CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 26 — The Plot, the Passover, the Garden, and the Betrayal

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapters 24 and 25 recorded Jesus' great teaching on the Mount of Olives.

He spoke about His return in glory.

He spoke about the final judgment, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne.

Now in Matthew Chapter 26, everything changes.

The teaching is finished.

The suffering begins.

The One who will sit on the throne of glory must first be betrayed, arrested, and condemned.

Matthew 26 is one of the longest chapters in the Gospel.

It moves through some of the most important events in all of history:

- **The plot** — the religious leaders plan to kill Jesus.
- **The anointing** — a woman pours costly perfume on Jesus' head.
- **The betrayal** — Judas agrees to hand Jesus over for thirty pieces of silver.
- **The Passover** — Jesus eats His last meal with His disciples and gives them the Lord's Supper.
- **The warning** — Jesus predicts that all will fall away and Peter will deny Him.
- **The garden** — Jesus prays in agony in Gethsemane.
- **The arrest** — Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss.
- **The trial** — Jesus stands before the high priest and the council.
- **The denial** — Peter denies Jesus three times.

In this chapter we see the very best and the very worst of the human heart.

We see a woman's beautiful devotion.

We see a disciple's cold betrayal.

We see friends who fall asleep.

We see a leader who denies his Lord.

And in the middle of it all, we see Jesus.

Calm.

Obedient.

Faithful.

Fully in control, even as He is handed over.

It is important to read this chapter carefully.

The plot against Jesus was led by certain religious leaders of that time.

It was not the act of the Jewish people as a whole.

Jesus' first followers were Jewish, and the New Testament teaches that Jesus gave His life willingly, for the sins of the whole world — including ours.

Matthew 26 therefore shows two great truths:

Jesus went to the cross willingly, in perfect obedience to His Father's will.

And:

Even when His followers failed Him, Jesus remained faithful to God's plan of salvation.

The central truth of Matthew 26 is:

Jesus, knowing everything that would happen, willingly gave Himself up to betrayal, arrest, and condemnation, offering His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and submitting to the Father's will, even when His closest followers failed Him.

I. WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED

Matthew 26:1 — All These Things

“When Jesus had finished saying all these things, He told His disciples,”

When Jesus had finished saying all these things.

Matthew uses words like these at the end of each of Jesus' five great teachings in his Gospel.

But this time he says **all these things.**

Jesus' public teaching ministry was complete.

Now His work of suffering would begin.

He told His disciples.

Jesus did not walk blindly into death.

He told His disciples ahead of time.

He had already told them several times that He would suffer, die, and rise again.

Cross References

Matthew 16:21

> From that time on, Jesus began to explain to His followers that He must go to Jerusalem. There He would suffer many things from the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. He would be killed and then be raised to life on the third day.

Matthew 20:18

> We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the leading priests and the teachers of the law. They will sentence Him to death.

John 13:1

> It was just before the Passover festival. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. He had loved His own people who were in the world, and now He showed them the full extent of His love.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus finished His teaching so that He could finish His saving work.

II. THE PASSOVER IS TWO DAYS AWAY

Matthew 26:2 — Handed Over to Be Crucified

“You know that the Passover is just two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

The Passover is just two days away.

The Passover was the great yearly festival when Israel remembered how God rescued them from slavery in Egypt.

On the first Passover, each family killed a lamb and put its blood on the doorframes of their house.

When God's judgment passed through Egypt, He **passed over** every house covered by the blood.

And the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.

Jesus connects His death with the Passover.

This is not an accident.

Jesus is the true Passover Lamb.

John the Baptist had called Him **“the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”**

Notice also that Jesus told His disciples **when** He would be crucified.

The religious leaders were planning to wait until after the festival.

But Jesus knew it would happen at the Passover.

God's timing, not man's, would decide the day.

Cross References

Exodus 12:6

> Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month. Then all the people of Israel must kill the animals at twilight.

John 1:29

> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

Mark 14:1

> The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away. The leading priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a sneaky way to arrest Jesus and kill Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the true Passover Lamb, whose blood saves us from judgment.

III. THE PALACE OF CAIAPHAS

Matthew 26:3 — The Leaders Gather

“Then the chief priests, the elders of the people, and the teachers of the law gathered in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest.”

The chief priests, the elders of the people, and the teachers of the law.

These were the leaders of the Jewish council, called the Sanhedrin.

Gathered in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest.

Caiaphas was the high priest from about A.D. 18 to 36.

He was the son-in-law of Annas, an earlier high priest who still had great influence.

Earlier, after Jesus raised Lazarus, Caiaphas had said it was better for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish.

He did not understand that he was speaking a deep truth about Jesus' death.

Cross References

Psalm 2:2

> The kings of the earth get ready to fight, and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against His Anointed One.

John 11:49

> One of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said, “You don't know anything at all!”

Luke 22:2

> The leading priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus, because they were afraid of the people.

Spiritual Principle

People may plot against God's Son, but God's plan cannot be stopped.

IV. A SECRET PLOT

Matthew 26:4 — Arrest Him Secretly

“They plotted together how they might arrest Jesus secretly and kill Him.”

They plotted together.

This was not a sudden decision.

They had been planning for some time.

How they might arrest Jesus secretly.

They could not arrest Him openly.

Too many people loved Him.

So they planned to do it in secret, using trickery.

And kill Him.

Their goal was clear.

The religious leaders of God's people were planning to murder God's Son.

Cross References

Psalm 31:13

> I hear many people whispering. There is terror all around me. They plot together against me and plan to take my life.

John 11:53

> So from that day on they made plans to kill Jesus.

Isaiah 53:8

> He was taken away by unfair judgment and punishment. Who could have imagined what would happen to Him? He was cut off from the land of the living. He was punished for the sins of My people.

Spiritual Principle

Evil works in secret, but nothing is hidden from God.

V. NOT DURING THE FESTIVAL

Matthew 26:5 — The People May Riot

“But they said, ‘Not during the festival, or the people may riot.’”

Not during the festival.

During the Passover, Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims from all over the world.

Many of them had heard Jesus teach.

Many had seen His miracles.

Or the people may riot.

The leaders were afraid of the crowds.

So they planned to wait until after the festival.

But God had a different plan.

Jesus would die during the Passover festival, the very time when Israel remembered the blood of the lamb.

The leaders made their plans.

But God was in control of the timing.

Cross References

Mark 14:2

> “But not during the festival,” they said, “or the people may riot.”

Luke 22:2

> The leading priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus, because they were afraid of the people.

Acts 4:27

> It is true that Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city. They plotted against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed.

Spiritual Principle

Human beings make plans, but God decides the timing.

VI. IN BETHANY

Matthew 26:6 — At the Home of Simon the Leper

“While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper,”

While Jesus was in Bethany.

Bethany was a small village about two miles from Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives.

Jesus stayed there during the last week of His life.

It was the hometown of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

At the home of Simon the leper.

We know nothing else about Simon.

He was probably a man Jesus had healed of leprosy.

Otherwise, he could not have hosted guests.

He was still known by his old name — **the leper.**

In the house of a healed leper, Jesus was honored.

In the palace of the high priest, Jesus was plotted against.

Cross References

John 12:1

> Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. Jesus had raised him from the dead.

John 11:1

> A man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived.

Luke 7:36

> One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to eat with him. So He went to the Pharisee's house and took His place at the table.

Spiritual Principle

Those who have been touched by Jesus' grace are the ones who welcome Him most gladly.

VII. AN ALABASTER JAR

Matthew 26:7 — Poured on His Head

“a woman came to Him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on His head as He reclined at the table.”

A woman came to Him.

Matthew does not give her name.

John's Gospel tells us that this was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

With an alabaster jar.

Alabaster was a beautiful, smooth stone used for precious things.

Of very expensive perfume.

Mark and John tell us it was worth about a year's wages.

It may have been her most valuable possession.

Which she poured on His head.

In Israel, kings were anointed by pouring oil on their heads.

Without knowing it fully, she was honoring Jesus as King.

As He reclined at the table.

At special meals, people reclined on cushions around a low table.

Luke 7 tells of another woman who anointed Jesus' feet at the house of a Pharisee.

Most Bible students believe that was a different event, earlier in Jesus' ministry.

Cross References

John 12:3

> Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, a very expensive perfume. She poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the sweet smell of the perfume.

Luke 7:38

> She stood behind Him at His feet, crying. She began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them.

Song of Solomon 1:12

> While the king was at his table, my perfume gave off its sweet smell.

Spiritual Principle

True love for Jesus gives Him our very best.

VIII. "WHY THIS WASTE?"

Matthew 26:8 — The Disciples Were Upset

“When the disciples saw this, they were upset and said, ‘Why this waste?’”

When the disciples saw this, they were upset.

They were angry.

They thought she had done something foolish.

Why this waste?

To them, the perfume was wasted.

To Jesus, it was worship.

John's Gospel tells us that Judas led the complaint.

But Matthew shows that the other disciples joined in.

Sometimes people who love Jesus less criticize those who love Him more.

Nothing given to Jesus out of love is ever wasted.

Cross References

John 12:4

> But one of His followers, Judas Iscariot, who was later going to betray Him, objected.

Mark 14:4

> Some of the people there were angry and said to one another, “Why waste this perfume?”

John 12:5

> “Why wasn't this perfume sold? The money could have been given to the poor. It was worth a year's pay.”

