

# Ministry of Grace Church

## Matthew 26 – Part 2

### Preface:

Last week we learned that Mary anointed Jesus with expensive ointment. We also learned about Judas' agreement with the Chief Priests and Elders to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Then we talked about the Passover meal that Jesus shared with His disciples as well as His institution of Communion as a reminder to all Christians about what Jesus did for us and the fact that He is coming back again.

This week we will learn about the events that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus' first two trials of the night, before the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas.

### Jesus Foretells Peter's Denial

#### **Matthew 26:30-35**

<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.

**Mark 14:26-31** – <sup>26</sup>And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. <sup>27</sup>And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'" <sup>28</sup>But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." <sup>29</sup>Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." <sup>30</sup>And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." <sup>31</sup>But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same.

**Luke 22:31-34** – <sup>31</sup>"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup>but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." <sup>33</sup>Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

**John 13:36-38** – <sup>36</sup>Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." <sup>37</sup>Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." <sup>38</sup>Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times."

### Notes:

Directly across the Kidron Valley from the Temple Mount was the area known as Gethsemane. This name is a combination of the two Hebrew words *gath*, referring to a press, and *shemen*, which is the word for olive oil. Therefore, Gethsemane means "Olive Oil Press." (Slide 2A) The actual press wasn't located in

the garden, but in a cave at the foot of the mountain. Near this olive oil press was the cultivated garden area where Jesus was accustomed to taking His disciples. While they were walking there, Jesus told the 11 disciples that they were going to desert Him (Slide 2B) that night and that it would be a fulfillment of prophecy. At the same time, He tried to console them by telling them that He would meet up with them in Galilee after He was raised from the dead.

Upon hearing that all the disciples would desert Jesus, and true to his impetuous nature, Peter immediately claimed that he would never desert Jesus, even if it meant death. (Slide 3A) Unfortunately, he ended up setting himself up for failure. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, which he wouldn't receive for another 53 days, Peter and the other disciples were still controlled by their selfish sin nature. As a result, they all would forsake Jesus and run for their lives. Peter, however, still thought he could resist the urge for self-preservation in the face of danger. Jesus informed him that in this very night, he would deny his Messiah three times before the second crowing of the rooster.

Luke's gospel account adds some details that Matthew leaves out at this point. Jesus informed Peter and the other disciples that Satan was determined to defeat them. He said:

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.” (Luke 22:31-34)

This is one of those passages that is slightly obscured by the English translation and the lack of distinction in English between you-singular and you-plural. Here's how the Greek text reads for verses 31 and 32:

Simon, Simon, look Satan has desired to have you [plural], to sift you [plural] like wheat, but I have prayed for you [singular] that your [singular] faith may not fail. And when you [singular] have turned back again, strengthen your [singular] brothers.

In other words, Jesus is telling Simon that Satan wanted to sift all the disciples as wheat. But Jesus said that He prayed only for Peter, so that when Peter has been turned around, he is to strengthen the other disciples. (Slide 4A) Even though Peter's heart was in the right place and he thought he could stare death in the face and remain faithful to Jesus no matter what, he is about to find out to his own shame that he can't.

## **Jesus Prays in Gethsemane**

### **Matthew 26:36-46**

<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.”**

**Mark 14:32-42** – <sup>32</sup>And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” <sup>33</sup>And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. <sup>34</sup>And he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch.” <sup>35</sup>And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup>And he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” <sup>37</sup>And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? <sup>38</sup>Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>39</sup>And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. <sup>40</sup>And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. <sup>41</sup>And he came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup>Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

**Luke 22:39-46** – <sup>39</sup>And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup>And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” <sup>41</sup>And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup>saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” <sup>43</sup>And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup>And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup>And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

### **Notes:**

This portion of Scripture offers us one of the most dramatic views of Jesus’ humanity and reveals some of the agony that He experienced. Entering into the garden, Jesus asked eight of His disciples to sit and wait while He and the other three went farther into the garden to pray.

Why did Jesus choose Peter, James, and John to go with Him to pray? This seems to be His “inner circle” of disciples. It was these three that Jesus choose to reveal His glory to on the mount of Transfiguration, and it was these three that He took with Him when He raised the synagogue’s ruler’s daughter from the dead (see **Luke 8:49-56**). Jesus is now being emotionally tested and He apparently wanted His closest friends to be with Him for comfort and support. But he would be deserted by even these closest of His disciples in His greatest hour of need.

