

Betrayed 4-30-06

Matthew 26:47-56 (NIV)

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I have the difficult task of taking you back to the time before the crucifixion as we continue our journey through Matthew. Every Easter Season, I find myself feeling the emotion of the weeks leading up to the crucifixion. Then, finally, Easter arrives and there is that wonderful celebration of resurrection. I am sure many of you experience the same thing. So it is difficult for us to step back to the time before the resurrection and enter back into those painful moments. In some ways, the suffering of Christ is always with us. The Apostle Paul wrote "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6:14 (NIV) In the same way, the resurrection is always with us, for we have been raised with Him to newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

In our passage for today, Jesus had finished praying and had turned His will over to the Father. (Matthew 26:39) The battle was won in prayer. He was as ready for what was coming as anyone could be. Let us never forget that the way to prepare for difficulty is on our knees surrendering our will to the Father. (James 5:13a) If we know we are in His will, we can face what is coming with that peace that transcends all understanding. (Philippians 4:7) That is what I rely upon when I know difficulty is coming. I search my heart to be sure that I am in God's will. If I go through the trial by the will of God, I can be sure that whatever happens is ultimately the best thing for me. (Romans 8:28) What I fear is going through a trial because I am out of God's will and insisting on my own way. I have seen the damage that can cause, the long lasting effects, and the hurt in other's lives. But if I am in God's will, I can face whatever comes. (Philippians 4:13)

When I was young, I had a dreamlike vision of standing in a dark room. Before me was a well-lit hallway. There were people along both walls with objects in their hands to hit me with as I passed. I knew instantly what it meant. If that hallway is

Commented [notes1]: We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
Romans 6:4 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."
Matthew 26:39 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: 13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray.
James 5:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.
Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

the will of God, it does not matter what the world throws at me, or what I have to endure, God will see me through to the other side. It may be painful, but I will get through and be victorious because God will help me through. (1 Peter 4:19)

Commented [notes7]: 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.
1 Peter 4:19 (NIV)

Jesus knew He was going to the cross because of the Father's will. He was ready to drink the cup because He knew it came from the hand of the Father. He knew He would be victorious in spite of what He would have to endure. ² *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Hebrews 12:2 (NIV) When you face your trial, fix your eyes on Jesus. It will make your trial small by comparison, and it will encourage you to do God's will and not your own.

⁴⁷ *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.* It reminds me of that hallway. Can you picture the crowd? We portrayed it in the play with a few priests and servants. In the movie, *The Passion*, the focus was the Roman soldiers. Matthew describes a mob that is ready to do violence. Luke says the temple guard was there. (Luke 22:52) John refers to the priests and a detachment of soldiers. (John 18:3) They were all there, and together they made up a mob that was armed. What feeling of dread must have swept over the disciples!

Commented [notes8]: 52 Then Jesus said to the chief 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?
Luke 22:52 (NIV)

⁴⁸ *Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him."* ⁴⁹ *Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.* To greet a friend with a kiss was like shaking hands in our day. It was Judas' signal. Apparently the mob could not recognize Jesus. They had to stir up people that had not had a personal encounter with Him. Earlier, the priests had sent temple guards to arrest Jesus, but they came back saying, "No one ever spoke the way this man does." (John 7:45-46) Perhaps they had to find those who had never heard or seen Him personally because others would not be willing. Would you please remember this: many who hate Jesus have never met Him. If they encountered Him, His presence would change their attitude. In His presence, you are either changed for the better or further hardened. You cannot meet Him and continue as you were. If you need to change, and I never met anyone who did not have that need, then you need to get in the presence of Jesus.

Commented [notes9]: 3 So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.
John 18:3 (NIV)

Judas kissed Jesus to point Him out to them. Remember that Satan had entered Judas. Such hypocrisy is inspired by evil. True friends will tell one another the truth, even when it hurts, but selfishness uses flattery to gain what they desire. (Proverbs 27:6)

⁵⁰ *Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.* Luke recorded Jesus asking, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Luke 22:48 (NIV) He must have uttered both expressions. How convicting His words must have been! He still called Judas "friend". Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of the betrayal with the kiss as a sign. Is Jesus still trying to get Judas to see the mistake he is making?