Spiritual Principle

Nothing given to Jesus in love is ever wasted.

IX. GIVEN TO THE POOR

Matthew 26:9 — Sold for a High Price

“This perfume could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor.”

This perfume could have been sold for a high price.

This was true.

It was worth a great deal.

And the money given to the poor.

This sounded good.

Caring for the poor is important to God.

Jesus had just taught that whatever we do for the least of these, we do for Him.

But John tells us that Judas did not really care about the poor.

He was a thief who stole from the money bag.

Sometimes a selfish heart hides behind good-sounding words.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 15:11

> There will always be poor people in the land. So I command you to be generous to your fellow Israelites who are poor and in need in your land.

Mark 14:5

> “It could have been sold for more than a year's pay, and the money given to the poor.” And they scolded her harshly.

1 John 3:17

> If anyone has enough to live on and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no pity, how can the love of God be in that person?

Spiritual Principle

God looks at the heart behind our words.

X. A BEAUTIFUL THING

Matthew 26:10 — Why Are You Bothering Her?

“Aware of this, Jesus said, ‘Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing for Me.’”

Aware of this.

Jesus knew what they were saying.

Why are you bothering this woman?

Jesus defended her.

When others criticized her, Jesus stood up for her.

She has done a beautiful thing for Me.

Beautiful means good, lovely, and fitting.

The disciples saw waste.

Jesus saw beauty.

What matters is not what others think of our worship.

What matters is what Jesus thinks.

Cross References

Mark 14:6

> “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to Me.”

John 12:7

> “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was meant for her to save this perfume for the day of My burial.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11

> He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also put eternity into the hearts of people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus defends and delights in those who worship Him with all their heart.

XI. YOU WILL NOT ALWAYS HAVE ME

Matthew 26:11 — The Poor You Will Always Have

“The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have Me.”

The poor you will always have with you.

Jesus was not saying the poor do not matter.

He was quoting the idea of Deuteronomy 15, which commands God's people to be generous to the poor.

There would always be opportunities to help the poor.

But you will not always have Me.

Jesus would soon be gone.

This woman had one opportunity to honor Him in this way.

And she took it.

There is a time for everything.

Some opportunities come only once.

Cross References

John 12:8

> You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have Me.

Mark 14:7

> The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have Me.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Some opportunities to honor Jesus come only once.

XII. PREPARED FOR BURIAL

Matthew 26:12 — Poured on My Body

“When she poured this perfume on My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial.”

When she poured this perfume on My body.

In those days, bodies were prepared for burial with perfumes and spices.

She did it to prepare Me for burial.

She may not have understood everything.

But she seemed to sense what the disciples did not.

Jesus was going to die.

Again and again, Jesus had told the disciples He would die.

They did not understand.

But this woman listened.

Her act of love was a prophecy of His death.

Cross References

John 12:7

> “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was meant for her to save this perfume for the day of My burial.”

Mark 14:8

> She did what she could. She poured perfume on My body ahead of time to prepare for My burial.

John 19:39

> Nicodemus came with Joseph. He was the man who had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought about seventy-five pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes.

Spiritual Principle

Those who sit at Jesus' feet often understand what others miss.

XIII. IN MEMORY OF HER

Matthew 26:13 — Wherever This Gospel Is Preached

“Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world.

Jesus knew that the gospel would go to the whole world.

And He knew it would be connected with His death and burial.

What she has done will also be told in memory of her.

This promise has come true.

Two thousand years later, we are still telling her story.

Kings and emperors have been forgotten.

But this woman's love is remembered.

Jesus never forgets what we do for Him.

Cross References

Mark 14:9

> Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

Mark 16:15

> He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.”

Psalm 112:6

> Surely the righteous will never be shaken. They will be remembered forever.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus never forgets an act of love done for Him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

What the world calls a waste, Jesus calls beautiful — and He remembers it forever.

XIV. ONE OF THE TWELVE

Matthew 26:14 — Judas Iscariot

“Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests”

Then.

Right after the woman's beautiful act of love.

The contrast is striking.

She gave Jesus her most precious possession.

Judas sold Jesus for money.

One of the Twelve.

This is the most shocking part.

Judas was not an enemy from outside.

He was one of Jesus' chosen apostles.

He had heard Jesus' teaching.

He had seen His miracles.

He had been sent out to preach.

The one called Judas Iscariot.

Iscariot may mean **“man from Kerioth,”** a town in Judea.

Went to the chief priests.

He went on his own.

No one forced him.

Luke and John tell us that Satan entered Judas.

But Judas was still responsible for his choice.

Cross References

Mark 14:10

> Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the leading priests to hand Jesus over to them.

Luke 22:3

> Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

John 13:2

> The evening meal was being served. The devil had already put the idea into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Being close to Jesus is not the same as belonging to Jesus.

Spiritual Warning

A person can be surrounded by spiritual things and still have a heart far from God.

XV. THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

Matthew 26:15 — What Will You Give Me?

“and asked, ‘What will you give me if I deliver Him to you?’ So they counted out thirty pieces of silver.”

What will you give me?

Judas' question shows what was in his heart.

He was thinking about himself.

If I deliver Him to you.

The leaders needed a way to arrest Jesus secretly.

Judas offered them exactly that.

So they counted out thirty pieces of silver.

In the law of Moses, thirty pieces of silver was the price paid when a slave was killed.

The prophet Zechariah spoke of being valued at **thirty pieces of silver** — an insulting price.

The Son of God was sold for the price of a slave.

Cross References

Zechariah 11:12

> I told them, “If you think it is right, give me my pay. But if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

Exodus 21:32

> If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty pieces of silver to the slave's master, and the bull must be stoned to death.

Mark 14:11

> They were very happy to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for a chance to hand Jesus over.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing in this world is worth trading Jesus for.

XVI. WATCHING FOR THE RIGHT TIME

Matthew 26:16 — To Hand Jesus Over

“From then on, Judas watched for the right time to hand Jesus over.”

From then on.

The decision was made.

Judas watched for the right time.

He looked for a moment when Jesus would be away from the crowds.

To hand Jesus over.

Every day, Judas walked with Jesus.

He ate with Him.

He listened to Him.

But all the while, he was looking for a chance to betray Him.

This is what love of money can do to a heart.

Cross References

Luke 22:6

> He agreed, and he watched for a chance to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

John 13:27

> As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”

Proverbs 1:19

> This is what happens to everyone who is greedy for money. Greed takes away the life of those who have it.

Spiritual Principle

Greed can turn a follower into a betrayer.

XVII. PREPARING THE PASSOVER

Matthew 26:17 — The First Day of Unleavened Bread

“On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Where do You want us to make preparations for You to eat the Passover?’”

The first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

The Passover was followed by a seven-day festival.

During this time, Israel ate bread made without yeast.

This reminded them that they left Egypt in such a hurry that their bread had no time to rise.

The Passover lambs were sacrificed at the temple on the afternoon before the Passover meal.

Where do You want us to make preparations?

Preparing the Passover was a big job.

The lamb had to be sacrificed at the temple.

The room had to be arranged.

The bread, wine, and bitter herbs had to be ready.

Cross References

Exodus 12:15

> For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, remove all yeast from your houses.

Mark 14:12

> On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was the custom to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' followers asked Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

Luke 22:7

> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

Spiritual Principle

God's people prepare to remember His great acts of salvation.

XVIII. MY APPOINTED TIME IS NEAR

Matthew 26:18 — At Your House

“He replied, ‘Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, “The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with My disciples at your house.”’”

Go into the city to a certain man.

Jesus does not name the man.

This may have been to keep the location secret from Judas, so that Jesus could finish the meal before His arrest.

The Teacher says.

The man seems to have known Jesus.

My appointed time is near.

Earlier, Jesus had said, **“My time has not yet come.”**

Now He says, **“My appointed time is near.”**

This is the hour the Father had planned.

I am going to celebrate the Passover with My disciples at your house.

Jesus wanted to share this last meal with His closest friends.

Cross References

Mark 14:14

> Say to the owner of the house he enters, “The Teacher asks: Where is My guest room, where I may eat the Passover with My followers?”

John 7:6

> Therefore Jesus told them, “My time is not yet here. For you, any time is right.”

John 7:30

> At this they tried to seize Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus moved according to the Father's timetable, not man's.

XIX. THEY DID AS JESUS DIRECTED

Matthew 26:19 — Preparing the Passover

“So the disciples did as Jesus directed them and prepared the Passover.”

So the disciples did as Jesus directed them.

They obeyed.

Everything happened just as Jesus said.

And prepared the Passover.

They got the room ready.

They prepared the food.

In the same way, the Israelites in Egypt did exactly what the LORD commanded Moses.

When we follow Jesus' directions, we find everything just as He said.

Cross References

Mark 14:16

> The followers left, went into the city, and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

Luke 22:13

> They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

Exodus 12:28

> The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

Spiritual Principle

When we obey Jesus, we find that His word is always true.

XX. RECLINING WITH THE TWELVE

Matthew 26:20 — When Evening Came

“When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.”

When evening came.

The Passover meal was eaten at night.

Jesus was reclining at the table.

They lay on couches or cushions, leaning on one elbow, around a low table.

With the Twelve.

His closest followers were with Him.

This was the last meal Jesus would eat with them before His death.

John tells us that during this meal Jesus washed their feet.