Jesus revealed to the three that He was very sorrowful due to His impending death and told them to remain and keep watch with Him. The word translated “**keep watch**” is *grēgoreuō*, which means “to refrain from sleep and be on the lookout for threatening dangers.” While he left them there to be on guard, He went further and prayed to the Father. Luke tells us that Jesus knelt down to pray, but Matthew says that He fell on His face. Apparently, He began on His knees and fell forward onto His face as His prayer intensified.

Even though He told His closest disciples that he was sorrowful unto death, He was not saying that He feared death. He knew that He would overcome death. However, He also knew that He was about to experience the wrath of His Father for the first, and only time ever. He knew of the physical pain He was to suffer, but He also knew that He was to be separated spiritually and emotionally from the Father for three hours while he bore the sins of the whole world. Jesus is about to be abandoned by all of His closest

friends and He will soon be deserted by His Father as well. Perhaps most of all, Jesus, as God had always been separated from sin, and He knew that soon He was to bear the very essence of sin while He hung on the cross. He prayed,

Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.

The “cup” that Jesus referred to is the cup of the wrath of God. (Slide 5A) This cup of God’s wrath is referred to in **Isaiah 51:17** in reference to Jerusalem and in **Revelation 14:10** in reference to all who take the mark of the Beast during the Tribulation. It is a reference to God’s wrath poured out full strength. We see here a beautiful picture of Jesus’ desirous will versus His determined will. It was Jesus’ desire to avoid the Father’s wrath, but He was determined to do His Father’s will, to become sin and receive the Father’s wrath, so that He might offer Himself as payment.

After His first prayer, Jesus returned to His disciples and found them sleeping (the opposite of keeping watch). His closest disciples had already begun to fail Him. Soon, they would forsake Him completely. Compare this to God’s promise to believers that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

He returned to pray the second time, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” He then returned a second time and again found His disciples sleeping. Finally, he went and prayed a third time and repeated His previous prayer. (Slide 5B) This time, however, Luke tells us that angels came and ministered to Him. We aren’t told whether they ministered to Him before or after this third prayer, but I believe it was afterward. The reason I say this is because of what Luke tells us about this third prayer;

And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

This is another of those verses that is mis-read and mis-interpreted. We are told here that Jesus prayed so earnestly that his sweat became “like” great drops of blood. I have heard numerous Christians proclaim that Jesus sweat blood for us. That is NOT what this verse says. It tells us that he prayed so earnestly that he sweat – and he sweat so profusely that it was “like” drops of blood. The book of Hebrews also describes Jesus’ prayers in the garden as:

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, **with loud cries and tears**, to him who was able to save him from death ... (Hebrews 5:7)

This three-fold prayer from Jesus to the Father reminds us of Elijah in the Old Testament when he raised up the son of the widow of Zarephath (**1 Kings 17:21-22**) and Paul in the New Testament (**2 Corinthians 12:8-9**) who prayed earnestly three times that God would heal him.

Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again.” And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. (**1 Kings 17:21-22**)

Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” ... (**2 Corinthians 12:8-9**)

We see that God answered Elijah’s prayer for the life of the young boy, but He answered neither Paul’s nor Jesus’ prayer for themselves.

Now, before we leave this prayer time in the garden, let's have a look at what Jesus was facing emotionally. He knew that He was about to become sin for us and endure the Father's wrath and the pain of the cross, but He also was about to face all of this alone. He started out the night in the upper room with all 12 of His disciples. After going to the garden and heading further in to pray, he only had His three closest friends. But even they deserted Him emotionally by sleeping when He needed them the most. Now, being all alone in the garden, He wrestled with the thought that He would be deserted even by His Heavenly Father who had been by His side since before time began.

## **Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus**

### **Matthew 26:47-56**

<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.

