

Were You There Lenten Devotional
Friday March 15,2024
Matthew 26:14-30
Submitted by Nona Culpepper

Scripture:
Matthew 26:14-30

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14 Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests **15** and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. **16** From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

The Last Supper

17 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

18 He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” **19** So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. **21** And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?”

23 Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. **24** The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?”

Jesus answered, “You have said so.”

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. **28** This is my blood of the [a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. **29** I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Devotion:

Watch and pray. That ye enter not into temptation.

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

The spirit is willing because the Holy Spirit gives us hope, faith and love.

God made our body of mind , heart and soul to be able to make decisions. We must watch and pray to be able to make right decisions; that ye enter not into temptation.

Not as I will but as thy wilt.

The spirit is willing.

Thy will be done.

Were You There Lenten Devotional

March 16,2024

Submitted by Patti Lyle

Scripture:

John 18:1-18

Jesus Arrested

18 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. **3** So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

5 "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) **6** When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they said.

8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." **9** This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."^[a]

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

11 Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him **13** and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. **14** Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Peter's First Denial

15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, **16** but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

17 "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter.

He replied, "I am not."

18 It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

Devotion:

v. 2-3: "Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees."

Judas, Judas, Judas. Don't we all love to hate on Judas and lay a lot of blame at his feet? Guess what? Jesus didn't. Jesus knew when He chose Judas what was going on. Jesus knew Judas was open to being deceived and swayed. Jesus loved him anyway. They ate meals together. They traveled together. Judas watched as Jesus healed, cast out demons, and loved the outcasts. Judas watched Jesus be a humble servant. He watched and waited for Jesus to show His warrior king side. But Jesus just loved on Judas. He taught him God's love. He shared with him God's truths. At the last supper, He washed Judas' feet just like the other 11. Jesus served His betrayer. Jesus loved Judas even when Judas kissed Him on the cheek to identify Jesus to his captors (in Mark and Matthew's gospels). Judas showing up in that garden with a slew of folks to arrest Jesus broke His heart. But He knew. And He loved. And had Judas ever asked, Jesus would have forgiven. That's our Savior. He knows, He loves and He forgives when we betray Him if we ask. If Jesus can do that to one who betrayed Him to His death, we can too.

Were You There Lenten Devotional
Sunday March 17,2024
Mark 14:32-72
Submitted by Bro. Jamie

Scripture:
Mark 14:32-72

Gethsemane

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." **33** He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. **34** "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. **36** “Abba,[a] Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour? **38** Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. **40** When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. **42** Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Jesus Arrested

43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” **45** Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. **46** The men seized Jesus and arrested him. **47** Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48 “Am I leading a rebellion,” said Jesus, “that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? **49** Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” **50** Then everyone deserted him and fled.

51 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, **52** he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Jesus Before the Sanhedrin

53 They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. **54** Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. **56** Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

57 Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: **58** “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’” **59** Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” **61** But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

62 “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

63 The high priest tore his clothes. “Why do we need any more witnesses?” he asked. **64** “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

They all condemned him as worthy of death. **65** Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.

Peter Disowns Jesus

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. **67** When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

“You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said.

68 But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway.^[b]

69 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” **70** Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”

71 He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

72 Immediately the rooster crowed the second time.[c] Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice[d] you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Devotion:

It sounds wrong to say that these last 40 verses of Mark 14 are beautiful, but they are. Yes, they talk about Jesus’ struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane, His betrayal by Judas, His arrest, ten of the disciples leaving Him, His mockery of a trial, the false witnesses that testified against Him, and finally - Peter’s scared declaration with an oath and some cursing, that he did not know Jesus. Sounds horrible, yet sometimes horrible is necessary.

Jesus had to suffer and die for us. If He hadn’t, we would be ETERNALLY separated from God with no chance at salvation. We could do good 24/7 and still not be good enough to earn what He suffered and died to give us. Sometimes, horrible is necessary, and that’s what makes it beautiful, and that’s how love is shown.

In verse 60, during the trial, the High Priest asked Jesus if He was The Messiah, the Son of the Blessed. Jesus answered, “I AM, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of the sky” (One New Man Bible). In those few words, He declared Himself God and Savior and our coming Redeemer. The Jews saw it as blasphemy because their religious spirit would not allow them to see who Jesus really was. His answer sealed His fate, AND ours! He suffered horribly, but from that came the beautiful love story of our redemption and reconciliation with the Father. Sometimes, horrible is necessary.

Perhaps you are about to face pain and suffering, and all you need is others to pray with you, but they all appear to be asleep to your circumstances. Perhaps you are facing the end of a friendship that culminates with a kiss and a betrayal at almost the same moment. Perhaps your suffering will make others guilty by association, so instead of standing with you, they flee in every direction, even denying they know you. What do you do? Look in the mirror! In that mirror you will see the result of Jesus’s horrible times, and that should give you some hope. You! You are the result of what He suffered, and now, you are saved, whole, redeemed, reconciled, justified, blessed, filled with Holy Spirit, and seated in Heavenly places with God in Christ. Let that bring joy and peace and life to your suffering. Just like Jesus, what you go through will not only work out for your good in the end, but it will help bring others to freedom. Just like you were worth it for Jesus to suffer, those who you will help are worth it as well. In the end, love is the result of your horrible times. Isn’t that beautiful!

Prayer:

Lord, the Garden of Gethsemane, the arrest of Jesus, Jesus before His enemies, and Peter disowning Jesus all to place to reveal your love to us and the gift of salvation. Thank you Lord for the gift of your redeeming life changing love! In your name, I pray. Amen.