

# THE BETRAYED PRIEST

**+** **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Even as Jesus was betrayed and arrested, He did not waver in His obedience to the Father and continued to trust in His plan to provide salvation.

**+** **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Matthew 26

**+** **SETTING:**

As Jesus and His disciples left the upper room, Jesus embarked on the final leg of His journey to the cross. He entered the garden of Gethsemane, knowing all His disciples would fail to stand and watch and pray. He knew Peter would deny Him three times. He was utterly alone, but He never wavered. In the garden, Jesus did what Adam could not do. He stood against the devil and bowed His will to the Father's. By doing so, He brought many sons to glory.

# DAY 1

## READ:

**Matthew 26:31-35**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Matthew 26:31**

## NOTES

In Matthew 26:31, Jesus quoted from Zechariah 13:7, where the Lord of Armies, God Himself, is instructing the shepherd to be struck by the sword and the sheep will be scattered.

James Montgomery Boice said, "It is God the Father striking his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in our place as our sinbearer. It is Jesus suffering for us in order that we might be delivered from the wrath of God against sin and be released to serve the Lord effectively."<sup>1</sup>

The plan of salvation included the death of the Son of God. That plan existed before the world began. In eternity past, the triune God determined He would pay the penalty for His people's sins Himself. When Jesus came to earth, His sole mission was to accomplish salvation through His perfect life and substitutionary death so that by rising from the grave, He might defeat death.

In His final hours, Jesus looked back to the old, old plan of salvation and brought the promises of God into focus as He faced His final test. He did that for you because He loves you.

**In light of all that Christ has endured for you, how would you describe His love?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

**Matthew 26:31-35**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Matthew 26:32**

## NOTES

In His final days, Jesus spoke of His coming death. But He also spoke of His coming resurrection. The salvation He was to accomplish in His death on the cross was the central point of all human history, but it was not the end of the story. Jesus didn't treat it as such, and if we stop at the cross, we will have stopped too short for the full comfort of the gospel.

It is indeed glorious beyond belief that Jesus died for our sins on the cross. But the glory of the gospel extends to the resurrection three days later. In the resurrection, Jesus gave us hope beyond the grave. We are not merely acquitted of our sins. We are given newness of life. We are not only no longer condemned, but we are also rejoiced over. In the resurrection, Jesus gives us our life back, fuller and more complete than ever before. The resurrection answers all our greatest fears and is a gift of immeasurable worth. This isn't our only shot at life, not if Christ is ours.

When Jesus told His disciples He would be struck and they would scatter, that could not have been anything but bad news to His friends. But He chased it with hope as He always does. He would go before them to Galilee after He rose. He would meet them there. He'll meet you there too.

**How does Jesus's resurrection answer our greatest fear?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

Matthew 26:36-46

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 26:41

NOTES

Moments before Jesus entered the garden of Gethsemane and asked His disciples to watch and pray with Him through the night, they all vowed never to deny Him, even if it meant death. But when it came time simply to sit and stay awake as Jesus prayed, they could not muster the energy to do so. Jesus came back to them and roused them again, urging them to stay awake and pray so that they would not enter temptation, for “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Still, they fell asleep.

What happened to the disciples that night is what happens to each of us if we are not watchful. They were overconfident, believing they would stand by Jesus no matter the cost. Then they fell asleep. The flesh cannot stand on its own. It is too weak. But in our weakness, God offers us His strength. We may be unable to keep our eyes open, literally or figuratively, on our own. But God is not asking us to do it ourselves. He gives grace to those who ask. When we feel our flesh fighting against us, we can, by prayer, ask the God of the universe for help in our time of need.

And the amazing thing is that He will answer that prayer because He knows, in Christ, what it is like. He can sympathize with us (Hebrews 4:14-15). And He is faithful to be there for us even when it is difficult for us to do the same for Him.

**How can believers respond knowing Jesus remained faithful even when He knew His disciples wouldn't be?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

Matthew 26:36-46

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 26:39

## NOTES

In the garden of Gethsemane, we see Jesus in His humanity in a way unlike anywhere else. He is in anguish and sorrow, crying out in prayer to the Father. We see Jesus praying not with His hands raised to the sky but on His face. He is humble and needy. He is like us in so many ways. When suffering reaches out and touches us, Jesus shows us how to react.