**Mark 14:43-52** – <sup>43</sup>And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. <sup>44</sup>Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him and lead him away under guard." <sup>45</sup>And when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him. <sup>46</sup>And they laid hands on him and seized him. <sup>47</sup>But one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. <sup>48</sup>And Jesus said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? <sup>49</sup>Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." <sup>50</sup>And they all left him and fled. <sup>51</sup>And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, <sup>52</sup>but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

**Luke 22:47-53** – <sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, <sup>48</sup>but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" <sup>49</sup>And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" <sup>50</sup>And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. <sup>51</sup>But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. <sup>52</sup>Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? <sup>53</sup>When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

**John 18:1-14** – <sup>1</sup>When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. <sup>2</sup>Now Judas, who betrayed him,

also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. <sup>3</sup>So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” <sup>5</sup>They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup>So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” <sup>9</sup>This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.” <sup>10</sup>Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) <sup>11</sup>So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?” <sup>12</sup>So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. <sup>13</sup>First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. <sup>14</sup>It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

### Notes:

Notice, first of all, how Judas cheapened everything he touched. His name means “praise,” yet nothing he did was praiseworthy. His was a life of pretense. He pretended for most of three years to be a disciple of Jesus’, yet he didn’t believe in Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah. He claimed to be Jesus’ friend, yet he betrayed Him for the price of a slave. He pretended to be Jesus’ friend, but even his greeting, “Hail, Rabbi,” was without sincerity. In that day, it was customary for a disciple to kiss his teacher as a mark of submission and respect, but Judas’ kiss was not a kiss of reverence, submission, respect, or even friendship. It was a kiss of betrayal. (Slide 6A)

According to John’s gospel account, after Judas betrayed Him, Jesus addressed the crowd saying, “**Whom do you seek?**” When He openly admitted that He was Jesus, a strange thing happened. Jesus’ response was simply “I am.” (Slide 6B) This is the very name of God. We find in Exodus chapter 3 a description of Moses interacting with God at the burning bush. It was there that God instructed Moses to go back to the Israelites and tell them that God has said for them to come out of Egypt. Then Moses asks God:

... If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?

Then God responded,

... “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

In this encounter in the garden when the crowd said that they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth, John tells us that Jesus simply responded, “I AM” and “**they went backward and fell to the ground.**” In other words, Jesus’ proclamation that He is the eternal I AM had such heavenly and earthly force that it drove them backward to the ground. You might say that it “blew them away,” quite literally.

At this point, perhaps emboldened by Jesus’ display of power, Peter drew his sword (*machaira*, a short stabbing sword), and attacked a servant of the High Priest, named Malchus. However, instead of causing a mortal wound, he simply cut off his ear, which Jesus immediately healed. Then in all the confusion and excitement, as Jesus was seized, His disciples fled.

## **Jesus Before Caiaphas and the Council**

### **Matthew 26:57-68**

<sup>57</sup>Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. <sup>58</sup>And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. <sup>59</sup>Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, <sup>60</sup>but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward <sup>61</sup>and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” <sup>62</sup>And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” <sup>63</sup>But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” <sup>64</sup>Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” <sup>65</sup>Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. <sup>66</sup>What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” <sup>67</sup>Then they spit in his face and struck him. <sup>68</sup>Who is it that struck you?”

**Mark 14:53-65** – <sup>53</sup>And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. <sup>54</sup>And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. <sup>55</sup>Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. <sup>56</sup>For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. <sup>57</sup>And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, <sup>58</sup>“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” <sup>59</sup>Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. <sup>60</sup>And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” <sup>61</sup>But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” <sup>62</sup>And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” <sup>63</sup>And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? <sup>64</sup>You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. <sup>65</sup>And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with

**Luke 22:66-71** – <sup>66</sup>When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said, <sup>67</sup>“If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, <sup>68</sup>and if I ask you, you will not answer. <sup>69</sup>But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” <sup>70</sup>So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.” <sup>71</sup>Then they said, “What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.”

**John 18:12-17** – <sup>12</sup>So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. <sup>13</sup>First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. <sup>14</sup>It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people. <sup>15</sup>Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, <sup>16</sup>but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl

who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. <sup>17</sup>The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”

### **Notes:**

Before we look at the trials that convicted and condemned Jesus for being the Son of God, let's consider something. It was in a garden, thousands of years before, that the first Adam disobeyed God and brought sin into the world. Now it was also in a garden that the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) became a life-giving spirit because of his obedience to the Father. It was here, as Paul tells us in the book of Philippians, that He became “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8)

Also consider that Judas pretended to know and follow Jesus, when in reality he didn't really know Him nor was he a follower. How many “Christians” today commit the same deception as Judas, while they attend church, sing praise songs, and give of their time and resources claiming to be followers of Jesus (and genuinely believing that they are), yet they don't really know Him.

