

The Gospel According to
Matthew

Lesson #30 – Ch.26

Religious leaders plot to kill Jesus – Matthew 26:1-5

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This is a huge chapter in the Book of Matthew and we are going to tackle it all in one week. I think it is one of my favorite chapters in the whole book, even though it reveals the personal failures of many bible characters, it also reveals the deep love of Christ for those He loves.

Will you pray with me as we enter this very important chapter in the last week of Christ's life here on earth?

Lord, as I begin this chapter in the Gospel of Matthew, open my eyes to the details of the words and the intent of the writers as they penned these pages of scripture.

As I review this familiar story, teach me by your Spirit and show me secret truths written in Your Word, that I might have missed without Your leading. Make Your Word come alive to my heart Lord, that I would go away richer in my spirit than when I began.
– Amen

Religious leaders plot to kill Jesus – Matthew 26:1-5

Please read Matthew 26:1-5

1. Who did Jesus share His “fast approaching - future to be” with? _____

2. What did Jesus tell the disciples would happen next? Matthew 26:2

3. Why did the religious leaders wait until after the Passover Feast was over to arrest Jesus? Mark 14:2 _____

4. Did these religious leaders ever plan to give Jesus a fair trial? Mark 14:1; Mark 14:55, 56

Caiaphas was the High Priest at the time and he was responsible for allowing this to happen in his court room. It was illegal from the standpoint of Jewish law because false witnesses were called to testify, but Caiaphas allowed Jesus' trial to move forward.

Caiaphas came from a whole family who hated Christ and all who followed Him. (Acts 4:1-6) He was also the High Priest who put Peter and John into custody for healing a 40 yr. old man, after Jesus' death. He stood against the works of Christ and was key to the revolt against Jesus at the time. In every place he is spoken of in scripture, he was involved in pursuing the death of Jesus and His followers.

5. Why did the religious leaders like Caiaphas, the Pharisees and elders in the temple, hate Jesus so much? John 11:45-48

Many people don't come to Christ for this very reason – they believe if they walk with the Lord, they will have to give up their material wealth, their worldly habits and their life as they have created it. The love of this world overshadows their desire for anything spiritual. They choose their stuff over eternity! The religious leaders would rather hold onto their wealth and their power and position in the community rather than follow the Messiah. Greed, hunger for power and position all played a role in their decisions.

As believers, we are called to “tap down our flesh”. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are all able to have self-control. (Gal. 5:24) God's desire is to make His goals – our goals, His desires – our desires. In order to do that, we often have to crucify our flesh and ask God to create in us godly desires.

Look up the definition of “GREED”.
Describe that word here -

The word “covetousness” in the bible is synonymous with the word “greed”.
Look at the following scriptures and share what you learned about greed or covetousness.

- Ephesians 5:3 –

- Colossians 3:5 –

- Philippians 3:17-19 (V.19) –

Stop! Check your heart for the “greed factor”. Do an inventory of what your time has been devoted to lately. Is there enough evidence before you to make you want to watch out for this dangerous and unhealthy characteristic rising up in your life?

If so – ask God to keep you in check in this area of your life. Maybe consider some changes.

Jesus knew the time had come for Him to do the will of His Father and die for the sins of the world by crucifixion. He shared with the disciples that it would be only two short days until He would be crucified. It was an appropriate time for the Lamb of God to be slain because it was Passover Week when all the Jews were sacrificing their lambs in the temple of God for the sins of the people. Jesus Himself was the unblemished Lamb who would take away the sins of the world for all time. All of this was done at this point in time to point to Jesus as the Savior of all mankind.

Mary anoints Jesus for burial – Matthew 26:6-13

Continue to read on in Matthew, Ch.26: 6-13

This is a flashback of the Saturday before, when Jesus went into Bethany near the Mount of Olives. This chapter is not in chronological order and Matthew puts this sweet story in at this point of the chapter maybe as a sharp contrast to the way the religious leaders treated Jesus. Jesus is worshiped in Bethany by the ones who love Him the most. Some of Jesus’ best friends are there and they are aware that their beloved Jesus will leave them soon. He was worshipped in the house of Simon the Leper and in contrast, spit on and slapped in the face in Caiaphas’ court room in the temple.

6. Jesus was in Bethany just before Passover week. Whose house was He visiting?
Matthew 26:6

In those days, Lepers were made to stay outside the camp or off the city streets, so this man must have been healed by Jesus at one time or another. But probably forever this man would be known as “Simon the Leper”.