Cross References

Mark 14:17

> When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

Luke 22:14

> When the hour came, Jesus and His apostles took their places at the table.

John 13:23

> One of His followers, the one Jesus loved, was leaning back against Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus desires close fellowship with His followers.

XXI. ONE OF YOU WILL BETRAY ME

Matthew 26:21 — While They Were Eating

“And while they were eating, He said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me.’”

While they were eating.

In the middle of a sacred meal.

In a moment of friendship.

Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me.

Jesus knew.

He had always known.

And yet He had loved Judas.

He had chosen him.

He had washed his feet.

Even now, Jesus was giving Judas a chance to turn back.

Cross References

Mark 14:18

> While they were at the table eating, He said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me — one who is eating with Me.”

John 13:21

> After He had said this, Jesus was deeply troubled in spirit. He said, “Truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray Me.”

John 6:70

> Then Jesus replied, “Didn't I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows every heart, and still He offers grace.

XXII. "SURELY NOT I, LORD?"

Matthew 26:22 — One After Another

“They were very sad and began to say to Him one after another, ‘Surely You don't mean me, Lord?’”

They were very sad.

They were deeply hurt by Jesus' words.

And began to say to Him one after another.

Each disciple asked.

Surely You don't mean me, Lord?

They did not point fingers at each other.

Each one looked at his own heart.

This is the right response.

When we hear a warning from God's Word, the first question should be, **“Lord, is it I?”**

Cross References

Mark 14:19

> They were very sad. One by one they said to Him, “Surely You don't mean me?”

John 13:22

> His followers stared at one another. They had no idea which of them He meant.

Luke 22:23

> They began to ask one another which of them would do this.

Spiritual Principle

When God's Word warns us, we should first examine our own hearts.

XXIII. DIPPED IN THE BOWL

Matthew 26:23 — The One Who Will Betray Me

“Jesus replied, ‘The one who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me will betray Me.’”

The one who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me.

At the Passover meal, people dipped bread and herbs into a shared bowl of sauce.

This was a sign of close friendship.

To eat from the same bowl was to be trusted.

Will betray Me.

The betrayal would come from someone very close.

David wrote of the pain of being betrayed by a close friend.

Jesus felt that same pain.

Cross References

John 13:26

> Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

Mark 14:20

> “It is one of the Twelve,” He replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with Me.”

Psalm 55:13

> But it is you, someone like me, my friend, my close companion.

Spiritual Principle

The deepest wounds often come from those closest to us — and Jesus understands.

XXIV. BETTER NEVER TO HAVE BEEN BORN

Matthew 26:24 — Just As It Is Written

“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man—it would be better for him if he had never been born.”

The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him.

Jesus' death was part of God's plan.

The Scriptures had foretold it.

But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man.

God's plan does not take away human responsibility.

Judas chose to betray Jesus.

He would be held accountable.

It would be better for him if he had never been born.

These are terrible words.

They show how serious Judas' sin was.

This verse teaches two truths side by side:

God is in control of all things.

And people are responsible for their choices.

The Bible does not explain fully how both are true, but it clearly teaches both.

Cross References

Psalm 41:9

> Even my close friend, someone I trusted, someone who shared my bread, has turned against me.

Luke 22:22

> The Son of Man will go as it has been decided. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays Him!

Acts 1:16

> Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to come true that the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David about Judas. Judas guided those who arrested Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

God's sovereign plan never removes human responsibility.

XXV. "SURELY NOT I, RABBI?"

Matthew 26:25 — You Have Said So

“Then Judas, the one who would betray Him, said, ‘Surely You don't mean me, Rabbi?’ Jesus answered, ‘You have said so.’”

Then Judas, the one who would betray Him.

Judas asked the same question as the others.

Surely You don't mean me, Rabbi?

Notice a small but important difference.

The other disciples called Jesus **“Lord.”**

Judas called Him **“Rabbi”** — Teacher.

Judas never calls Jesus **“Lord”** in Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus answered, ‘You have said so.’

This was a way of saying **“Yes.”**

Jesus exposed Judas without shouting.

Without anger.

Quietly.

Even now, Judas could have repented.

But he did not.

Cross References

Mark 14:21

> The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.

John 13:30

> As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

1 John 2:19

> They left us, but they never really belonged to us. If they had belonged to us, they would have stayed with us. Their leaving showed that none of them belonged to us.

Spiritual Principle

Calling Jesus “Teacher” is not the same as following Him as Lord.

XXVI. THIS IS MY BODY

Matthew 26:26 — Take and Eat

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is My body.’”

While they were eating.

In the middle of the Passover meal, Jesus did something new.

Jesus took bread.

This was the flat, unleavened bread of the Passover.

And when He had given thanks.

Jesus thanked the Father — even on the night He was betrayed.

He broke it.

The broken bread pictured His body, which would be broken on the cross.

And gave it to His disciples.

Jesus gives Himself to His people.

Take and eat; this is My body.

In the Passover, the bread reminded Israel of their escape from Egypt.

Now Jesus gives the bread a new meaning.

It points to His own body, given for us.

This was the beginning of what Christians call **the Lord's Supper**, **Communion**, or **the Eucharist.**

How Do Christians Understand “This Is My Body”?

Christians have understood these words in different ways.

Some believe the bread truly becomes the body of Christ.

Some believe Christ is truly present in, with, and under the bread, while it remains bread.

Some believe Christ is spiritually present to believers as they eat in faith.

Some believe the bread is a symbol and memorial that helps us remember His sacrifice.

All Christians agree on this:

Jesus gave His body for us, and He commanded His people to remember Him in this meal.

Cross References

Exodus 12:8

> That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast.

1 Corinthians 11:24

> And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you. Do this in memory of Me.”

Luke 22:19

> And He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. He gave it to them, saying, “This is My body given for you. Do this in memory of Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus gave His body so that we could receive life.

XXVII. DRINK FROM IT, ALL OF YOU

Matthew 26:27 — He Took a Cup

“Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you.’”

Then He took a cup.

During the Passover meal, several cups of wine were shared.

And when He had given thanks.

Again, Jesus gave thanks.

The Greek word for giving thanks is the source of the word **Eucharist.**

He gave it to them.

Drink from it, all of you.

Jesus offered the cup to every disciple.

Even to Peter, who would deny Him.

Even to the others, who would run away.

What He was about to give was for all who would come to Him.

Cross References

Exodus 24:8

> Then Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you according to all these words.”

1 Corinthians 11:25

> In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in memory of Me.”

Luke 22:20

> In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus offers His grace to all His followers, even those who will fail Him.

XXVIII. THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

Matthew 26:28 — For the Forgiveness of Sins

“This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

This is My blood of the covenant.

A **covenant** is a solemn agreement or promise between God and His people.

At Mount Sinai, Moses sprinkled the blood of sacrifices on the people to seal God's covenant with Israel.

Now Jesus says His own blood seals a covenant.

Jeremiah had promised a **new covenant**, when God would write His law on people's hearts and remember their sins no more.

Jesus was bringing that new covenant.

Which is poured out.

His blood would be poured out on the cross.

For many.

Isaiah 53 said that the Servant of the LORD would bear the sin of many.

For the forgiveness of sins.

This is why Jesus died.

Not as a victim of bad men only.

But as the sacrifice for our sins.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

Jesus' blood is enough to wash away every sin.

Cross References

Hebrews 9:22

> In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be made clean with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

Jeremiah 31:31

> “The days are coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.”

Isaiah 53:12

> He gave up His life and died, and He was counted among the sinners. He carried the sin of many and prayed for those who did wrong.

Spiritual Principle

The blood of Jesus brings forgiveness and a new relationship with God.

Key Truth

The cup of the Lord's Supper tells us that our sins can be completely forgiven.

XXIX. NEW IN MY FATHER'S KINGDOM

Matthew 26:29 — The Fruit of the Vine

“I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine again until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”

I will not drink from this fruit of the vine again.

This was Jesus' last meal before His death.

Until that day.

Jesus looks beyond the cross.

When I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

This is a promise.

Jesus will share a meal with His people again.

In the kingdom of God.

At the great wedding supper of the Lamb.

The Lord's Supper looks back to the cross.

But it also looks forward to the feast to come.

Paul wrote that whenever we eat the bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death **until He comes.**

Cross References

Luke 22:18

> For I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

Mark 14:25

> Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Revelation 19:9

> Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who have been invited to the wedding meal of the Lamb!”

Spiritual Principle

The Lord's Supper looks back to the cross and forward to the kingdom.

XXX. THEY SANG A HYMN

Matthew 26:30 — To the Mount of Olives

“When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

When they had sung a hymn.

At the end of the Passover meal, Jewish families sang psalms of praise, often Psalms 115 to 118.

These psalms are part of what is called **the Hallel**, meaning **praise.**

Psalm 118 says, **“Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His love endures forever.”**

It also says, **“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.”**

Imagine Jesus singing these words, knowing He was about to be rejected and crucified.

They went out to the Mount of Olives.

They walked out of the city in the dark, across the Kidron Valley, to the hill east of Jerusalem.

Jesus went toward the place of His arrest — singing.

Cross References

Mark 14:26

> When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Psalm 118:1

> Give thanks to the LORD, because He is good. His faithful love lasts forever.

Zechariah 14:4

> On that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faced His suffering with worship on His lips.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When the darkest hour comes, sing — because God is still good.