Commented [notes10]: 45 Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"
46 "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared.
John 7:45-46 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: 6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.
Proverbs 27:6 (NIV)

When they grabbed Jesus, one of the disciples asked if they should fight. (Luke 22:49) Before Jesus could answer, Peter had lopped off the ear of the High Priest's servant. ⁵¹

Commented [notes12]: 49 When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?"
Luke 22:49 (NIV)

With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Peter had already been rebuked for telling the Lord that He should not allow Himself to be captured. (Matthew 16:22) Jesus had tried to tell Peter that he had the wrong priorities, but apparently Peter did not understand. He was still thinking of a physical kingdom and fighting physically. Luke the physician tells us that Jesus healed that man's ear. (Luke 22:51) You might recall that marvelous scene in *The Passion*. It depicted the man as kneeling amazed and stunned at the miracle that had taken place. Even when being attacked, Jesus ministered to those who attacked Him. He is out to save souls. (John 3:17)

Commented [notes13]: 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"
Matthew 16:22 (NIV)

Commented [notes14]: 51 But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.
Luke 22:51 (NIV)

Commented [notes15]: 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.
John 3:17 (NIV)

I can relate to that wounded servant of the High Priest. Some of us have attacked the Lord in one way or another and found that He loved us in spite of ourselves. The healing and redemption in the face of our rebellion should cause us to kneel in awe as well, stunned that anyone with such power could be so gracious and forgiving. We have felt His healing touch, too. Man responds to hatred with hatred. Jesus responds to hatred with compassion and grace. Remember, they probably did not know what Jesus looked like. This is their first encounter. How it must have stunned them and caused them to search their hearts! No wonder they had to get those who had not seen Him to capture Him. Do you realize that God wants to work His kind of compassionate grace into our lives so that we can respond as He does?

⁵² *"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.* The disciples had something much more important than fighting for an earthly passing kingdom. They were to share the words of Christ that transforms the hearts of men. (Mark 16:15) They were to induct people into a spiritual kingdom that is eternal. Jesus did not want them dying early trying to defend Him. (John 18:36) When as individuals we respond to violence with violence, we are asking for our early demise. We are focused on the wrong thing. Certainly you can defend your life against an immediate threat, and there is a place for governments to defend the oppressed using force. (Romans 13:3-4) This was a case of trying to escape from the will of the Father by using the same tactics of force that the enemy was using. It was sinking to their level. Jesus had already told them repeatedly that He would be handed over, that the Shepherd would be struck and the sheep scattered. (Matthew 26:31)

Commented [notes16]: 15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."
Mark 16:15 (NIV)

Commented [notes17]: 36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."
John 18:36 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.
4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.
Romans 13:3-4 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: 31 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.'
Matthew 26:31 (NIV)

It is interesting that police tell the victims of robberies not to draw a weapon. You are much more likely to be hurt by brandishing a weapon. It causes the perpetrator to cross a line they might not otherwise cross and could cost you your life as well as possibly hurting innocent by-standers.

⁵³ *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 Jesus needs bodyguards? He has them already, and one can slay a few hundred thousand humans. A legion could take on the entire planet. Do you think Jesus is defenseless? He could still have walked away just as He did at Nazareth when they tried to throw Him off the cliff. (Luke 4:29-30) He could end every life of every enemy in an instant, but He had a mission. He had already surrendered His will to the Father. He knew exactly where He was headed. He did not

Commented [notes20]: 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.
30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.
Luke 4:29-30 (NIV)

have to go down that hallway, but He did because He loves you. You do not have to go down your hallway but you do because you love Him.

Sometimes we do not know how to answer someone that brings up a question about Christ. We feel like we must defend Him, or save His reputation. He can defend Himself. Of course we should stand up when the Holy Spirit moves us to answer, but do not worry if He does not inspire us to say something. God can touch a heart in an instant through the most trivial of things. The disciples needed to know that this moment was not out of God's control. The entire event was in His plan, for God's glory and the salvation of mankind. (Mark 10:45)

This week I was reminded that everything is in His omnipotent hands. He has planned my steps from eternity past and knows where they will fall throughout eternity future. (Psalm 139:16) He rules over all, and nothing escapes His notice. Are you tempted to see your world as out of control? Could He not presently send an angel and turn your circumstances around? Trust Him. Believe you are in His hand. Watch for Him to be at work in your circumstances.