This house of Simon the leper was filled with followers of Christ. They came there to pray and worship their Lord. Most of the people there had their own great testimonies of the power of God in their life. Martha, her sister Mary and Lazarus (whom God raised from the dead) were there to name a few. They were some of Christ’s closest friends.

7. Many came to see Jesus and who was the other attraction? John 12:9

8. The Chief Priests hated all followers of Christ. They were out to kill Lazarus, just like they wanted to kill Jesus. Why? John 12:10-11

“It was on account of *him*” (v.11) – Who was the “*him*”? It was Lazarus that was the problem, in the minds of the Jesus haters. The religious leaders wanted Lazarus dead because he had such a great testimony for Christ. Many were converted just because they had *seen* the power of God as He raised their companion Lazarus from the dead. They knew their friend – had watched him live and watched him die and stay dead for three days. They had already wrapped their brain around the fact that he was their friend no longer. He was gone.

He was dead for three days before Jesus did a crazy thing - touched him and did the awesome miracle of bringing him back to life! Lazarus himself couldn't boast of his own testimony – there was nothing *he* did that was great. All he did was *die, his weak body was consumed with leprosy, that's not great, but Jesus* did the un heard of -the resurrecting of his body. Jesus breathed life into a dead corpse, one that was already starting to decompose. Jesus breathed the breathe of life and gave him new life, a second chance, more time to live his life for what was important and *that* brought attention to the miracle working power of God! Lazarus pointed to the power of Jesus just because he was alive. The god-haters hated Lazarus for that.

Did you ever think that your personal testimony has that same kind of power, the power to help transform another's life? Your testimony has the power to influence someone towards a decision for Jesus Christ. That power comes from the part Christ did in your life, not the part you played. Others are watching and they are summing up who Jesus is by the power He displays in and through you. Your part consisted of a wrecked life in need of saving. But Christ comes in as the Savior and resurrects a dead person. He takes a person dead in sin and transforms them and gives them eternal life, freedom from sin and eternal joy and peace. When you begin to make different choices due to moral convictions set by the Holy Spirit, people will stop and notice. They will see the resurrected new life in you right at that moment. If Satan could, he would kill every one of us who resemble the resurrected life of Lazarus, because we attract others to Jesus just as Lazarus did. *“It's on account of what Christ did in you and me” ...that Satan hates the testimony of the church. Your life lived is a very real threat to the prince of this world.*

Matthew records that a woman came to Jesus with an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and poured it on Jesus head and when the disciples saw her do that they became indignant. Why?

9. Who was this woman and which disciple led the hostility towards her? John gives us her name. See John 12:1-6

His attitude was contagious among the other disciples. Attitudes often are.

a. What reason did he give for his concern about the using the expensive oil? Was he being truthful? John 12:5-6

Motives are not always what they seem looking on. God knows the true motives behind our actions good or bad.

Judas agrees to betray Jesus – Matthew 26:10-11

Read Matthew 26:10-11

Judas was the treasurer of the group! He was in charge of the money box and he was a thief – how convenient. He placed himself in that position with the intent of stealing from others. Now Jesus knew Judas was not a true follower. Jesus knew he was stealing money on the side, yet He allowed him to be the treasurer of the group of followers.

What is sin? It is the glory of God not honored. The holiness of God not revered. The greatness of God not admired. The power of God not praised. The truth of God not sought. The wisdom of God not esteemed. The beauty of God not treasured. The goodness of God not savored. The faithfulness of God not trusted. The commandments of God not obeyed. The justice of God not respected. The wrath of God not feared. The grace of God not cherished. The presence of God not prized. The person of God not loved. That is sin.

John Piper

Judas had no reverence for God. He stole from God's people and thought nothing of it.

10. Have you ever trusted someone with something valuable to you and they stole from you or didn't take care of the thing you lent them?

Or

Have you ever given money to a Christian ministry and they misused it? _____

11. Do you ever wonder why the Lord allows people who are dishonest with God's money stay in places of authority? _____
I wonder sometimes...

Unfortunately we have seen many people who claim to be concerned about the people of God collecting money just for their own personal gain. They have been exposed on television and through our media. It's rather embarrassing to the church. I cringe every time I hear of another believer getting caught stealing from their religious organization or from their church. "Oh God help us, if we do not honor Him with what He has entrusted in our hands." There will come a time of personal judgment for those who are dishonest, they will eventually fall and great will be the fall!

