death and of their future with him.

The next few hours would bring apparent death, but soon they would experience the power of the Holy Ghost and witness the great spread of the Gospel message.

And one day they would all be together again in God's new kingdom.

It is possible that the hymn the disciples sang in (V 30) was from (Ps, 115-118), the traditional psalms sung as part of the Passover meal.

Matthew 26:30-35 KJV

[30] And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. [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. [32] But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. [33] Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. [34] Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. [35] Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

(ALL) The disciples declared that they would die rather than desert Jesus. A few hours later, however, they all scattered.

(Talk is cheap) It is easy to say we are devoted to Christ, but our claims are meaningful only when they are tested in the crucible of persecution.

How strong is your faith?

Is it strong enough to stand under intense trials?

This was the second time that evening that Jesus predicted that his disciples would desert him (Lk. 22:31-38; John 13:31-38 for the first prediction)

Jesus agonizes in the garden (watch and pray)

Matthew 26:36-46 KJV

[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. [37] And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. [38] Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. [39] And he went a little further, 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.

[40] And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? [41] Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. [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. [43] And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. [44] And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. [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. [46] Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus shows us what surrender looks like. He is honest about his pain, yet fully submitted to the Father's will. The disciples fall asleep when they should be praying. Jesus informs them that the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Application: *Prayer prepares us for pressure.*

When we neglect prayer, we leave ourselves vulnerable to fear and failure.

Jesus was in great anguish over his coming physical pain, separation from the Father, and death for the sins of the world.

The divine course was set, but he, in his human nature, still struggled (Heb. 5:7-9).

Because of the anguish he experienced, he can relate to our suffering. His strength to obey came from his (relationship with God) the Father, who is also the source of our strength (Jn. 17:11.15, 16, 21, 26)

His prayer reveals to us his terrible suffering. His agony was worse than death as he paid for all sin by being separated from God.

The sinless Son of God took our sins upon himself to save us from suffering and separation.

In times of struggle, people sometimes wish they knew the future, or they wish they could understand the reason for their anguish.

What does it take to be able to say ***“Thy will be done”***?

- It takes ***trust*** in God’s plans
- It takes ***prayer*** with God
- It takes ***obedience*** each step of the way.

Jesus is betrayed and arrested (with swords and clubs)

Matthew 26:47-55 KJV

[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. [48] Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. [49] And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. [50] And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. [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. [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. [53] Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? [54] But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? [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.

Judas had told the temple guards to arrest the man he greeted. This was not an arrest by Roman soldiers under Roman law, but an arrest by the religious leaders. Judas pointed Jesus out not because he was hard to recognize, but because Judas had agreed to be the formal accuser in case a trial was called. Judas was able to lead them to one of Jesus' retreats where no onlookers would interfere with the arrest.

The man who cut off the servant's ear was Peter (Jn. 18:10). Peter was trying to prevent what he saw as defeat. He didn't realize that Jesus had to die to have victory.

But Jesus demonstrated perfect commitment to his Father's will. His kingdom would not be advanced with swords, but with faith and obedience. (Luke 22:51) records that Jesus then touched the servant's ear and healed him.

Although the religious leaders could have arrested Jesus at any time, they came at night because they were afraid of the crowd who followed him each day.

Key teaching point:

God's purposes are not advanced through the weapons of the flesh.

Ephesians 6:12 **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

Life application:

Obedience often requires *restraint* and *trust* rather than impulsive action.

False Charges, Caiaphas questions Jesus:

Matthew 26:57-68 KJV

[57] Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. [58] But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. [59] The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. [60] But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally, two came forward [61] and declared, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’” [62] Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” [63] But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” [64] “You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” [65] Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. [66] What do you think?” “He is worthy of death,” they answered. [67] Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him [68] and said, “Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?”

Jesus stands before false witnesses and unjust leaders. He speaks only when necessary and remains silent when provoked.

He entrusted Himself to God rather than defending His reputation.

Key takeaway: Truth does not need to shout to stand firm.

Life Application: There are moments when trusting God is more powerful than defending ourselves.

(Vss 57-68) There were several irregularities evident in Jesus's appearance before the Sanhedrin:

- The court was not to come to a verdict at night
- Not convene during the Festival
- Not meet in the High Priest's home
- Do not condemn an accused person without witnesses to testify on behalf of the accused

But desperate leaders sometimes ignore their own laws.

Matthew 26:59 KJV

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

This shows that the Sanhedrin authorities knew Jesus was innocent of any true violations of their law.

Matthew 26:63 KJV

[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.

Jesus remains silent - Jesus's silence reflects his unwillingness to defend himself because he knows his mission is to die.

Matthew 26:67-68 KJV

[67] Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, [68] saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

The soldiers (Jewish) mock Jesus' reputation. For them, he isn't even a prophet, much less the Messiah.

Peter Disowns Jesus

Matthew 26:69-75 KJV

[69] Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. [70] But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. [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. [72] And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. [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. [74] Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. [75] And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Despite his earlier *protestation* (an *emphatic* declaration that something is or is not the case), {V.33} Peter disowns Jesus.

- The contrast between Peter's and Jesus' behavior is striking. Jesus gave a true confession of His identity, even though it cost him his life.
- Peter denies even knowing Jesus, eventually doing so with a self-condemning oath, with only two servant girls and some unspecified bystanders listening.

What was it that gave Peter away in V.73?

[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.

When speaking Aramaic, Galileans had a different accent than Judeans.

Matthew 26:75 KJV

[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.

Before the rooster crows: **Peter recalls V.33-35:**

[33] Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. [34] Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. [35] Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Peter, recalling his vain boasting...WEEPS BITTERLY!!!.

The Book of Matthew - Chapter 26
 Rhema Christian Center
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Reference:
 NIV ZONDERVAN STUDY BIBLE - Commentary
 Life Application Study Bible KJV - Commentary