XXXI. STRIKE THE SHEPHERD

Matthew 26:31 — You Will All Fall Away

“Then Jesus told them, ‘This very night you will all fall away on account of Me, for it is written: “I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”’”

This very night.

Not someday.

Tonight.

You will all fall away on account of Me.

Fall away means to stumble.

To be tripped up.

To lose courage.

Not just Judas.

All of them.

For it is written.

Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7.

I will strike the Shepherd.

God Himself would allow the Shepherd to be struck.

Jesus' death was part of God's plan.

And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

When the Shepherd was arrested, His sheep would run away in fear.

Cross References

Zechariah 13:7

> “Wake up, sword, against My Shepherd, against the man who is close to Me!” says the LORD who commands armies. “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.”

Mark 14:27

> Jesus told them, “You will all fall away, for it is written: ‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’”

John 16:32

> A time is coming, and in fact has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, because My Father is with Me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows our weakness before we fail.

XXXII. I WILL GO AHEAD OF YOU

Matthew 26:32 — After I Have Risen

“But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”

But.

Right after the bad news, Jesus gives good news.

After I have risen.

Jesus was certain of His resurrection.

I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

Like a shepherd who goes ahead of his sheep.

They would scatter.

But He would gather them again.

Their failure would not be the end of the story.

Jesus was already planning to meet them after they failed.

Cross References

Mark 14:28

> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

Matthew 28:7

> Then go quickly and tell His followers: “He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.”

Matthew 28:16

> Then the eleven followers went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus plans our restoration even before we fall.

Key Truth

Our failure is never bigger than His faithfulness.

XXXIII. "I NEVER WILL"

Matthew 26:33 — Peter's Boast

“Peter replied, ‘Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will.’”

Peter replied.

Peter loved Jesus.

He meant what he said.

Even if all fall away on account of You.

Peter compared himself with the others.

He thought he was stronger than they were.

I never will.

Peter trusted in his own strength.

He did not believe Jesus' warning.

Pride says, **“I could never do that.”**

Humility says, **“Lord, keep me, because I am weak.”**

Cross References

Mark 14:29

> Peter said, “Even if all fall away, I will not.”

Luke 22:33

But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with You to prison and to death.”

John 13:37

Peter asked, “Lord, why can't I follow You now? I will give my life for You.”

Spiritual Principle

Self-confidence is dangerous when it ignores God's warning.

XXXIV. BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS

Matthew 26:34 — Three Times

“Jesus answered, ‘Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.’”

Truly I tell you.

Jesus answers Peter's boast with a solemn warning.

This very night.

Within hours.

Before the rooster crows.

Roosters often crowed in the early morning hours, before dawn.

You will disown Me three times.

Disown means to deny knowing someone.

Peter would not just stumble once.

He would deny Jesus three times.

Jesus knew every detail.

And still He loved Peter.

Cross References

Mark 14:30

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today — yes, tonight — before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will disown Me three times.”

Luke 22:34

> Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me.”

John 13:38

> Then Jesus answered, “Will you really give your life for Me? Truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times!”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows the worst about us and loves us still.

XXXV. "EVEN IF I HAVE TO DIE"

Matthew 26:35 — All the Others Said the Same

“But Peter declared, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.’ And all the other disciples said the same.”

But Peter declared.

Peter argued with Jesus.

Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.

Peter was sincere.

He truly thought he would die for Jesus.

And one day, he would.

But not yet.

Not in his own strength.

And all the other disciples said the same.

They all promised loyalty.

They all failed that same night.

Our good intentions are not enough.

We need God's strength.

Cross References

Mark 14:31

> But Peter said even more strongly, “Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.” And all the others said the same.

John 11:16

> Then Thomas, also called Didymus, said to the rest of the followers, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.”

Proverbs 28:26

> Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.

Spiritual Principle

Good intentions are not enough; we need God's strength.

XXXVI. GETHSEMANE

Matthew 26:36 — Sit Here While I Pray

“Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’”

Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane.

Gethsemane means **oil press.**

It was a garden of olive trees on the Mount of Olives.

John tells us Jesus often went there with His disciples.

That is how Judas knew where to find Him.

Olives were crushed in an oil press to make oil.

In this place, Jesus would be pressed down with sorrow.

Sit here while I go over there and pray.

In His hour of greatest need, Jesus turned to prayer.

Cross References

Mark 14:32

> They went to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to His followers, “Sit here while I pray.”

Luke 22:40

> When He reached the place, He said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”

John 18:1

> When He had finished praying, Jesus left with His followers and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and He and His followers went into it.

Spiritual Principle

In the hour of greatest pressure, go to prayer.

XXXVII. DEEPLY TROUBLED

Matthew 26:37 — Peter, James, and John

“He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be deeply troubled and sorrowful.”

He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.

The sons of Zebedee were James and John.

These three had seen Jesus' glory on the mountain of transfiguration.

Now they would see His agony in the garden.

And He began to be deeply troubled and sorrowful.

Jesus was fully God.

But He was also fully human.

He felt real sorrow.

Real distress.

Real anguish.

He was not pretending.

He knew what was coming — the cross, and bearing the sins of the world.

Cross References

Mark 14:33

> He took Peter, James, and John along with Him, and He began to be deeply troubled and upset.

Matthew 17:1

> After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James with Him. He led them up a high mountain by themselves.

John 12:27

> Now My soul is troubled. What shall I say? “Father, save Me from this hour”? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus knows what deep sorrow feels like.

XXXVIII. OVERWHELMED WITH SORROW

Matthew 26:38 — Keep Watch with Me

“He said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.’”

My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow.

Jesus opened His heart to His friends.

He did not hide His pain.

To the point of death.

The sorrow was so heavy it felt like it could kill Him.

Stay here and keep watch with Me.

Jesus wanted His friends near Him.

He asked them to stay awake and pray.

Even the Son of God wanted the support of His friends in His darkest hour.

It is not weakness to ask others to pray with us.

Cross References

Mark 14:34

> “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” He said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

Psalm 42:5

> Why, my soul, are you so sad? Why are you so upset inside me? Put your hope in God, because I will praise Him again — my Savior and my God.

Jonah 4:9

> But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “It is,” he said. “And I'm so angry I wish I were dead.”

Spiritual Principle

It is right to share our burdens and ask others to pray with us.

XXXIX. NOT AS I WILL

Matthew 26:39 — Let This Cup Be Taken from Me

“Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.’”

Going a little farther.

Jesus went a short distance from them.

He fell with His face to the ground.

The posture of deep humility and great distress.

My Father.

Even in agony, Jesus prayed to God as His Father.

Mark tells us He said **“Abba”** — a warm, close word for father.

If it is possible, let this cup be taken from Me.

In the Old Testament, **the cup** often pictured God's anger against sin.

Jesus was about to drink that cup.

He would take the judgment our sins deserved.

He shrank from it in horror.

But He did not run from it.

Yet not as I will, but as You will.

This is the greatest prayer of surrender ever prayed.

Jesus wanted what the Father wanted.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam said **“My will.”**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said **“Your will.”**

Cross References

Mark 14:36

> “Abba, Father,” He said, “everything is possible for You. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I want, but what You want.”

Luke 22:42

> “Father, if You are willing, take this cup from Me. Yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

John 5:30

> By Myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is fair, because I do not try to please Myself but the One who sent Me.

Spiritual Principle

True prayer ends with surrender: not my will, but Yours.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

In one garden, Adam chose his own will; in another garden, Jesus chose the Father's will.

XL. ONE HOUR

Matthew 26:40 — Found Them Sleeping

“Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Couldn't you men keep watch with Me for one hour?’ He asked Peter.”

Then He returned to His disciples.

Jesus came back for comfort and support.

And found them sleeping.

They were tired.

It was late.

They had eaten a big meal.

Luke tells us they were **exhausted from sorrow.**

Couldn't you men keep watch with Me for one hour?

Jesus spoke to Peter.

The same Peter who had said, **“I will never disown You.”**

He could not even stay awake for one hour.

Cross References

Mark 14:37

> Then He returned to His followers and found them sleeping. “Simon,” He said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?”

Luke 22:45

> When He rose from prayer and went back to the followers, He found them asleep, worn out from sadness.

1 Peter 5:8

> Be alert and think clearly. Your enemy the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to eat.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual strength is lost when we fall asleep in prayer.

XLI. WATCH AND PRAY

Matthew 26:41 — The Spirit Is Willing

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Watch and pray.

These two go together.

Watch — be alert to danger.

Pray — depend on God's strength.

So that you will not fall into temptation.

Temptation was coming that very night.

Prayer was their protection.

Peter did not pray.

And Peter fell.

The spirit is willing.

In their hearts, the disciples wanted to be faithful.

But the flesh is weak.

Their human strength was not enough.

This is true of every believer.

We want to do right.

But without God's help, we fail.

That is why we must pray.

Cross References

Mark 14:38

> Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

Galatians 5:17

> For the flesh wants what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is against the flesh. They fight against each other, so you do not do what you want.

Romans 7:18

> I know that nothing good lives in me — that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is good, but I cannot do it.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer is the believer's strength against temptation.

Key Truth

Prayerlessness leads to weakness; prayer leads to victory.

XLII. YOUR WILL BE DONE

Matthew 26:42 — The Second Prayer

“He went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done.’”

He went away a second time and prayed.