Jesus was first taken to Annas. By God's law, he was the High Priest. By Roman law, however, it was Caiaphas who had been chosen High Priest. The trial before Annas was illegal because such trials were forbidden at nighttime. It was also illegal because there were no witnesses present to accuse Jesus.

Keep in mind that both Annas and Caiaphas were Sadducees, not believing in a resurrection. They were also the ones in charge of the temple money changing business which Jesus had condemned and disrupted twice. Would either of them really give Jesus a fair trial?

After the trial before Annas, Jesus was led to the palace of Caiaphas, where the Sanhedrin had been gathered. Here they had a formal trial, complete with witnesses. It was at this point that Peter and John caught up with the proceedings. John went inside the courtyard, but Peter remained outside. Since John was known to the high priest, he was able to convince the guard to let Peter come in as well. It was here that Peter was first asked about knowing Jesus and he denied it.

Meanwhile, inside at Jesus' trial, we see Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin trying to find some witnesses to condemn Jesus. Keep in mind that it is still nighttime. Therefore, this trial, like the one before Annas, was illegal by Jewish law. Also, let us not forget that all this is going on during the Passover celebration. Passover was a commemoration of God's mercy as He rescued the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt. But, did they show Jesus any mercy? Think of that: God had shown the Israelites great mercy, but they were not showing any mercy at all to their God.

Back in chapter 22 we noticed that Jesus, the Passover Lamb, was questioned by all the religious leaders regarding His theology and none of them could find any fault. Now, during these religious trials, Jesus is being examined to determine if He had broken any of the Jewish religious laws and they couldn't find any such evidence.

But they were so determined to find Jesus guilty that they were even willing to accept false testimony against Him. Being unable to find even false testimony against Him, they found two witnesses who testified that they heard Jesus say that He was able to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Keep in mind that the temple they were referring to was still being refurbished by Herod and this reconstruction had been going on for more than 50 years. However, we know that Jesus had not been talking about Herod's temple, but the temple of His own body. And, again, there was nothing illegal about Jesus' statement regarding the temple, even if He had been talking about Herod's temple.



At this point, Caiaphas stood up and asked Jesus to respond to the accusations. When He would not respond, the High Priest commanded Him to answer whether or not He was the Christ, the Son of God. When Jesus said that He was, Caiaphas tore his robes (which the Romans had made an illegal act) and he accused Jesus of blasphemy. (Slide 7A) As a result, the entire council declared Jesus to be worthy of death. Then they spit in His face, some of them hit Him with a closed fist, and others slapped Him. All of this being illegal activity.

Having condemned Jesus of blasphemy, they led Him away to appear before Pilate. The reason for doing this is that the Jews were forbidden to execute criminals accused of breaking their religious laws. Only the Romans could mete out capital punishment.

## **Peter's Failure**

### **Matthew 26:69-75**

**<sup>69</sup>Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." <sup>70</sup>But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." <sup>71</sup>And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>72</sup>And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." <sup>73</sup>After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." <sup>74</sup>Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. <sup>75</sup>And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.**

**Mark 14:66-72** – <sup>66</sup>And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, <sup>67</sup>and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." <sup>68</sup>But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. <sup>69</sup>And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." <sup>70</sup>But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." <sup>71</sup>But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." <sup>72</sup>And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

**Luke 22:54-62** – <sup>54</sup>Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance. <sup>55</sup>And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. <sup>56</sup>Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, "This man also was with him." <sup>57</sup>But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." <sup>58</sup>And a little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." <sup>59</sup>And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." <sup>60</sup>But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup>And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." <sup>62</sup>And he went out and wept bitterly.