Jesus reacted perfectly as He always does. In His prayer in the garden, He prayed honestly. “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.” He knew what was before Him. The cup of God’s wrath for sin would soon be poured out over Him on the cross. The sin of the world would be placed upon Him, and He would pay the penalty for it all. Though He never sinned Himself, He who knew no sin would become sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus would drink from the cup. It would not pass, yet Jesus prayed that it would. He brought His request humbly but boldly. Still, He did not cling to the answer He most desperately wanted. He knew even as He prayed the answer was no. And He submitted Himself to that answer. He did so in His prayer placing God’s will before His own. This is the heart of true prayer: bending our will to God’s will.

In His most desperate moment, Jesus modeled how to pray during our suffering—to open ourselves to God’s perfect plan and receive from His hand what He wills.

**What in your life right now do you need to hand over to God’s will?**

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

“Yielding to God’s will can be hard. And sometimes, it really hurts. But it always brings peace.”<sup>2</sup>

—John M. Perkins

# DAY 5

## READ:

**Matthew 26:47-56**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Matthew 26:54**

## NOTES



### **KEY DOCTRINE #4: INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE**

Inerrancy refers to the belief that Scripture is completely truthful, without any mixture of error, in all its teachings, no matter what subject it addresses. Believing the Scriptures to be inerrant does not preclude the biblical authors' inclusion of observations from a human observer, the use of round numbers, unusual grammatical constructions, or varying perspectives on a particular event. It does mean, however, that Scripture is an infallible guide to salvation and that it is truthful in all that it affirms (Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18).

Jesus was a man perfectly in tune with the plan of salvation. In His flesh, He did not want to suffer. He did not want to die. He did not want to face the cross. Yet He did so because it was the way laid out for Him. The penalty for sin had to be paid by man's blood, and Jesus became a man precisely for that purpose. When His hour came, He did not shrink back. He stood firm in the faith, knowing that this was how the Scriptures would be fulfilled.

Facing the mob with their swords and clubs after Peter cut off the ear of one of them, Jesus mused how He could call down legions of angels to defend Him. But He would not do it because it was not the Father's will. His purpose was not to defend Himself but to defend His people, and He could not do that without giving Himself up. The Scriptures had prophesied substitutionary atonement.

Jesus was a man like us. He did not want to suffer. But Jesus was also the perfect man, willing to suffer for God's plan. He did not refuse the cup of God's wrath because He knew that through it, He was fulfilling Scripture. Without that, we are without hope. With it, we are saved.

**What can you do to show your thankfulness, knowing Jesus was willing to face death to bring about salvation?**

# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"You may have spent a lifetime deserting him or betraying him or denying him. But if you will come to him he says to you this morning, 'I will be your sovereign, merciful Savior and Lord. I will be everything you need.'"<sup>3</sup>

—John Piper

### **POINT 1: The Son of Man predicts abandonment** (Matthew 26:31-35).

Jesus knew His friends would desert Him, but He continued with His plan of salvation anyway.

**?** From Day 5: **What can you do to show your thankfulness, knowing Jesus was willing to face death to bring about salvation?**

Jesus's disciples failed, but they still remained Jesus's disciples whom He loved.

**?** **How does the gospel change the way we view the disciples' failures the night of Jesus's arrest?**

### **POINT 2: The Son of Man trusts in God's plan** (Matthew 26:36-46).

Two gardens play a role in salvation: the garden of Eden, where sin entered the world, and the garden of Gethsemane, where sin met its match in Jesus.

**?** **What can we learn from Jesus in the garden when we are grieving and sorrowful?**

Through Jesus's prayer, we learn that He didn't reject His role but gave Himself up to God's plan, knowing it would come at an immense cost.

**?** **How does Jesus's acceptance of God's will instruct us on how we should pray during difficult times?**

### **POINT 3: The Son of Man exercises restraint** (Matthew 26:47-56).

Jesus gave Himself up without a fight because it was all part of God's salvation plan in His timing.



How does knowing God's timing is different from our timing help us in dealing with hardships?

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Seeing prophecies fulfilled, what do we learn about Scripture?

### MY RESPONSE

Because we have been saved through the sacrifice of Jesus, we embrace suffering as we follow in the footsteps of our Savior, whose mission was to seek and save the lost.

- **HEAD:** How does seeing Jesus fulfill Old Testament prophecies encourage your faith in the Bible?
- **HEART:** How can you praise God knowing that Jesus willingly gave Himself up for you?
- **HANDS:** With whom this week can you share the amazing love of Christ and how He endured suffering and death for us?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

### VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"I trust in the Lord God Almighty . . . that He will not take away from me the cup of His redemption; but I firmly hope to drink from it today in His kingdom."<sup>4</sup>

—John Huss (1369–1415)