Jesus kept praying.

My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it.

The first prayer said, **“If it is possible.”**

Now Jesus seems to accept that there is no other way.

If people are to be saved, He must drink the cup.

May Your will be done.

These are the same words Jesus taught His disciples in the Lord's Prayer.

Now He prays them in agony.

He is not only teaching surrender.

He is living it.

Cross References

Mark 14:39

> Once more He went away and prayed the same thing.

Luke 22:43

> An angel from heaven appeared to Him and gave Him strength.

Hebrews 5:7

> While Jesus lived on earth, He offered up prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death. He was heard because of His reverent submission.

A Note on Luke 22:43–44

Luke 22:43–44, which tells of the angel who strengthened Jesus and His sweat like drops of blood, is not found in some of the early manuscripts of Luke. It is found in many others, and many Bibles include it with a note.

Spiritual Principle

Surrender to God's will may need to be prayed again and again.

XLIII. THEIR EYES WERE HEAVY

Matthew 26:43 — Sleeping Again

“When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.”

When He came back, He again found them sleeping.

For the second time, they failed.

Because their eyes were heavy.

Matthew gives a gentle explanation.

They were truly tired.

Mark adds that **they did not know what to say to Him.**

They were ashamed.

How human they were.

And how patient Jesus was with them.

Cross References

Mark 14:40

> When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to Him.

Luke 9:32

> Peter and his companions were very sleepy. But when they became fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him.

Romans 13:11

> Do this because you know what time it is. It is time to wake up from your sleep, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is patient with our weakness, but He calls us to wake up.

XLIV. THE THIRD TIME

Matthew 26:44 — Saying the Same Thing

“So He left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.”

So He left them.

Jesus did not wake them again.

And went away once more and prayed the third time.

Three times Jesus prayed.

Paul also prayed three times about his thorn in the flesh.

Saying the same thing.

Jesus repeated His prayer.

This is not the empty repetition Jesus warned against.

It is persistent, heartfelt prayer from a heart in great need.

By the end of the third prayer, Jesus was ready.

The struggle was over.

He rose with peace and strength to face the cross.

Cross References

Mark 14:41

> Returning the third time, He said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come.”

2 Corinthians 12:8

> Three times I begged the Lord to take it away from me.

Luke 22:44

> And being in anguish, He prayed even harder, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Spiritual Principle

Keep praying until you are ready to obey.

XLV. THE HOUR HAS COME

Matthew 26:45 — Into the Hands of Sinners

“Then He returned to the disciples and said, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.’”

Are you still sleeping and resting?

The time for watching was over.

They had missed their chance to pray.

Look, the hour has come.

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus spoke of **“My hour.”**

Now it had arrived.

And the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.

The sinless One was handed over to sinful men.

This was the purpose for which He came.

Cross References

Mark 14:42

> Get up! Let us go! Here comes My betrayer!

John 12:23

> Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”

Luke 22:53

> Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on Me. But this is your hour — when darkness rules.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus faced His hour with courage, because He had prayed.

XLVI. RISE, LET US GO

Matthew 26:46 — Here Comes My Betrayer

“Rise, let us go! Here comes My betrayer!”

Rise, let us go!

Jesus did not run away.

He did not hide.

He went out to meet His enemies.

Here comes My betrayer!

Jesus could see the torches.

He knew Judas was coming.

John tells us Jesus knew **everything that was going to happen to Him.**

And He went forward anyway.

The prayer in the garden gave Him strength to face the cross.

Cross References

John 18:2

> Judas, who betrayed Him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with His followers.

John 18:4

> Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him. So He went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

John 14:31

> But the world must learn that I love the Father and do exactly what My Father has commanded Me. Come now; let us leave.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus went willingly to the cross.

Key Truth

No one took Jesus' life from Him; He laid it down.

XLVII. JUDAS ARRIVES

Matthew 26:47 — With Swords and Clubs

“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.”

While He was still speaking.

Everything happened just as Jesus said.

Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived.

Matthew again reminds us: **one of the Twelve.**

The betrayer was a friend.

With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs.

John tells us it included Roman soldiers and temple guards.

They came as if to capture a dangerous criminal.

Sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

The religious leaders were behind the arrest.

They came with weapons to arrest the Prince of Peace.

Cross References

Mark 14:43

> Just as He was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

Luke 22:47

> While He was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He came near to Jesus to kiss Him.

John 18:3

> So Judas came to the garden, guiding a group of soldiers and some officials from the leading priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

Spiritual Principle

The forces of darkness come with weapons, but Jesus comes with surrender to God.

XLVIII. THE SIGNAL

Matthew 26:48 — The One I Kiss

“Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: ‘The one I kiss is the man; arrest Him.’”

Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them.

It was dark.

The soldiers might not know which man was Jesus.

The one I kiss is the man.

A kiss was a common greeting between a student and his teacher.

It was a sign of respect and love.

Judas turned a sign of love into a sign of betrayal.

Arrest Him.

Just as Joab once kissed Amasa and then killed him, Judas would kiss Jesus and hand Him over to death.

Cross References

Mark 14:44

> Now the betrayer had given them a signal: “The one I kiss is the man. Arrest Him and lead Him away under guard.”

2 Samuel 20:9

> Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my brother?” Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

Proverbs 27:6

> Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy gives many kisses.

Spiritual Principle

A false show of love is one of the cruelest forms of betrayal.

XLIX. "GREETINGS, RABBI!"

Matthew 26:49 — And Kissed Him

“Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi!’ and kissed Him.”

Going at once to Jesus.

Judas did not hesitate.

Greetings, Rabbi!

Again, Judas calls Jesus **Rabbi**, not **Lord.**

And kissed Him.

The Greek word suggests a warm or repeated kiss.

It was an act of open hypocrisy.

Luke records Jesus' response: **“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”**

Cross References

Mark 14:45

> Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

Luke 22:48

> But Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Psalm 55:21

> His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart. His words are softer than oil, yet they are drawn swords.

Spiritual Principle

Outward affection means nothing if the heart is false.

L. "FRIEND, DO WHAT YOU CAME FOR"

Matthew 26:50 — They Seized Jesus

“Jesus replied, ‘Friend, do what you came for.’ Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus, and arrested Him.”

Friend.

Even now, Jesus called Judas **friend.**

What grace!

Jesus did not curse him.

He did not strike him.

He gave him one last word of kindness.

Do what you came for.

Jesus was in control.

He was not a helpless victim.

He allowed what was happening.

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus, and arrested Him.

The One who calmed storms and raised the dead let Himself be tied up like a criminal.

Cross References

Mark 14:46

> The men seized Jesus and arrested Him.

John 18:12

> Then the soldiers, their commander, and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They tied Him up.

Luke 22:52

> Then Jesus said to the leading priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders who had come for Him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs?”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus showed grace even to the one who betrayed Him.

LI. A SWORD IS DRAWN

Matthew 26:51 — The Servant's Ear

“With that, one of Jesus' companions drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.”

One of Jesus' companions drew his sword.

John tells us it was Peter.

Peter was trying to keep his promise to fight for Jesus.

And struck the servant of the high priest.

John tells us the servant's name was Malchus.

Cutting off his ear.

Peter may have been aiming for his head.

Luke, the doctor, tells us that Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him.

Even while being arrested, Jesus was healing His enemies.

Cross References

Mark 14:47

> Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

John 18:10

> Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Luke 22:51

> But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And He touched the man's ear and healed him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' kingdom does not advance by the sword.

LII. PUT YOUR SWORD BACK

Matthew 26:52 — All Who Draw the Sword

“‘Put your sword back in its place,’ Jesus said to him, ‘for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.’”

Put your sword back in its place.

Jesus stopped Peter.

Peter wanted to fight.

Jesus wanted to obey the Father.

For all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

Violence leads to more violence.

Jesus' kingdom would not be built by force.

It would be built by His death and resurrection.

Christians have discussed how this verse applies to government, police, self-defense, and war.

But in this moment, Jesus' meaning was clear:

His disciples must not use violence to defend Him or His mission.

Cross References

John 18:11

> Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?”

Genesis 9:6

> Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, because God made human beings in His own image.

Revelation 13:10

> If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness from God's people.

Spiritual Principle

God's work is not done by human force but by faithful obedience.

LIII. TWELVE LEGIONS OF ANGELS

Matthew 26:53 — I Could Call on My Father

“Do you think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

Do you think I cannot call on My Father?

Jesus did not need Peter's sword.

More than twelve legions of angels.

A Roman legion had about six thousand soldiers.

Twelve legions would be more than seventy thousand angels.

In the Old Testament, one angel destroyed a huge Assyrian army in a single night.

Jesus had all the power of heaven available to Him.

He was not arrested because He was weak.

He was arrested because He chose to be.

Cross References

2 Kings 6:17

> And Elisha prayed, “LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Psalm 91:11

> For He will command His angels to protect you wherever you go.

Matthew 4:11

> Then the devil left Him, and angels came and took care of Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus had all power, yet He chose to lay down His life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

It was not the soldiers who held Jesus, but His love for us and His obedience to the Father.

LIV. THE SCRIPTURES MUST BE FULFILLED

Matthew 26:54 — It Must Happen This Way

“But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?”

But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled?

If Jesus called the angels, He would not go to the cross.

And if He did not go to the cross, the Scriptures would not be fulfilled.

That say it must happen this way.

Isaiah said the Servant would be led like a lamb to the slaughter.

