

Matthew ch 26 vs 40-75

We left off last time right in the middle of the event that was taking place in the life of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Whereby He was petitioning the Father concerning the cup that lay before Him, and that if there be any other way that sinful man could obtain everlasting life apart from Him having to partake of that cup, then it was His desire that the cup pass from Him. The cup being His blood of the new covenant, which was to be shed for many for the remission of sins, He was calling out for an alternate plan if it were at all possible. If man could come to God by means of being good and moral people or if they could give so much money to the church or for that matter be devout religious people who were very sincere in what they believed. Or if there were any other stipulation that God could put upon man that might bridge that gap that separates a holy and righteous God from a wickedly sinful people apart from causing Jesus who knew no sin to become sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, then that's what Jesus wanted to do.

He was really probing the heart of the Father here to see if there might be another option, again not because He was scared of dying, death had no power over Him and He knew He would rise again. But because as an absolutely sinless person who had never known anything but the most intimate of ties with the Father, Jesus knew that this would involve the Father turning His back on Him and it was not His desire to have our sin laid upon Him. But you see it's impossible that the blood of sinful man could atone for sinful man, and yet the wages of sin is death, and in order for atonement to be made life has to be given for life, and the bible tells us that the atonement for the soul is in the blood, because the life is in the blood. and So it was necessary that the blood of a sinless man be shed on the behalf of the sinful, life given for life and even as 1 man brought sin into the world, all it would take would be one man to atone for the sin of the world. and Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, God Himself came in the person of Jesus Christ and becoming a Man He was in all ways tempted as we are tempted and yet with out sin and so there was no other way that we might obtain the remission of our sin apart from our sin being laid upon Him as our sin offering upon the altar of the cross and Him shedding His blood for us. Now, Jesus was calling for an alternate plan if at all possible, but the thing I want to re-emphasize is the fact that He wasn't trying to bypass the will of the Father.

To the contrary He would settle for nothing less than the will of the Father, that's why He insisted *"nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* Jesus thrived on doing the will of His Father, in John 4:34 He said, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."* and What was that work, to provide a means of escape for you and me from the penalty of our sins, the redemption of mankind. and When Jesus was dying on the cross, His body having been broke and His blood having been shed, right before He released His Spirit, what did He say, *"It is finished."* What was finished, the will of Him who sent Him, the shedding of His blood for the remission of sins.

So that's basically where we left off, with Jesus praying to His Father just a little ways off from the rest of the disciples in the Garden, and interestingly enough the word Gethsemane means "oil press" and this is where Jesus began to really feel the "pressure" of what was taking place at this point, and so we pick it up in vs 40.

Vs 40-41

You remember just a little bit earlier Jesus had said to these guys all of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night. and Peter stood in defiance of the words of Jesus (which is really to say, the word of God) and said no way Lord, not me. and How often we think we know better than Gods word as it pertains to our lives, "well, that might be true in their case, but not mine." and So Jesus re-emphasized to Peter that not only would he be made to stumble because of Him, but that he would deny the Lord 3 times before the night was over. and So Peter said, "*Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!*"

So Jesus took them all to the garden and He pulled Peter James and John a little farther in with Him and He said Hey guys, things are really beginning to weigh on My soul. I feel like I could I die, (as weight of what lied before Him was pressing down on Him) and so He asked them to simply watch with Him while He prayed. and So now He comes back just about an hour later and they're all asleep, and so who does He pick out to chide in the hearing of the others knowing that they'd get the point. Peter, the one who had just boasted of his strength and courage, and He's basically saying Peter, I thought you were willing to see Me through to the end, and you can't even stay awake for an hour?

So He exhorts them again to watch, and now He adds another element for them to be occupied with, prayer. Watch and pray, lest you enter into or succumb to temptation. There is a battle going on and it's not against flesh and blood, it's against powers and principalities and spiritual hosts of wickedness and that battle gets fought on your knees in prayer. and One thing I love about prayer is that it's a sign of humility and it works humility in the life of the pray-er. Prayer says God I can't do this on my own, and it seeks the help that can only come from God; Leon Morris said, "prayer recognizes the limitations of the human frame and seeks divine assistance." Because the problem isn't in our willingness to do what's right many times, we desire to do those things that God would have us do, our spirit is willing.

The problem however as pointed out by Jesus is that we live in these tents called the body and our flesh is weak, it lacks the power to follow through with the desires of the spirit. Because our flesh wants to do what our flesh wants to do, which many times is just the opposite of the desires of the Spirit for our lives. What then is the key element that will aid me in overcoming the weakness of my own flesh, my own will, and my own desires that oppose the Spirit? Prayer, it's been noted by others that just at the time when Jesus was the victory of the spirit over the flesh, the disciples were manifesting the victory of the flesh over the spirit.

What is it that we see happening in the life of Jesus at this time that we don't see going on in the life of the disciples? Prayer, and because of the weakness and frailty of human nature, there is the constant need for prayer, that's why Paul said pray with out ceasing. Because a willing spirit just isn't enough; it needs to be supplemented by the power of prayer.