I believe Judas was a disillusioned disciple. He had a hard time following a teacher who was not prepared to lead a war against Rome. When he saw that was not going to happen and Jesus was predicting His own death by crucifixion, his hopes were gone - maybe this disappointment along with his love of money, lead Judas to this place. He had many failed expectations. He didn't care any longer about being a part of the twelve; he turned into a man who wanted all he could get for himself out of this situation. In this time of failed expectations, Judas began making godless, selfish decisions.

12. Notice, who sought out who when Jesus was delivered over to the Roman government?

Matthew 26:14-15 _____

13. At this point in Judas's life, what was controlling him? Luke 22:1-5

Sometimes we assume everyone around us in our worship settings are believers. They talk like believers; they hang out with believers and seem to agree with what we are doing. But not all those who associate in Christian circles are true believers. Judas was on the left side of Jesus during the Passover feast, leaning on his side with John on the right, breaking bread with Jesus. No one would have suspected that just a few hours later he would be the one with the kiss of death on his lips that would lead the Roman soldiers to arrest Christ for His crucifixion. Only God knows for sure those who are really His.

Judas had wasted opportunities in his life to have a relationship with Jesus. He had the opportunity to be right at Jesus side – to walk with God here on earth - the distinct honor of being chosen as one of the twelve, yet he was willing to deceive the Savior – such a tragic wasted life.

Judas was called "Son of Perdition" which actually means "son of waste"! Isn't that interesting, isn't that sad. Judas will forever be remembered as a wasted life, one who could have experienced a life eternally with Christ. One who could have had the special position and opportunity to be of one of His closest earthly friends. The multitudes pushed in to touch him

14. From that time on Judas sought opportunity to make money at Jesus' expense. (Matt.16:16) It was prophesied that one closest to Him would betray Him.

Write out these scriptures describing the betrayal.

Psalm 41:9 –

Psalm 55:12-14 –

David describes a friend that was a close companion, one who took sweet council with him. (v.14) They knew each other well and even shared personal problems with each other before the betrayal.

15. Have you ever experienced this kind of betrayal by a close friend? _____
 Jesus knows just how you feel or felt. He was delivered up unto death by one of His closest friends. Share with your group how the Lord got you through that time. What did you learn through this experience?

16. Did you notice how the Savior didn't retaliate against Judas? He knew what was going on in Judas heart and mind the whole time, and didn't speak a word of anger towards him. Jesus only asked him to do what he had to do, and do it quickly. (John 13:27)

What do you do so as not to retaliate against those who do you wrong? _____

17. How did God bring healing to you in that situation? Encourage those in your group that currently may be going through a painful time of betrayal.

The only person who can be completely loyal to you is our Savior Jesus Christ! He is perfect and perfectly holy. People – all people, even the most trusted are sinners living in grace in need of a Savior, they will fail you at times, even if not purposefully. Jesus will never disappoint you – ever! His ways are perfect and His love for you is unwavering! He never forgets you, not for one moment. His plans for you are to give you a future and a hope. (Jer. 29:11) Now He is one we can put full trust in!

The Passover – Matthew 26:17-25

Read through these scriptures in this section; Ch.26:17-25

The disciples had already killed the Passover lamb and were preparing for the Passover meal they would share with Christ. The question they had for Jesus was, “Where are we to eat this Passover meal”? (v.12)

18. Jesus sent them out looking for a certain man in the city and they were to eat Passover at his house. How were they to know which one he was? Matt. 26:17-19

19. What else were they to do? Mark 14:12-16.

It would have been unusual to see a man carrying a pitcher of water anyways. Most of that kind of work was designated for the women to do.

20. What did the disciples find as they went looking for what Jesus had promised them? Mark 26:16

“And the disciples went out, and came into the city, and _____.”

They “**found it just as He had said**”! I love that! That’s a powerful statement! Jesus never sends anyone on a wild goose chase. He never sends us around the long way without a plan in mind and when we finally arrive, we find He has been completely faithful, “Just as He had said.”!

Are you praying for a child that needs to hear from God? God will be faithful to hear that prayer and act on your behalf, “Just as He had said.”

Job 22:27 – “You will make your prayer to Him, and He will hear you.”