He would be counted among the lawbreakers.

Jesus chose to fulfill God's Word, even though it meant suffering.

Cross References

Luke 22:37

> It is written: “He was counted among the lawbreakers.” And I tell you that this must be fulfilled in Me. Yes, what is written about Me is coming true.

Isaiah 53:7

> He was treated badly and made to suffer, but He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to be killed. Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.

John 19:28

> Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus valued fulfilling God's Word more than escaping suffering.

LV. AM I LEADING A REBELLION?

Matthew 26:55 — Every Day in the Temple

“In that hour 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.’”

Am I leading a rebellion?

They treated Him like a dangerous outlaw.

But He was a peaceful teacher.

That you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me?

Jesus pointed out how foolish and cowardly this was.

Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching.

He had taught openly, in public.

And you did not arrest Me.

They were afraid of the crowds.

So they came at night, in secret.

Their actions showed they knew they were doing wrong.

Cross References

Mark 14:48

> “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture Me?”

Mark 14:49

> Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

John 18:20

> “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret.”

Spiritual Principle

Truth works in the light; evil hides in the dark.

LVI. ALL THE DISCIPLES FLED

Matthew 26:56 — The Prophets Fulfilled

“But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.

But this has all taken place.

Nothing was out of control.

That the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.

Every detail was part of God's plan.

Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.

Just as Jesus said.

All of them.

Peter, who said he would die with Jesus.

James and John, who said they could drink His cup.

They all ran away.

I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.

Jesus was left alone.

He faced His enemies without His friends.

He went to the cross alone, so that we would never have to be alone.

Cross References

Mark 14:50

> Then everyone deserted Him and ran away.

Zechariah 13:7

> Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. I will turn My hand against the little ones.

John 16:32

> A time is coming, and in fact has come, when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, because My Father is with Me.

Spiritual Principle

When everyone else fails, Jesus remains faithful.

Key Truth

Jesus was left alone so that we would never be left alone.

LVII. BEFORE CAIAPHAS

Matthew 26:57 — Taken to the High Priest

“Those who had arrested Jesus took Him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled.”

Those who had arrested Jesus took Him to Caiaphas the high priest.

John tells us they first took Jesus to Annas, Caiaphas' father-in-law.

Then He was sent to Caiaphas.

Where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled.

The leaders were waiting.

It was the middle of the night.

This hearing was hurried and held in the dark.

Its outcome had been decided before it began.

Cross References

Mark 14:53

> They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of the law came together.

John 18:24

> Then Annas sent Him, still tied up, to Caiaphas the high priest.

Psalm 27:12

> Do not hand me over to my enemies, because false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.

Spiritual Principle

The Judge of all the earth allowed Himself to be judged unfairly.

LVIII. PETER FOLLOWED AT A DISTANCE

Matthew 26:58 — In the High Priest's Courtyard

“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.”

But Peter followed Him.

Peter had run away.

But he came back.

He still loved Jesus.

At a distance.

Close enough to see.

Far enough to stay safe.

Right up to the courtyard of the high priest.

John tells us another disciple who knew the high priest helped Peter get in.

He entered and sat down with the guards.

Peter sat with the very people who had arrested Jesus.

He warmed himself at their fire.

To see the outcome.

Following Jesus at a distance is dangerous.

It puts us in the company of those who do not love Him.

Cross References

Mark 14:54

> Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

Luke 22:55

> When some there had started a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

John 18:16

> But Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other follower, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there, and brought Peter in.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus at a distance leads to danger.

LIX. LOOKING FOR FALSE EVIDENCE

Matthew 26:59 — The Whole Sanhedrin

“The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so they could put Him to death.”

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin.

The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish council.

It was made up of about seventy members and the high priest.

It was supposed to protect justice.

Were looking for false evidence against Jesus.

They were not looking for the truth.

They had already decided what they wanted.

So they could put Him to death.

The trial was not about whether Jesus was guilty.

It was about finding a reason to kill Him.

Cross References

Mark 14:55

> The leading priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death, but they did not find any.

Psalm 37:32

> The wicked watch for the righteous and look for a way to kill them.

Psalm 35:11

> Cruel witnesses come forward. They question me about things I know nothing about.

Spiritual Principle

When the heart has already decided against Jesus, it will look for any excuse.

LX. MANY FALSE WITNESSES

Matthew 26:60 — But They Found None

“But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward”

But they did not find any.

They could not find any real evidence.

Jesus was innocent.

Though many false witnesses came forward.

Many people were willing to lie.

But Mark tells us their stories did not agree.

Finally two came forward.

The law of Moses required at least two witnesses to agree before a person could be condemned.

Even with all their efforts, they could barely meet this requirement.

Cross References

Mark 14:57

> Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against Him.

Deuteronomy 19:15

> One witness is not enough to convict anyone of a crime or offense. A matter must be proven by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Proverbs 19:5

> A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever tells lies will not escape.

Spiritual Principle

Lies cannot prove the guilt of the innocent.

LXI. DESTROY THE TEMPLE

Matthew 26:61 — Rebuild It in Three Days

“and declared, ‘This man said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.”’”

This man said.

They did not even use His name.

I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.

Jesus had said something like this at the beginning of His ministry.

But He said, **“Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”**

He was not talking about the building.

John tells us He was talking about **His body.**

The witnesses twisted His words.

Ironically, their charge pointed to the truth.

They would destroy His body.

And in three days He would rise again.

Cross References

John 2:19

> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

Mark 14:58

> We heard Him say, “I will destroy this temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.”

Acts 6:14

> For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.

Spiritual Principle

People may twist Jesus' words, but God will fulfill them.

LXII. "ARE YOU NOT GOING TO ANSWER?"

Matthew 26:62 — The High Priest Stood Up

“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?’”

Then the high priest stood up.

Caiaphas was frustrated.

The case was falling apart.

Are You not going to answer?

He wanted Jesus to defend Himself.

Perhaps He would say something they could use.

What is this testimony?

But the testimony was false and confused.

It did not deserve an answer.

Cross References

Mark 14:60

> Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are You not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against You?”

Isaiah 53:7

> He was treated badly and made to suffer, but He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to be killed. Like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.

John 19:9

> He went back inside the palace. “Where do You come from?” he asked Jesus. But Jesus gave him no answer.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes silence is the strongest answer to false accusations.

LXIII. JESUS REMAINED SILENT

Matthew 26:63 — Under Oath by the Living God

“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.’”

But Jesus remained silent.

He did not defend Himself against lies.

Just as Isaiah said, He was like a lamb before its shearers.

I charge You under oath by the living God.

Caiaphas put Jesus under a solemn oath.

Now Jesus was required to answer.

Tell us if You are the Messiah, the Son of God.

This was the real question.

Not the temple.

Not the witnesses.

Who is Jesus?

This is still the most important question in the world.

Cross References

Psalm 39:9

> I was silent. I would not open my mouth, because You are the One who has done this.

Mark 14:61

> But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked Him, “Are You the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Psalm 38:13

> I am like a deaf man who cannot hear, like a man who cannot speak and does not open his mouth.

Spiritual Principle

The most important question anyone can answer is, “Who is Jesus?”

LXIV. AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MIGHTY ONE

Matthew 26:64 — Coming on the Clouds

“‘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.’”

You have said so.

This means **yes.**

Mark records Jesus' answer as **“I am.”**

Jesus openly declared that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

But I say to all of you.

Now Jesus speaks with authority.

The prisoner becomes the Judge.

From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One.

Jesus combines two Old Testament passages.

Psalm 110 speaks of the Lord seated at God's right hand.

Daniel 7 speaks of one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven to receive an everlasting kingdom.

And coming on the clouds of heaven.

Jesus was saying:

“Today you are judging Me. But one day I will judge you.”

Cross References

Daniel 7:13

> In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was One like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence.

Psalm 110:1

> The LORD said to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Mark 14:62

> “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Spiritual Principle

The One who stood on trial will one day sit as Judge.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Jesus was silent about the lies, but He spoke clearly about who He is.

LXV. "HE HAS SPOKEN BLASPHEMY!"

Matthew 26:65 — The High Priest Tore His Clothes

“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.’”

Then the high priest tore his clothes.

Tearing clothes was a sign of grief or horror.

The high priest did this to show that he had heard something terrible.

He has spoken blasphemy!

Blasphemy means speaking against God or claiming for yourself what belongs only to God.

Caiaphas understood that Jesus was claiming to share God's throne and power.

If Jesus were not the Son of God, it would be blasphemy.

But Jesus was telling the truth.

Why do we need any more witnesses?

They no longer needed false witnesses.

They would condemn Jesus for telling the truth about Himself.

Cross References

Leviticus 21:10

> The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head, must not let his hair hang loose or tear his clothes.

Mark 14:63

> The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked.

John 19:7

> The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus was condemned for telling the truth about who He is.

LXVI. WORTHY OF DEATH

Matthew 26:66 — What Do You Think?

“What do you think?” “He is worthy of death,” they answered.

What do you think?

Caiaphas asked the council for their verdict.

He is worthy of death.

They condemned the only perfectly innocent man who ever lived.

The law of Moses said that whoever blasphemed the name of the LORD must be put to death.

They applied this law to the very One who gave the law.

Like the false trial of Naboth, this was injustice dressed up as justice.

