

## Thursday: Onward to the Cross of Grace

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Matthew 26:17-56

*Holy Week*  
2021 LENT SERMON

### Toward the Cross of Grace as Jesus Celebrates Passover

<sup>[17]</sup> Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?" <sup>[18]</sup> He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" <sup>[19]</sup> And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

<sup>[20]</sup> When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. <sup>[21]</sup> And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." <sup>[22]</sup> And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" <sup>[23]</sup> He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. <sup>[24]</sup> The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." <sup>[25]</sup> Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."

### Toward the Cross of Grace as Jesus Establishes Communion

<sup>[26]</sup> Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." <sup>[27]</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, <sup>[28]</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>[29]</sup> I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

<sup>[30]</sup> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. <sup>[31]</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' <sup>[32]</sup> But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." <sup>[33]</sup> Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." <sup>[34]</sup> Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." <sup>[35]</sup> Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same.

## **Toward the Cross of Grace as Jesus Prays in the Garden**

<sup>[36]</sup> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." <sup>[37]</sup> And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>[38]</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." <sup>[39]</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

<sup>[40]</sup> And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? <sup>[41]</sup> Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." <sup>[42]</sup> Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." <sup>[43]</sup> And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>[44]</sup> So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. <sup>[45]</sup> Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>[46]</sup> Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

## **Toward the Cross of Grace as Jesus is Arrested**

<sup>[47]</sup> While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. <sup>[48]</sup> Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." <sup>[49]</sup> And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. <sup>[50]</sup> Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

<sup>[51]</sup> And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. <sup>[52]</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>[53]</sup> Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>[54]</sup> But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" <sup>[55]</sup> At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. <sup>[56]</sup> But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

## Thursday: Onward to the Cross of Grace

March 28, 2021

*Holy Week*

**Open:** What does grace mean to you?

**Read:** Matthew 26:20-39

**Discuss:**

1. If you were one of the twelve disciples, how would you have felt as Jesus was describing the betrayer in verses 20-25? What do you think Judas might have been feeling? What can we learn about Jesus through the way He announces Judas' betrayal?
2. How should we understand the tension in verse 24 between "The Son of Man goes [into betrayal] as it is written of Him" and "woe to the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed"? How should this shape our view of those who work against God's ways?
3. After this serious warning, the text transitions directly into Jesus establishing communion (vv. 26-29). How do you think the disciples might have understood Jesus' words? If someone came to visit church with you on a Communion Sunday, how would you help him or her understand what we are doing?
4. Jesus then warns the disciples that not only will one betray him, but they will all fall away because of him (v. 33). Does their disbelief in Jesus' words surprise you? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think Peter gave the response he did in verse 35? What can we learn about our own faithfulness to Jesus, knowing that the convictions of these disciples will not hold through to morning?
6. In verses 36-39, Jesus is described as feeling sorrowful even to the point of death. What does this tell us about Jesus? What can we learn about how to process our sorrow in prayer from Jesus' example in verse 39?

**Apply:** What stands out to you or impresses you about Jesus from this passage? How do Jesus' words or actions challenge you to make changes in your life?

**Pray:** Ask God to use our church family to carry the message of grace to all who have ears to hear it. Pray for the many Easter services that will happen in our community and around the world.

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