

Matthew 26

The cross

- was no surprise.

"¹ And it came about that when Jesus had finished all these words, He said to His disciples, ² "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be delivered up for crucifixion."

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; ⁴ and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth, and kill Him. ⁵ But they were saying, "Not during the festival, lest a riot occur among the people."

- It is a popular opinion that Jesus was a victim of political circumstances that his followers later reconstructed to have spiritual significance. The gospels are consistent in portraying the cross as an important and anticipated part of Jesus ministry from his baptism on.
- While there were social/ political forces at work leading to the crucifixion the gospels are quite clear in linking the cross with prophetic tradition.

- was about spiritual redemption more than social reform.

⁶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, at the home of Simon the leper, ⁷ a woman came to Him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume, and she poured it upon His head as He reclined at the table. ⁸ But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste? ⁹ For this perfume might have been sold for a **high price** and the money given to the poor." ¹⁰ But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done a good deed to Me. ¹¹ For the poor you have with you always; but you do not always have Me. ¹² For when she poured this perfume upon My body, she did it to prepare Me for burial. ¹³ Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her."

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, ¹⁵ and said, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?" And they weighed out to him **thirty pieces of silver**. ¹⁶ And from then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Him.

- The word of "perfume" in this passage is the same word for the myrrh brought by the Magi in 2:11. It was valued at about one years wages.
- It has been suggested that Mary (the woman mentioned here) and Judas were the first two followers to recognize Jesus' death. Note the dramatic difference in the way they express that knowledge.
- The theme that links these two paragraphs is the emphasis on money or materialism. The disciples at this point were still unaware of the spiritual significance of what was about to happen.
- It is significant that Jesus, while not disrespecting the needs of the poor (25:31-46), puts a priority on the significance of his death. This corrects a mistaken notion that the significance of Jesus and the Kingdom is primarily social reform.

- In fact, the social ethical reform that is an important part of the Christian church grows out of the more significant point of spiritual redemption and reconciliation.
- This story may find a parallel in the extravagant church architecture and art of the middle ages at a time of intense physical suffering and poverty.

- would change the way we relate to God.

17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" 18 And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples. "' 19 And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

20 Now when evening had come, He was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. 21 And as they were eating, He said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me." 22 And being deeply grieved, they each one began to say to Him, "Surely not I, Lord?" 23 And He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. 24 "The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." 25 And Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said it yourself."

26 And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of **the covenant**, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

30 And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

- The most significant aspect of the Last Supper is the introduction of the fulfillment of the New Covenant mentioned in Jer.31 and Ezek.36. While "new" does not appear in the best Manuscripts of Matthew, it does appear in Luke 22:20 (a parallel text).
- A controversy over the meaning of "this is my body" has unfortunately divided Christians over the years. The Roman Catholic Church has taken the words to actually suggest that the bread and cup become the body and blood of Christ, while Baptists and some other Protestants have taken it to be symbolic of the body and blood. This is in keeping with the way metaphor is often used by Jesus.
- Christians have repeated the "Lord's Supper" from the first century on. It is very probable that the early church used this as a part of weekly worship although there is no prescription to that effect.
- Our relationship with God is defined by a series of covenants or contracts. The New Covenant stands in contrast to the Old Covenant (Law of Moses). Paul (in Galatians) spends a lot of time and energy to make sure we understand the difference.
- Again, the Protestant church is not in full agreement as to how the Law of Moses relates to the New Covenant. The proper distinction is best understood as not a change in the moral boundaries defined by the Old and New Covenants but rather

by the role they play in defining the contractual relationship between God and man. The New Covenant stands in contrast to the Old Covenant with respect to the grace that frees the followers of Christ from the curses and blessings associated with human faithfulness under the Old Covenant.

- Implications of life under the New Covenant are significant. Not the least of which is the sense of freedom from guilt and motivation for faithfulness that comes from love not fear.

- was for those who fall asleep and fall away.

³¹ Then Jesus said to them, "**You will all fall away** because of Me this night, for it is written, *'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.'* ³² "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." ³³ But Peter answered and said to Him, " Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away." ³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times." ³⁵ Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too.

³⁶ Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." ³⁹ And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt." ⁴⁰ And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? ⁴¹ Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴² He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done." ⁴³ And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. ⁴⁵ Then He came to the disciples, and said to them, "**Are you still sleeping** and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ "Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

- Jesus' atoning sacrifice would be for the benefit of those who were indeed unworthy.
- Jesus agony in the garden reveals the soul of the Son of Man. He experienced human suffering in anticipation of his calling. While asking that the coming suffering be taken away, he in the end yields himself willingly to God's will.
- The term "deeply grieved" (vs.38) and "distressed" (vs.37) are literally "overwhelmed with sorrow" and "crushed with anguish."
- Lessons for us include the realization that the atonement was applied to those who were unworthy on the basis of their own merit.
- There is an interesting psychological lesson in this story. Jesus seems to seek out emotional support from the disciples. He goes back for them three times. In every case He finds them unable to be there for Him. Many of us have realized that the greatest pain in our lives is not the presence of a crisis but rather the sense of abandonment in the face of the crisis.