Jeremiah 29:12 – “Then when you call upon Me and go and pray to Me, I will listen to you.”

Are you waiting for Him to provide in some way? Do you need a new job, a reliable car, a good friend? He will be your provider of all things you need, “Just as He had said.”!

1 Timothy 6:17 – “God richly supplies us with everything to enjoy.”

Jesus lives up to every promise in His Word – “Just as He had said.”!

Whatever you need from the Lord today – find a promise in His Word that pertains to that need and remind yourself that He will be completely faithful to that promise – “Just as He had said!”

21. Jesus sits down with the twelve for the Passover and shares with them some pretty disturbing news. What is it? Matthew 26:21

22. How did this make the disciples feel? Matthew 26:22; John 13:22

It would be a little unsettling to have Jesus give you this news as one of the disciples. You would know by experience that He wasn't mistaken and they all thought they knew each other pretty well. After all they had been living together and doing ministry for the last three years. Yet, one of the twelve would betray Christ and they were all hoping Jesus wasn't pointing to them! They were so upside down with this news, they were asking Jesus if it was them, personally.

23. In John we can find some more details to our story. John describes one leaning on Jesus' bosom, so Simon Peter motions to this disciple to ask Jesus who this disciple would be that would betray Him. (John 13:21-25)

- a. Why do you think Peter didn't want to ask Jesus himself?
- b. What disciple would they be speaking of when they said, "The one who Jesus loved"?

24. How would they know which one of them would be the deceiver? Matthew 26:23

25. Judas asked Jesus if it would be him that would deny Christ and Jesus confirmed that it would be. (Matt. 26:25) What do you think the other disciples thought about Judas after hearing this? They must have been within hearing distance if they were all around the table. _____

26. What did Judas do after the Passover was finished? John 13:30

Sin and rebellion causes a person to want to alienate themselves. We want to be alone in our darkness. Light is painful when it shines upon darkness – so sin is best kept away from the light. This is a such a sad and lonely existence.

Peter's denial is predicted – Matthew 26:30-35

Read Matthew 26:30-35

27. What did they do together that reminds you of a good ol' church service? Matthew 26:30

This hymn according to tradition was known to be part of the Hallel. The songs they sang came from three Psalms.

Read these three Psalms keeping in mind the crucifixion that Christ was encountering soon.

- Psalm 116 – 118

Jesus would be singing these – I wonder what kind of voice He had? Was He a tenor or a baritone?

28. What phrase or phrases describe to you the sorrow Jesus felt as He approached the cross? _____

Jesus quotes an Old Testament prophecy in Matthew 26:31 – “I will strike the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”

Jesus was predicting that not one of His disciples would stand by Him during this time. Every one of them would be filled with terrifying fear and run from Him and the Roman government who were determined to wipe out Christianity. They were afraid for their lives and would leave Jesus to fend for Himself.

29. Peter was filled with self-confidence. The last thing in the world he wanted to do was disappoint his Savior. Why do you believe Peter was so self-confident? Do you believe his personality played a part in this?

(See Matt. 26:33, 35)

We all want to believe that if we were faced with the decision of choosing Christ, that would lead to death, that we would be able to choose Christ and forsake our own lives but in reality we really don't know what our choice would be until we are in that situation. I do know we shouldn't be so confident in our flesh, because our flesh is willing, but our spirit is weak! Jesus wants us to place our confidence in Him and not in our own will-power.

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane – Matthew 26:36-46

Read through these verses that reveal the raw emotions of Jesus as He heads to the suffering which is set before Him. What is your first impression of Jesus' emotional state?

Jesus was God, but while here on earth He felt all of the emotion and pain of the flesh that we do as human beings. Scripture says that He understands our sorrows and is

acquainted with our grief. He asks His heavenly Father three times if He could possibly escape from having to go to the cross. Do you know why? It's not because He was afraid of the pain of crucifixion, even though He knew that would be almost unbearable. It wasn't because He didn't want the shame. It was much more than that.

Jesus grimaced at the fact that on that cross and **bear the sin of all mankind for all of time!** We feel guilty for the sins we have committed in our own personal life once we understand the ugliness of them compared to the righteousness of Christ, can you imagine being made responsible for everyone's sin that had ever lived on planet earth? The weight of that sin would be tremendous!