⁵⁴ *But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"* Jesus was surrendered to the will of God that He discovered in the Scriptures. What Scriptures? After the supper He had already quoted one from Isaiah 53. ³⁷ *It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.*" Luke 22:37 (NIV) He also quoted from Zechariah 13. ³¹ *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."* Matthew 26:31 (NIV) And quoting from the Psalms Jesus reminded them, ²⁵ *But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'* John 15:25 (NIV) At that very moment He was watching the fulfillment of Psalm 41:9 which He quoted in John 13:18 (NIV). ¹⁸ *"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'* And did Obadiah 1:7b (NIV) cause His choice of words earlier. *...those who eat your bread will set a trap for you...* Did Psalm 55 cause Jesus to use the term "friend"? ¹² *If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him.* ¹³ *But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend,* ¹⁴ *with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.* Psalms 55:12-14 (NIV) It is an inspiring example for us to see how Jesus saw the Word as lamp to His feet and a light to His path. (Psalm 119:105) The more I study, the more I see Jesus was the Living Word and living the Word.

⁵⁵ *At that time 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.* We are reminded again about this armed mob. Jesus is addressing them. He is challenging their consciences. Was He leading an army that they would have to confront with weapons? What did they fear? Why were they doing this at night? Why not in the daytime when He was teaching? Why

Commented [notes21]: 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45 (NIV)

Commented [notes22]: 16 your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Psalms 139:16 (NIV)

Commented [notes23]: 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Psalms 119:105 (NIV)

plot for a time when no one else will see what takes place? He had been in the temple teaching every day of that last week.

I would ask a similar question of any among us this morning that have rejected accepting Christ. Do you think He is kind of trickster? Do you think His disciples risked their lives making up stories to make Him seem as if He were God when in fact He was just an enlightened man? Why do you meet Him with your defenses up? What do you fear?

The Holy Spirit will ask us the same convicting question that Jesus asked. We can fool ourselves into thinking that we are doing the right thing or at least something God would let slide, but the Spirit of God asks us why we are hoping no one will see us? He asks us why we have chosen to do something in secret. Why have we plotted and planned? A life in service to God is lived in the open. Even in the church we are careful about confidentiality. Are we afraid someone might find out we are a sinner, that we struggle just as they do, that we are not perfect? The best way to get a victory over sin is to confess it and forsake it. (James 5:16)

⁵⁶ But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Jesus reminded them again that this was all in the hands of Sovereign God. It was not out of control. It was not a surprise. It was foretold in detail. (Isaiah 46:10) Not only was this happening to fulfill the Scripture in that particular moment, but to fulfill all that was written about the salvation of man and the New Covenant that Jesus had just introduced during Passover. (Matthew 26:27)

The disciples did as the Scriptures predicted and scattered. Jesus had told them they would run to their own homes. (John 16:32) He told them they would mourn and weep while the world rejoiced. They would grieve but... I love this conjunction, BUT that is not where it ends. BUT your grief will turn to joy! (John 16:20) The world can do whatever schemes and mockery against God it can come up with, but God is sovereign over the affairs of men. (Psalm 2:4) We talked last week about the efforts of man to fight against the Gospel declaration, BUT God reveals His truth to those who seek. (Matthew 7:7)

Whatever circumstances God has thrown into your life, will you trust God this morning that His word is being fulfilled? No matter how dark and or troubling the days ahead of you may be, will you believe that God can turn your sorrow into joy? Will you let the Word of God be a lamp to your feet and a light to your path as Jesus did in His most difficult hours? You are either going to trust God or yourself. Seems like an easy decision to me. If you have been trusting self and you need to let go and trust God this morning, come forward and let one of the elders pray with you as we sing. Put down your needless defenses and say yes to Jesus this morning.

Commented [notes24]: 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective James 5:16 (NIV)

Commented [notes25]: 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. Isaiah 46:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes26]: 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. Matthew 26:27

Commented [notes27]: 32 "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. John 16:32 (NIV)

Commented [notes28]: 20 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. John 16:20 (NIV)

Commented [notes29]: 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Psalms 2:4 (NIV)

Commented [notes30]: 7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7 (NIV)