But in God's plan, the Innocent One was condemned so that the guilty could go free.

Cross References

Leviticus 24:16

> Anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death. The whole community must stone that person.

1 Kings 21:13

> Then two worthless men came and sat facing Naboth. They brought charges against him in front of the people, saying, “Naboth has cursed both God and the king.” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death.

Mark 14:64

> “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned Him as worthy of death.

Spiritual Principle

The Innocent One was condemned so that the guilty could be set free.

LXVII. SPIT AND STRUCK

Matthew 26:67 — They Struck Him with Their Fists

“Then they spit in His face and struck Him with their fists. Others slapped Him”

Then they spit in His face.

In that culture, spitting in someone's face was one of the worst insults.

And struck Him with their fists.

Others slapped Him.

These were respected religious leaders and their servants.

And they were beating a prisoner who could not fight back.

Isaiah had written:

“I let them beat My back... I did not turn My face away when they mocked Me and spit on Me.”

Jesus endured all of it.

For us.

Cross References

Isaiah 50:6

> I let them beat My back. I let them pull out the hair of My beard. I did not turn My face away when they mocked Me and spit on Me.

Mark 14:65

> Then some began to spit at Him. They blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said, “Prophesy!” And the guards took Him and beat Him.

Job 30:10

> They hate me and stay far away from me. They do not hold back from spitting in my face.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus accepted shame so that we could receive honor.

LXVIII. "WHO HIT YOU?"

Matthew 26:68 — Prophesy to Us

“and said, ‘Prophesy to us, Messiah. Who hit You?’”

Prophesy to us, Messiah.

They mocked Him.

They called Him **Messiah** as an insult.

Who hit You?

Luke and Mark tell us they blindfolded Him.

Then they hit Him and asked Him to guess who did it.

It was a cruel game.

But here is the irony:

Jesus had just prophesied three things — that all would fall away, that Peter would deny Him, and that He would be handed over.

At that very moment, out in the courtyard, His prophecy about Peter was coming true.

Cross References

Luke 22:64

> They blindfolded Him and demanded, “Prophesy! Who hit You?”

Micah 5:1

> They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.

Job 16:10

> People open their mouths to make fun of me. They strike my cheek to shame me. They join together against me.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus endured mocking in silence, trusting His Father.

LXIX. A SERVANT GIRL

Matthew 26:69 — You Were with Jesus

“Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. ‘You also were with Jesus of Galilee,’ she said.”

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard.

While Jesus was being questioned inside, Peter was being questioned outside.

And a servant girl came to him.

Not a soldier.

Not a priest.

Just a servant girl.

She had no power over him.

You also were with Jesus of Galilee.

It was a simple statement.

It was even true.

It was the perfect opportunity for Peter to say, **“Yes, I am His follower.”**

Cross References

Mark 14:66

> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by.

Luke 22:56

> A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with Him.”

John 18:17

> “You aren't one of this man's followers too, are you?” asked the girl at the door. He replied, “I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

The greatest tests of faith often come in small moments.

LXX. THE FIRST DENIAL

Matthew 26:70 — I Don't Know What You're Talking About

“But he denied it before them all. ‘I don't know what you're talking about,’ he said.”

But he denied it before them all.

In front of everyone.

I don't know what you're talking about.

Peter pretended not to understand.

He acted confused.

This was the same Peter who said, **“Even if I have to die with You, I will never disown You.”**

Only a few hours later, he could not admit he knew Jesus to a servant girl.

Cross References

Mark 14:68

> But he denied it. “I don't know or understand what you're talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.

Luke 22:57

> But he denied it. “Woman, I don't know Him,” he said.

John 13:38

> Then Jesus answered, “Will you really give your life for Me? Truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times!”

Spiritual Principle

Fear can make us deny what we love most.

LXXI. AT THE GATEWAY

Matthew 26:71 — Another Servant Girl

“Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, ‘This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.’”

Then he went out to the gateway.

Peter moved away from the fire.

He tried to get away from attention.

Where another servant girl saw him.

He could not escape.

And said to the people there.

This time she spoke to the crowd.

This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.

Now the pressure grew.

More people were listening.

Cross References

Mark 14:69

> When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.”

Luke 22:58

> A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

John 18:25

> Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, “You aren't one of His followers too, are you?” He denied it, saying, “I am not.”

Spiritual Principle

Running from one test does not keep the next one from coming.

LXXII. THE SECOND DENIAL

Matthew 26:72 — With an Oath

“He denied it again, with an oath: ‘I don't know the man!’”

He denied it again.

The second denial.

With an oath.

This time Peter swore an oath.

He used God's name to support a lie.

Jesus had taught, **“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’”**

I don't know the man!

Peter would not even say Jesus' name.

The man.

The One he had called **“the Messiah, the Son of the living God”** was now just **“the man.”**

Sin often grows worse when we do not stop it.

Cross References

Mark 14:70

> Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

John 18:26

> One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn't I see you with Him in the garden?”

1 Timothy 1:13

> Even though I was once a man who spoke against God, persecuted His people, and was violent, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

Spiritual Principle

One sin left unchecked often leads to a greater one.

LXXIII. "YOUR ACCENT GIVES YOU AWAY"

Matthew 26:73 — Surely You Are One of Them

“After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, ‘Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.’”

After a little while.

Luke tells us it was about an hour later.

Those standing there went up to Peter.

Now a group surrounded him.

Surely you are one of them.

Your accent gives you away.

People from Galilee spoke with a different accent than people in Jerusalem.

In the days of the judges, the men of Gilead identified their enemies by how they said the word **“Shibboleth.”**

Peter's words showed where he came from.

He could hide his loyalty, but not his voice.

Cross References

Luke 22:59

> About an hour later another man insisted, “Certainly this fellow was with Him, because he is a Galilean.”

Judges 12:6

> They said, “All right, say ‘Shibboleth.’” If he said, “Sibboleth,” because he could not say the word correctly, they grabbed him and killed him at the crossings of the Jordan.

Acts 2:7

> Utterly amazed, they asked, “Aren't all these people who are speaking Galileans?”

Spiritual Principle

A true follower of Jesus cannot hide forever who he belongs to.

LXXIV. THE ROOSTER CROWED

Matthew 26:74 — The Third Denial

“Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, ‘I don't know the man!’ Immediately a rooster crowed.”

Then he began to call down curses.

Peter called down curses on himself if he was lying.

And he swore to them.

Again he took an oath.

I don't know the man!

The third denial.

It was the strongest of all.

Immediately a rooster crowed.

At that exact moment.

Just as Jesus had said.

Luke tells us that at that moment, Jesus turned and looked at Peter.

Cross References

Mark 14:71

> He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don't know this man you're talking about.”

Luke 22:60

> Peter replied, “Man, I don't know what you're talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

John 18:27

> Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word always comes true, even when it exposes our failure.

LXXV. HE WEPT BITTERLY

Matthew 26:75 — Peter Remembered

“Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: ‘Before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly.”

Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken.

The rooster's cry reminded him.

Jesus had told him.

Jesus had warned him.

And Peter had not listened.

Before the rooster crows, you will disown Me three times.

And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Peter's heart was broken.

His tears were tears of true sorrow.

This is the difference between Peter and Judas.

Both failed Jesus terribly.

Judas was filled with regret, but did not turn back to Jesus.

Peter wept, repented, and was restored.

After the resurrection, Jesus would ask Peter three times, **“Do you love Me?”**

Three denials would be answered with three declarations of love.

And Peter would become a great leader of the church.

Peter's failure was not the end of his story.

Cross References

Luke 22:61

> The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown Me three times.”

Isaiah 22:4

> So I said, “Turn away from me. Let me weep bitterly. Do not try to comfort me.”

Psalm 51:17

> The sacrifice You want is a broken spirit. You will not reject a heart that is broken and sorry for sin, O God.

Spiritual Principle

Broken-hearted repentance opens the door to restoration.

Key Truth

Peter's tears were not the end of his story — they were the beginning of his restoration.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Failure is not final when it leads you back to Jesus.

LXXVI. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 26

1. Jesus Faced Betrayal and Suffering with Submission to the Father's Will

In the garden, Jesus prayed, **“Not as I will, but as You will.”**

He was betrayed, arrested, and condemned — and He accepted it all as the Father's plan.

Principle:

True obedience says “Your will be done,” even when it hurts.

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2. True Worship Costs Something

The woman poured out perfume worth about a year's wages.

Others called it a waste.

Jesus called it beautiful.

Principle:

Give Jesus your best, no matter what others think.

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3. The Lord's Supper Reminds Us of Christ's Body and Blood Given for Us

The bread speaks of His body.

The cup speaks of His blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Principle:

Every time we share the Lord's Supper, we remember His sacrifice and look forward to His return.

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4. Prayer Is the Believer's Strength Against Temptation

Jesus prayed and stood firm.

The disciples slept and fell.

Principle:

Watch and pray, because the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

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5. Even When His Followers Failed, Jesus Remained Faithful

Judas betrayed Him.

The disciples fled.

Peter denied Him.

But Jesus kept going toward the cross.

Principle:

Our faithfulness may fail, but His never does.

LXXVII. TWO FAILURES — JUDAS AND PETER

Matthew 26 tells of two disciples who failed Jesus on the same night.