Vs42

Notice the advance this time in Jesus' prayer, in His last petition He said, if it's possible let this cup pass from Me, this time He doesn't say that, and so we see in this the recognition by Jesus that the drinking of the "cup" is in fact the Father's will. and We see Him again settling for nothing less than the Father's will for His life, He submits to the Father's plan for Him, *"Your will be done."*

How we need to come to that point where we will settle for nothing less than the Father's will for our lives, even if it involves suffering and heartache, because we don't always understand why certain things are allowed to happen in our lives. But we either believe God is in control or we don't and God either loves us or He doesn't, and if we believe He is, and He does, than we need to learn to rest in that regardless of the physical ramifications. Because God is working out His eternal purposes and we need to be at peace with that even if we don't understand it. As I said last week, Heb tells us that Jesus *"learned obedience by the things which He suffered."* and If God allowed His only begotten Son to suffer in order that He might learn obedience and to work out His plans and His purpose we needn't think that we should stand above that.

Vs43-44

Now I'm not going to take much time right here, but just so that you know, it does not show a lack of faith to petition the Father repeatedly for the same thing if it's burdening your heart. Nor is that vain repetition, here we see an example in Jesus Himself of praying as Matthew puts it, *"the same words."*

Paul the apostle sought the Lord 3 times concerning the thorn in his flesh, when Jesus said ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you, those words, ask, seek, and knock are in the present perfect tense. Which means keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking, be diligent and persistent in your prayer life. It only becomes a vain repetition when, it just becomes words, now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. and If I die before I wake I pray the Lord my soul to take. I can rattle that off and in my mind I can be thinking about something totally different, because I've said it or heard it so much that it doesn't mean anything to me, my hearts not in it. Do you see the difference, God is searching your heart, and if your heart is in it, then it's not in vain as far as your petition to God is concerned.

Vs45–46

Now there in vs 45 I believe the KJV does the text a little more justice as far as the original goes because it says, "*Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest:*" and then there's a little colon which signifies a period of time, possibly of several hours. and It would seem that Jesus is basically saying that the time for praying is over, the battle has taken place and the Father's will is still in motion, and they're going to need their rest for all that awaits them as the day progresses and so go ahead and sleep. I really don't think that Jesus is rebuking them here, He's already done that and He's acknowledged the willingness of their spirits, but He understands the weakness of their flesh. and I find a sense of comfort in that what Jesus is seeming to say here is that even though you are unable to stay up and watch out for me, I'll stay up and watch over you.

I can just picture the Lord kind of sitting there watching out over them, probably interceding for each one of them as He was waiting for Judas to come. He probably looked at Peter and was like, Father he's going to blow it so big tonight, be with him, strengthen him, that he might become a wonderful example of Your grace and that he might be used mightily as a testimony to Me, and to strengthen the brethren. and The Lord was just probably praying for these guys during this interval of time after the dinner, which would've began around 6 or so and then after He spent some time in prayer with the disciples there sleeping and it wasn't until close to morning that Judas came out. Because it was while He was still at Caiaphas' house that the rooster crowed meaning that it was close to morning.

So there was this period of time by which Jesus was just sitting there looking over them, probably praying for each of them. Knowing how they would be tried and no doubt traumatized watching Him being beaten and crucified. and I'm certain that the Lord so often just kind of sits there watching over us, knowing what it is that's coming our way and just prays and intercedes for us. The bible tells us that "*He always lives to make intercession for us.*" and Then as He heard the crowd approaching, He woke them up and said hey wake up, My betrayer is at hand lets go out to meet him.

There's a lesson to be learned there as well, while you sleep your enemy plots, seeking how he might destroy your life, all the more reason to be a people of prayer that we might not stumble or be deceived. But Jesus went out to meet them, He didn't take off, He's in control of this whole thing.

Vs47-49

Notice again Judas doesn't call Jesus "Lord" he calls Him Rabbi or teacher, he doesn't see Jesus as Lord, but in vs 48 and in vs 49 there's something interesting that takes place in that in the Greek there's a couple of different words for the word kiss. 1 being like a peck of the cheek, like a high honey I'm home and the other being a kiss of passion or intensity. Judas said I'll kiss the one, meaning I'll peck him, which wasn't a weird deal or anything it was a common greeting of respect in that day, much like maybe a hug or a firm handshake today. But in vs 49 the other word is used meaning to kiss fervently or intensely or even repeatedly which really just magnifies the abhorrence with which he betrayed Him.

Now one quick observance here and we'll move on, this tells me that Jesus was a very common looking man, He didn't glow, He wasn't incredibly good looking or a head taller than everyone else as some people like to purport. Because if He had some clarifying characteristic Judas would've just said get the tall one, or whatever it may've been that caused Him to stand out. But He was so ordinary in appearance that if you'd never seen Him then you would have trouble picking Him out of even a group of 12 guys and so Judas said that he would identify Him for them. and The fact that they came out with swords and all just shows that Judas didn't understand the heart of Jesus, He came to them willingly because He knew that it was time to fulfill the Fathers plan of redemption.