- was not resisted by Jesus.

47 And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came up, accompanied by a great multitude with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him." 49 And immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. 50 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. 51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. 53 "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54 "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?" 55 At that time Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. 56 "But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

57 And those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. 58 But Peter also was following Him at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and entered in, and sat down with the officers to see the outcome. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death; 60 and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, 61 and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" 62 And the high priest stood up and said to Him, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?" 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see *the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.*" 65 Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; 66 what do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death!" 67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, 68 and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"

- The court referred to in this passage was the Sanhedrin (Jewish supreme court) which had limited jurisdiction in political and religious matters. It could not sentence people to death and this is why Jesus was eventually sent to Pilate (the Roman official).
- Matthew does not mention the examination before Annas (Jn.18:12-14, 19-23) which took place before the events mentioned here.
- Jesus' trial was remarkable in that it reveals his willingness to suffer abuse as a part of his pilgrimage to the cross.
- Lessons we can draw from this part of the story

- seems a waste to those who misunderstand it.

⁶⁹ Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a certain servant-girl came to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰ But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." ⁷¹ And when he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷² And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." ⁷³ And a little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Surely you too are one of them; for the way you talk gives you away." ⁷⁴ Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a cock crowed. ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a cock crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly."

- Peter's conduct stands in contrast to that of Jesus. While Jesus was willing to suffer, Peter was not.
- Peter's refusal to accept the predicted death of Christ put him in a position where his fears controlled his decisions.
- The authority of the Gospel of Matthew is underscored by the presence of this embarrassing account. It is not what we would expect of a document that was created by the early church to support its evolving theology of Apostolic authority.
- Zeal for God is no assurance of faithfulness.
- God uses people with weaknesses and even those who fail.
- Every spiritual failure has a story. Peter's story is not strange. If our expectations and hopes are misplaced we have reason to fear in that our hopes may very well be unrealized. The pattern in Peter's behavior seems to follow a path that we know from our own experiences.
 1. Eager expectations (but based on superficial understanding),
 2. Expectations not met (too much to live with and too little to live for),
 3. Fear (Have I believed a lie?),
 4. Self defense (I must defend myself because I can not trust God to show up for me),
 5. Abandonment of faith.

Three covenants that shape the Biblical story

through Abraham
Promise

The Redemptive Covenants

through Moses
Pain

at Sinai
(the Old Covenant)
a Tutor
by Hagar
“the bondwoman”

through Jesus
Peace

at Calvary
(the New Covenant)
the Gospel
by Sarah
“the free woman”

Galatians 4

“²² For it is written that **Abraham** had two sons, one by the **bondwoman** and one by the **free woman**. ²³ But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the **promise**. ²⁴ This is allegorically speaking: for these women are two covenants,”

SINAI	CALVARY
Through Moses With Israel The Law Conditioned upon man's obedience Based upon works Was concluded at the Cross Earthly, sinful priests Earthly tabernacle Faulty Limited access to God Physical working Demanded obedience Exodus - Gospels Malachi 3:7 “Return to me, and I will return to you.’ says the Lord Almighty.”	Through Christ With the Church Grace Conditioned upon Christ's obedience Based upon faith Was initiated at the Cross Heavenly, sinless priests True (heavenly) tabernacle Faultless Free access to God A cleansed conscience Enabled obedience Acts – Revelation I Jn.4:19 “We love because he first loved us.”

Matt.22:37-40 “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”

Just War Theory

1. Assumptions

- a. No aspect of the human condition falls outside the purview of moral reasoning and judgment - including politics.
- b. No aspect of the human condition falls outside the negative effects of Adam’s fall from grace. We live in a fallen world that is corrupted by evil and self-serving defensiveness at every turn.
- c. The fallen world will always be in a condition of “wars or rumors of wars.” We are either fighting or getting ready to. The utopian idea of a world of perfect peace awaits the new heaven and earth. Real lasting peace is not a part of our present age nor will it be.
- d. Armed force can be used for good or evil, depending on who is using it, why, to what ends, and how.
- e. There is a difference between the responsibility of the individual and the state with respect to the use of force.

2. Just war theory starts with a mandate to love one’s neighbor.

- a. It does not start with a presumption of non-violence, which is a question of means.
- b. Rightly constituted public authority is under a strict moral obligation to defend the security of those for whom it has assumed responsibility, even if this puts the magistrate’s own life in jeopardy.