Judas

- He was one of the Twelve.
- He betrayed Jesus for money.
- He planned his betrayal carefully.
- He called Jesus “Rabbi,” not “Lord.”
- He betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
- In Matthew 27, he is filled with regret, but he does not turn back to Jesus.

Peter

- He was one of the Twelve.
- He denied Jesus out of fear.
- He did not plan to fail; he was overcome by weakness.
- He loved Jesus, even when he failed Him.
- He denied Jesus with oaths and curses.
- He wept bitterly, repented, and was restored.

The Difference

Both men sinned terribly.

The difference was not the size of their sin.

The difference was what they did after they sinned.

Judas turned away in despair.

Peter turned back in repentance.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not whether you have failed, but where you will go after you fail.

LXXVIII. THE PASSOVER AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus gave the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal.

The two are closely connected.

The Passover Looked Back to Egypt

- A lamb was sacrificed.
- Its blood protected the people from judgment.
- God brought His people out of slavery.
- The covenant was made at Mount Sinai with the blood of sacrifices.

The Lord's Supper Looks Back to the Cross

- Jesus is the Lamb of God.
- His blood protects us from judgment.
- God brings us out of slavery to sin.
- The new covenant is made with the blood of Jesus.

The Lord's Supper Also Looks Forward

- Jesus promised to drink it new with us in His Father's kingdom.
- Every time we share it, we proclaim His death until He comes.

Key Truth

The Passover was the shadow; Jesus is the reality.

LXXIX. WHAT MATTHEW 26 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 26 reveals many truths about Jesus.

The Lamb of God

He would die at Passover as the true Passover Lamb.

The Worthy One

He received the woman's costly worship as fitting and beautiful.

The One Who Knows All Things

He knew who would betray Him, that the disciples would scatter, and that Peter would deny Him.

The Giver of the New Covenant

He gave His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

The Singing Savior

He sang a hymn of praise on the way to His suffering.

The Good Shepherd

He was struck so that His sheep could be gathered again.

The Man of Sorrows

He was overwhelmed with sorrow in Gethsemane.

The Obedient Son

He prayed, **“Not as I will, but as You will.”**

The Willing Sacrifice

He could have called more than twelve legions of angels, but He chose the cross.

The Gracious Friend

He called Judas **“friend”** and healed the servant's ear.

The Silent Lamb

He did not answer false charges.

The Son of God

He declared that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

The Coming Judge

He will sit at the right hand of the Mighty One and come on the clouds of heaven.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus was more in control than anyone in the room.

LXXX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why is it important that Jesus died at the time of the Passover?

Because Jesus is the true Passover Lamb, whose blood saves us from judgment.

Question 2

What did the woman in Bethany do, and why did the disciples object?

She poured very expensive perfume on Jesus' head. The disciples thought it was a waste and said it could have been sold for the poor.

Question 3

How did Jesus respond to her act?

He said she had done a beautiful thing, preparing His body for burial, and that her story would be told wherever the gospel is preached.

Question 4

For how much did Judas agree to betray Jesus, and what was significant about that amount?

Thirty pieces of silver — the price paid in the law of Moses for a slave who was killed.

Question 5

How did the other disciples respond when Jesus said one of them would betray Him?

Each one asked, “Surely You don't mean me, Lord?”

Question 6

What did Jesus say about the bread and the cup?

The bread is His body. The cup is His blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Question 7

What is the new covenant?

It is God's promise, foretold by Jeremiah, to forgive sins and give His people new hearts. It was made through the blood of Jesus.

Question 8

What did Jesus predict about the disciples and Peter?

All of them would fall away that night, and Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed.

Question 9

What does Gethsemane mean, and what happened there?

It means “oil press.” There Jesus prayed in deep sorrow, asking that the cup might pass, yet surrendering to the Father's will.

Question 10

What does “the cup” represent?

It pictures the suffering of the cross and the judgment for sin that Jesus would bear for us.

Question 11

Why did the disciples fall into temptation?

They slept instead of watching and praying. Their spirit was willing, but their flesh was weak.

Question 12

Why did Jesus tell Peter to put away his sword?

Because His kingdom does not advance by violence, and He was choosing to fulfill the Scriptures by going to the cross.

Question 13

How many angels could Jesus have called?

More than twelve legions — more than seventy thousand angels.

Question 14

Why was Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin?

Because He declared that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that they would see Him at the right hand of God and coming on the clouds.

Question 15

What is the difference between Peter's failure and Judas' failure?

Both failed terribly, but Peter wept, repented, and was restored, while Judas did not turn back to Jesus.

Question 16

What should Matthew 26 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 26 should cause believers to live:

- Giving Jesus their very best in worship.
- Not criticizing the devotion of others.
- Guarding against the love of money.
- Examining their own hearts first.
- Remembering Christ's sacrifice in the Lord's Supper.
- Trusting God's strength, not their own.
- Watching and praying against temptation.
- Surrendering to the Father's will.
- Refusing to use force to advance God's kingdom.
- Standing up for Jesus, even in small moments.

- Returning to Jesus quickly after they fail.

LXXXI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 26 asks several important questions.

Am I Giving Jesus My Best or My Leftovers?

Do I Criticize Others Whose Love for Jesus Seems Extravagant?

Is There Anything I Love More Than Jesus?

When I Hear God's Warnings, Do I First Ask, “Lord, Is It I?”

Do I Call Jesus “Lord” or Only “Teacher”?

Do I Remember His Body and Blood with Gratitude?

Am I Trusting in My Own Strength or God's?

Am I Watching and Praying, or Sleeping Spiritually?

Can I Pray, “Not My Will, but Yours”?

Am I Following Jesus Closely or at a Distance?

Have I Ever Denied Jesus by My Words, Actions, or Silence?

When I Fail, Do I Run from Jesus or Back to Him?

LXXXII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Not My Will, but Yours”

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed three times.

Each time, He came to the same place:

“Not as I will, but as You will.”

This prayer changed history.

Because Jesus surrendered His will, the way of salvation was opened.

In the first garden, Adam said, in effect, **“My will be done.”**

And sin entered the world.

In the second garden, Jesus said, **“Your will be done.”**

And salvation came to the world.

Every believer will face a Gethsemane.

A moment when God's will and our will seem to pull in different directions.

A cup we would rather not drink.

In that moment, we can be like the sleeping disciples.

Or we can be like Jesus.

We can pray honestly.

We can tell the Father how we feel.

We can ask Him to take the cup away.

But in the end, we can surrender:

“Not my will, but Yours.”

Principle:

The greatest victory is won not when we get what we want, but when we want what God wants.

LXXXIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 26 begins with a plot and ends with tears.

The religious leaders planned to kill Jesus in secret.

A woman poured out her love on Him in public.

Judas sold Him for thirty pieces of silver.

At the Passover table, Jesus took bread and said, **“This is My body.”**

He took the cup and said, **“This is My blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”**

Then He sang a hymn and walked into the night.

In Gethsemane, He was overwhelmed with sorrow.

He fell on His face and prayed, **“Not as I will, but as You will.”**

His friends fell asleep.

Judas came with a kiss.

Peter drew a sword.

Jesus healed the wound and gave Himself up.

And all the disciples fled.

Before the council, Jesus stood silent against lies.

But when asked who He was, He declared the truth:

He is the Messiah, the Son of God, who will sit at God's right hand and come on the clouds of heaven.

They spit on Him and beat Him.

And outside in the courtyard, Peter denied Him three times.

The rooster crowed.

Peter wept bitterly.

In this chapter, everyone fails Jesus.

But Jesus never fails.

He keeps walking toward the cross — for them, and for us.

So today:

Give Jesus your best.

Remember His body and blood.

Watch and pray.

Surrender your will to the Father.

Follow Him closely, not at a distance.

Do not be ashamed of Him.

And if you have failed, come back to Him with a broken heart.

And until He returns:

Remember His death until He comes.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

Thank You that He went to the cross willingly, in perfect obedience to You.

Lord Jesus, we want to love You like the woman in Bethany.

Help us give You our very best and not count the cost.

Keep us from loving money or anything else more than You.

When we hear Your warnings, help us look at our own hearts first.

Thank You for Your body, given for us.

Thank You for Your blood, poured out for the forgiveness of our sins.

Help us never take the Lord's Supper lightly.

Forgive us for trusting in our own strength.

Forgive us for sleeping when we should be praying.

Teach us to watch and pray, so that we will not fall into temptation.

When we face our own Gethsemane, help us pray as You prayed:

“Not my will, but Yours be done.”

Thank You for Your grace, even to those who betray and deny You.

Keep us from following You at a distance.

Give us courage to say, “I belong to Jesus,” even in small moments.

And when we fail, as Peter failed, bring us back to You with broken and repentant hearts.

Thank You that our failure is never greater than Your faithfulness.

We look forward to the day when we will share the feast with You, new, in Your Father's kingdom.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.’” — Matthew 26:39

Central Truth

Jesus, knowing everything that would happen, willingly gave Himself up to betrayal, arrest, and condemnation, offering His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins and submitting to the Father's will, even when His closest followers failed Him.

Matthew 26 in One Sentence

As the religious leaders plot His death, Jesus is anointed for burial, betrayed by Judas, gives His disciples the bread and cup of the new covenant, surrenders to the Father's will in Gethsemane, is arrested and condemned for declaring that He is the Son of God, and is denied three times by Peter, who weeps bitterly — yet Jesus remains faithful to God's plan of salvation.