Vs50

Even now Jesus calls him friend and gives Him opportunity to repent. Luke tells us that Jesus said, "*Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?*"

Vs51

As if you don't know who that was, John's gospel tells us that it was Peter. and Lets just say that it's a good thing that Peter was ½ asleep because he was no doubt aiming for his head and he may've been a good fisherman but his skills seemed to lack when it came to using a sword. But he was no doubt trying to redeem himself a little bit, he'd told the Lord he was going to be there for Him, and he'd already failed Him once falling asleep there and so now he's ready to defend Jesus. and We're also told in another gospel that Jesus picked up the ear and healed Malchus which was who Peter struck and he was the servant of the high priest. Had Jesus not healed him there would've probably been 4 men crucified that day.

Vs52-53

How many is a legion, I read several different books and got several different answers, the least being around 3,000 the most being around 12,000 multiply those #'s by 12 and it was somewhere around there. The point being that Jesus was more than able to take care of Himself and when you consider that in 2nd Kings 19:35 we read that 1 angel destroyed one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians in one night, just imagine what 12 legions could do. But Jesus knew that He had a divine appointment and He was submitted to the Father's will.

Vs54-56

So Jesus announces not only to His disciples but to everyone there that all this is happening so that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Peter calls it the "*more sure word of prophecy*." Everything is going down exactly like God said it would through the prophets.

Vs57

Last time I believe I told you that Caiaphas was Annas' son but allow me to correct that he was his son in-law.

Vs58

Now we don't have time to get into this but it makes for a good topical study on backsliding, I would have you notice that Peter followed Jesus "at a distance." Anytime you begin to follow the Lord from a distance your already on your way down, we've got to abide in Christ. When we begin to grow distant we're in for problems.

Vs59-62

Take notice of the fact of all the illegal things that are going on here in regards to this trial, #1 it was taking place at night which was against their law, #2 they are entertaining and even seeking out false witnesses which was absolutely forbidden by their law. Ex 20:16 "*You shall not bear false witness*" it was part of the Decalogue and a crime punishable by death, and yet nothing is being done about it and to the contrary they're looking for them. and 3rdly it was against their law to sentence capital punishment with out waiting for at least 24 hours to allow for feelings of mercy to arise, now that's not in the Mosaic law that I'm aware of but it was part of the law that they had adopted by this time. and All of these things they're violating, but finally they found 2 witnesses because by law (as if that mattered to them) they couldn't sentence capital punishment with out at least 2 witnesses.

Vs63-68

Luke tells us that they had blindfolded Jesus by this time and that's why we read that they were ridiculing Him in this way. and When it says that they spat in His face, don't think that it was just a little saliva here and there, they were digging deep in total disdain. Spitting on a person is one of the most shameful things that you can do and that's why they did it. Isaiah tells us in regards to this whole ordeal in ch 50:6 "*I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.*" As far as the beating that He with stood, Matt keeps it brief but again in Isa 52:14 we read "*His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;*"

In other words His face was so disfigured by the time that they were through pulling out His beard and beating Him and spitting on Him, with His face all swollen up and all that He was no longer recognizable as a man. That's why Isaiah goes on to say in ch 53:3 that "*we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*" That's to say that He was so grotesque to the sight that you couldn't even stand to look at Him. If you've ever pulled up on a wreck and seen people all mangled up and you have to turn away in shock because in churns your stomach to look at them that's what Isaiah is saying that it was like to look a Jesus. But what blows my mind about the whole thing is that Isaiah goes on yet again to say, "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*"

In other words He endured all of this for me, and for you, He was absolutely guiltless and I'm absolutely guilty, but He did for me what I could never do for myself. He laid down His life, was beaten, bruised, scourged and crucified on my behalf so that I might receive the remission of my sins by faith in that finished work of the cross before the Father. Now by this time Peter is no doubt rocked by this whole thing, watching such fierce and venomous brutality being taken out on Jesus. and Knowing how hostile the situation had gotten, he was no doubt terrified of what might be coming his way out of a guilt by association kind of a thing. and So we read here in vs 69

Vs69-74

Now it wasn't the intimidation of a valiant Roman Soldier that caused Peter to deny the Lord, it was a servant girl. and Then another girl after that, and then finally some of the people he was standing around said, you had to of been with Him you sound like a Galilean, your speech betrays you. and So Peter was like speech, I'll show you some speech and he began cursing and swearing that he didn't in any way know who Jesus was. Saying to the effect things like may God strike me dead if I ever knew this guy, and just vehemently denying Him. and Then the rooster crowed, just immediately after the 3rd denial and the gospel of Luke tells us that as soon as that happened Jesus looked up and locked eyes with Peter.

Vs75

My heart goes out to Peter because I can identify with the heartache of what it feels like to deny the Lord. Be it through my actions, or my words or whatever, but it encourages me to know that Peter went on to be used mightily by the Lord, having repented of that denial and being restored into the ministry. So in Peter we see a wonderful example of God's grace in that He uses imperfect people in the working out of His perfect will. and Peter teaches us the need for humility and being submissive to the word of God knowing that as the bible says, "*let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" and As Prov 16:18 tells us "*Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.*" and So may we learn to just submit our lives to the word of God and love the Lord with all of our hearts as we seek to follow Him and do those things that are well pleasing to Him.