Every perverted sexual sin was His to bear. Every act of fornication, adultery, incest, or child molestation was His to bear. Every murder, abortion, or act of theft, He now carried. This is why He asked the Father three times to change His plight, He wasn't sure He could bear it all, but He did. He bore it all for you and for me. Our salvation is secure because He the innocent, took on the sin of the guilty - forever conquering sin and death.

30. At first glance, I got a little irritated at those disciples for not being able to stay awake with Jesus in the garden, but Luke gives us some insight as to why they were having such a hard time staying awake. This information made my heart soften toward their actions.
Luke 22:45

Those poor men were in deep sorrow as their Master and friend was about to leave their side. They were so tired from the sorrow and stress. Stress zaps a body of energy real quick.

31. Father God didn't change strategies after Jesus asked Him in prayer three times to allow Him to forgo the cross. God's plan for Jesus' life didn't change. God's plan was set way before Jesus had come to earth. His plan would bring salvation to all those who would trust in Him and the suffering servant (Jesus) would have to endure the cross to enable these things to happen. How did Father God help Jesus *through it* since He wasn't going to be able to escape it? Luke 22:43

Many times He doesn't answer how we wish He would, the trial stays or the circumstances don't change much, but He gives us enough strength and grace to endure. He gives us supernatural strength, not by angels, like the Father did for Jesus, but by the Holy Spirit our constant friend.

Paul never had his thorn removed – God instead replied – “My grace is sufficient for you!”

Jesus – didn't go around the cross – God instead – supernaturally strengthened Him to make it through it.

Do you need an abundance of God’s grace today to endure? His grace is sufficient for you!

Jesus’ betrayal and arrest – Matthew 26:47-68

Here comes Judas – marching through the night with a band on “no-gooders” with swords and clubs to arrest Jesus. His betrayer had a sign given to him to inform the accusers of Jesus – it was a kiss. What a slap in the face to Jesus who had discipled Judas for three years. A kiss – so demeaning – a sign of affection was used to bring Him down.

32. What does Jesus call Judas at this time? Matthew 26:50 _____

Jesus asks Judas a direct question but before he can answer, Peter rises up and cuts off the ear of the High Priest’s servant.

33. What does Jesus do with this man’s ear? Luke 22:51

34. What does Jesus call this season of time? Luke 22:53b

Jesus could have called down legions of angels to come to His rescue at any time, but He was doing the will of His Father. (v.54, 56)

35. Matthew 26:56b is one of the saddest scriptures in the entire bible to me. Write it out on the lines below.

Every one of the disciples forsook Christ. One would betray Him to His executioners, one would deny even knowing Him to save his own skin and the others would run away so as not to suffer any punishment for being a follower of Jesus Christ. What a bunch of loyal friends they were! Our relationships with Jesus are so one-sided in the sense that He is much more loyal to us than we are to Him.

Peter denies Christ – Matthew 26:69-75

Peter did the very thing he swore he would never do.

That happens pretty often actually to us humans. We believe we are beyond some sins, and those are the very ones we fall into when we are tempted.

Read Peter’s story and feel sorrow for Peter – Matthew 26:69-75

Let’s read the story again in Luke’s gospel. Luke 22:47-53

36. Did you notice any details in Luke's account that Matthew didn't include?

Make note of this;

In Luke 22:54 – we read, “They led Jesus to the High Priest's house and Peter *followed from a distance.*”

In Luke 22:55 – we read, “They kindled a fire and Peter *sat among them.*”

Did this lead up to Peter's weak moment of denying Christ? I don't know for sure, but I do know when we back off and allow distance to come between ourselves and Christ and when we allow worldly people's opinions to affect ours, we are headed for a fall. Peter was afraid to make a stand for Christ at that moment. We can all understand his hesitation, but it doesn't excuse the fact that he failed to honor his Lord in this situation.

37. What must have been the hardest thing of all for Peter to face? Luke 22:61

38. What was Peter's reaction to the look Christ gave him? Luke 22:62

“Wrapping it up and making it personal”

Our Messiah was obedient to His mission – bringing salvation to a sinful world. The Passover week is closing, the Passover behind Him and the cross before Him Jesus moves ahead.

Let's close this chapter with the reading of Isaiah 50:4-8. This is a chapter written by the Prophet Isaiah describing the Messiah's obedience to His heavenly Father. Read it keeping in mind that Jesus is the one they are speaking about.

Let's close in prayer – I will not write one today – you pray from your heart to your Savior.