3. Peace is the “tranquility of order.”

- a. Just war theory sees armed force as an extension of establishing and maintaining an orderly and just society. It is not justified outside the broader mandate to establish and maintain civil order as an expression of love for one’s fellow man.
- b. Protecting America’s international interests is justified when they are defined as:
 - 1) Preserving internal order and peace both in the present and for the future.
 - 2) Promoting justice and peace abroad through the furthering of human rights and civil liberties for all people. The American ideal is worth protecting.

4. There must be a distinction between “the individual as a part of God’s covenant community” and “a secular state”.

- a. The principles of moral conduct that apply to the individual within the Covenant community and to those that apply to a pluralistic state may differ at points. Example: It is forbidden to teach a false gospel within the Covenant community while it is permitted in a pluralistic state.
- b. While pacifism may be appropriate for the individual Christian in their dealings with other individuals, it may not apply to the state’s responsibilities.

Basic elements of Just War theory

(Arthur F. Holmes "The Just War," in *War: Four Christian Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse, IV press)

- a. **Just cause** - All aggression is condemned; only defensive war is legitimate.
- b. **Just intention** - The only legitimate intention is to secure a just peace for all involved. Neither revenge nor conquest nor economic gain nor ideological supremacy are justified.
 - 1) **Defense against aggression.** (In recent times, this has been seen as the only just cause.) It is argued that "rogue states" (states that openly disrespect the global community of humanity and constitute a material threat to that global community by their declared intentions and actions) that possess weapons of mass destruction constitute aggression waiting to happen.
 - 2) **Recovery of something wrongfully taken.**
 - 3) **Punishment of evil.**
- c. **Formal declaration** - Since the use of military force is the prerogative of governments, not of private individuals, a state of war must be officially declared by the highest authorities.
- d. **Limited objectives** - If the purpose is peace, then unconditional surrender or the destruction of a nation's economic or political institutions is an unwarranted objective.
- e. **Proportionate means** - The weaponry and the force used should be limited to what is needed to repel the aggression and deter future attacks, that is to say, to secure a just peace. Total or unlimited war is ruled out.
- f. **Noncombatant immunity** - Since war is an official act of government, only those who are officially agents of government may fight, and individuals not actively contributing to the conflict (including POW's and casualties as well as civilian nonparticipants) should be immune from attack.
- g. **Last resort** - Because of the severe nature of war we should exhaust every reasonable means to avoid it.
 - 1) While we can never be certain that every possible alternative has been exhausted, we must go great lengths within what common sense at the time would dictate.
 - 2) The principle of loving discipline within the covenant community laid down in Matt.18:15-20 is a helpful guide. Drastic measures are used only when other appeals have been exhausted.

When is the use of force permitted?

“When love demands it!”

Two important distinctions:

- 1. The Christian Community and the Secular State***
- 2. Personal well-being and the care of others.***

I should
“turn the other cheek.”
Matt.6:39

It should
“bear the sword.”
Rom.13:4

**Christian
Church**

**Secular
State**

**Personal
defense**

No

**Protect
others**

Minimal

**Expand
Interests**

No

**Keep
Peace**

Limited

force! force! force! force!

Peter's story

From fearless faith to faithless fear in three steps.

Step #1

Distorted

**EXPECTATI
ONS**

(I can trust God to bring in "my ship.")

Step #2

Disappointing

**EXPERIENC
ES**

(I can't trust God.)

Step #3

Desperate

ESCAPE

(I must take care of myself.)

Lesson #1

How to manage life so as to never have to face personal failure.

- 1. Know the Scripture.** Have Biblically grounded expectations.
- 2. Trust God in the dark.** Don't let fear rule your life.
- 3. Discipline yourself to stand firm when tested.** Be prepared to endure the tests of faith.

Lesson #2

How to face life on the "far side" of personal failure.

- 1. God uses people who fail.** Know that God can use not only people who are weak but people who fail miserably.
- 2. God knows we will fail.** God includes in His plan those He knows will fail.

- 3. Even the strongest stumble.** Zeal for God is no assurance of faithfulness under trial.
- 4. Abide in Christ.** The ultimate test of faith is seen in our response to failure. Will we abide?

Two different expectations:

*The Old
Covenant
dream*

*The New
Covenant
dream*

My pursuit:

**The Better Life
of Blessing from
God.**

My pursuit:

**The Better Hope
of Nearness to
God.**

My need:

**More Wisdom
and Discipline
to be able to
Manage Life.**

My need:

**To Know
God.**

The pressure is on!

The pressure is off!

Peter in Matt.26

Peter in I Pet.1