**John 18:18-27** – <sup>18</sup>Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself. <sup>19</sup>The

high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. <sup>20</sup>Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. <sup>21</sup>Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.” <sup>22</sup>When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?” <sup>24</sup>Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. <sup>25</sup>Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” <sup>26</sup>One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” <sup>27</sup>Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

### **Notes:**

Meanwhile, as Peter sat in the courtyard awaiting the outcome of the trial being conducted inside, he stood by the fire warming himself. It was here that someone else accused him of being one of Jesus’ disciples and Peter denied it a second time. Later, one of the servants of the high priest who had been with the band of soldiers in the garden, and a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter cut off, accused Peter of being one of the disciples, and Peter denied knowing Jesus for the third time. He even called down a curse on himself and swore an oath that he did not know Jesus! Immediately, the rooster crowed. According to John’s gospel account it was still early morning. It apparently, was at this point in time that the soldiers were leading Jesus to Pilot’s headquarters. So, when Peter denied knowing Jesus for the third time and the rooster crowed, as they were leading Jesus away, He turned and looked at Peter. And Peter saw Him look.

Peter then remembered what Jesus had told him, that before the rooster crowed, he would deny knowing Jesus three times, Peter went out and wept bitterly. (Slide 7B)

### **So What?**

Let’s talk about Judas for a minute. Nobody wants to name their little baby Judas. Even though the name means “praise,” whenever we think of that name today, they think of the selfish person who betrayed Jesus for a month’s wages. What was Judas’ real crime, anyway. Was it greed, betrayal, phony pretense, or simply unbelief? Certainly, it was all of these things. But the root of it all came down to the fact that Judas was focused on himself and didn’t care about anybody else. He also didn’t care about God, and he certainly didn’t know God. So, what was he good at? He was a great pretender.

He pretended to be one of Jesus’ disciples. He pretended to care about the poor (he claimed he wanted to sell the ointment that Mary used so that he could give to the poor.) He even pretended to show honor and respect to Jesus when he betrayed Him with a kiss. He probably thought of himself as one of the disciples, but he wasn’t. You see, a disciple is a learner and Judas did not learn anything from Jesus, certainly not from His teaching and definitely not from Jesus’ example. The problem is that he was too focused on himself.

How about you? Are you a disciple of Jesus? Are you learning daily what it is that God wants to teach you? Do you put your effort into daily becoming more focused on Him? Or, are you a great pretender, like Judas?

Now, let’s talk about what Jesus went through the last couple of days of His earthly life. Once the Last Supper was over, we could characterize Jesus’ life as one of loneliness and desertion. Have you ever felt

like you are walking this life path by yourself, with no one to support and encourage you? Jesus can certainly identify with that. When you're alone, either physically or emotionally, you can reach out to Him and He will understand. But what we read about in this 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew's gospel account is only the tip of the iceberg for Jesus. What we will learn in a couple of weeks is the soul crushing agony that Jesus went through when He was deserted by His Father.

Now let's talk about our prayer life for a moment. Most of us have a difficult time carving out even a few minutes each day to pray. My prayer life was miserably inadequate until God allowed Conie and me to go through a spiritual valley several years ago. During that time, I learned (mostly from Conie) how to pour out my heart to God. I learned how to pray without pretense and I learned how important it is to set aside a certain time each day to dedicate myself to prayer. Two amazing things happened as a result. The first is that I found myself talking to God throughout the day like I never had before. The other amazing thing that happened is that I began to hear God speaking to my heart. The more I poured out to Him, the more He opened up my ears.

### **Now What?**

Let me offer you two challenges today. The first is to set aside a specific time of the day that you will go to God in prayer, every day! It doesn't have to be for ½ hour each day. I'm only asking you to commit to doing it every day, even if for only a few minutes. And, if you married, I strongly urge you to set this time aside to pray with your husband or wife, every day. Our time is 8:00 in the evening. Conie and I meet together every day at that time. Sometimes one or the other of us can't pray for one reason or another, but we still meet together and one of us prays.

The second challenge is to commit yourself to becoming a disciple of Jesus. Not just a believer, not just a follower, but a learner. If you're not growing in the Lord every day, you're falling back. Just as a very charismatic preacher I once heard say in his sermon,

Your Christian life is never standing still, you're either moving forward, or you're moving back!

Which way is your Christian life moving?

Are you a disciple of Jesus, or are you just a follower?

**Let's pray.**

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