

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus in Gethsemane

Matthew 26:1-56

Opening

Gathering: What would you do if you knew that you were soon to be arrested and executed for something you had not done?

Today's Focus: Jesus chose to be obedient to the Father's calling, even unto a pain-filled death.

Key Verses: *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

Do you not think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way? Matthew 26:53-54

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Jesus' Last Day Approaches (*Matthew 21*)

How did Jesus begin His last week in Jerusalem?

Matthew 21:1, 6-11 = Welcomed with great fanfare on *Palm Sunday*

How did the Jewish leaders react to Jesus' wise teachings in the temple?

Matthew 21: 23, 45-46 = They were offended and looked for a way to arrest Him

Were all of the Jewish leaders upset with Jesus?

John 12:42 = No, some believed in Him but stayed quiet

What was the real reason they wouldn't stand up for Jesus?

John 12:43 = *They loved praise from men more than praise from God*

Traps for Jesus (*Matthew 22*)

How did the Jewish leaders plan to arrest Jesus despite His popularity as a prophet?

Matthew 22:15 = They tried to trap and discredit Him with His own words

What are some examples of traps set by the Jewish leaders?

Matthew 22:16-17 (16-22) = Pharisees and Herodians asked - pay taxes or give to God?

Matthew 22:23, 28 (23-33) = Sadducees asked difficult question on resurrection they rejected

Matthew 22:34-36 (34-40) = Pharisees asked Jesus to pick the greatest commandment

How did Jesus put an end to their fruitless efforts?

Matthew 22:41-46 = Asked a question about the Messiah they couldn't answer

Plans of the Jewish Leaders (*Matthew 26:1-5*)

How did the Jewish leaders' plans for Jesus change after being unable to trap Him?

Matthew 26:3-4 = Plotted to make a surprise arrest and to kill Jesus

Why didn't they carry out their plan immediately? = Wait until after Feast - lasted 7 days after Passover

Matthew 26:5 = Didn't want a riot with so many people in town for the Passover

Did Jesus know what was going to happen and when?

Matthew 26:1-2 = Yes. Crucified, not murdered. During Passover, not after.

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Unexpected Help (*Matthew 26:6-16*)

How did the leaders get some unexpected help?

Matthew 26:14-16 = Judas Iscariot (Jesus' treasurer) agreed to turn Jesus over

Iscariot - Man of Kerioth = In Judea 12 mi south of Hebron – Only disciple not from Galilee(?)

What apparently influenced Judas' financial decision to betray Jesus?

John 12:4-8 (Matthew 26:6-13) = He realized that Jesus wasn't the political savior he hoped

What was significant about the price Judas was paid for giving Jesus to be killed?

Exodus 21:32 = 30 silver coins was price if a servant was killed

Judas Uncovered (*Matthew 26:20-25; John 13:23-30*)

Did Jesus know what Judas was planning to do?

Matthew 26:20-21 = Yes, He told his disciples that one of them would betray Him

Did they begin to accuse each other or guess that it might be Judas?

Matthew 26:22 = No, each one wondered if it might be him (weak faiths)

How did Jesus identify the betrayer? = John reclined at Jesus' right (leaned back)

John 13:23-26 = By handing the dipped bread to Judas

During Passover ritual, master of feast would take a flat cake of unleavened bread

After adding pieces of lamb and bitter herbs, he'd roll it and dip it onto a bitter sauce

Beginning with the most honored guest, he'd repeat until he gave one to everyone

The lamb anticipated God's Lamb that would bring salvation to sinners

By accepting the bread a guest acknowledged his sin and welcomed God's forgiveness

Did Judas accept Jesus' forgiveness when it was offered?

John 13:27-30 = No, Satan entered into him and he left to do his job

What comment did Jesus have about the one who would betray Him?

Matthew 26:23-24 = *It would be better for him if he had not been born*

Loyalty of the Other Eleven (*Matthew 26:31-35*)

Could the others be proud of their loyalty now that they knew they wouldn't betray Jesus?

Matthew 26:31-32 = No, Jesus said they would all fall away (fulfill Zechariah 13:7)

Who was overly self-confident in the faith he had built up himself?

Matthew 26:33-34 = Peter claimed he had a stronger faith than all the others

How strong did Peter say his faith and loyalty was?

Matthew 26:35 = He would even die for Jesus; the others said the same

What was wrong about the disciples boasting of their strong faith?

Ephesians 2:8 = Faith comes from God, not from ourselves

Garden Terrors (*Matthew 26:36-39*)

After sharing His Last Supper with His disciples, where did Jesus take them and why?

Matthew 26:30, 36 = To pray in Gethsemane (*olive press*) Garden on Mount of Olives

How did Jesus feel about His impending suffering and the desertion of His disciples?

Matthew 26:37-38 = Revealed His deep sorrow to P, J & J (other 8 stopped earlier)

How were Jesus' feelings similar to those of His ancestor King David?

Psalms 55:1-5 = *My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death assail me*

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A Man of Sorrows (*Isaiah 53*)

How else was Jesus like David in looking for relief from His sorrow?

Matthew 26:39 = He turned to God in prayer - Fell to ground in distress

What was the cause of His suffering?

Isaiah 53:3-5 = Weighed down in sorrow by the burden of our sins

How deeply troubled was Jesus? = hematidrosis - blood and sweat mingled during extreme agony

Luke 22:44 = *His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground*

Not My Will, But Yours (*Matthew 26:42, 44*)

For what did Jesus pray?

Matthew 26:42, 44 = 3 times for cup to be taken from Him if within Father's will

Knowing that God's plan included this suffering and death, why did Jesus bother asking for an option?

Mark 14:36 = *Daddy, Father, everything is possible for you* – God could even change plans

Would it be the Father's will to take this cup from Jesus?

Isaiah 53:10-11 = No, *It was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer*

How did the Father help Jesus through this time?

Luke 22:43 = Sent an angel to strengthen Him

Did Jesus have a choice of whether to accept His cup or not?

John 10:17-18 = *I lay it down of my own accord*

What did Jesus' prayer show about Him?

Psalms 40:8 = His perfect obedience and desire to do the Father's will

How does this relate to our own lives?

Philippians 2:5-8 = Same attitude as Jesus - servant, humbled, obedient to death

How was Jesus' submission and obedience critical for us?

Hebrews 5:7-9 = Through them He *became the source of eternal salvation*

The Faithful and Vigilant Disciples (*Matthew 26:40-46*)

Did the disciples understand the grief that Jesus was experiencing and its cause?

Matthew 26:40, 43 = No, they relaxed and slept

How did Jesus use their lack of vigilance to warn them of upcoming temptations?

Matthew 26:41 = *Watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation*

What temptation was Jesus warning His disciples about?

Isaiah 53:6 = Deserting and betraying Jesus

What excuse did the disciples have for not keeping watch and praying?

Mark 14:40 = None - they didn't realize the severity of what was about to happen

Did the disciples remain vigilant after Jesus' second warning?

Matthew 26:45-46 = No, went back to sleep; Jesus woke them before Judas came

Torches, Swords and Clubs (*Matthew 26:47*)

How long did they have to wait for Judas after Jesus predicted the coming of His betrayer?

Matthew 26:47 = *While He was still speaking*

What was significant about Judas arriving with a large crowd sent from the chief priests and elders?

Matthew 26:19-20 = This was Passover Feast night, Faithful Jews with family and full bellies

Did the chief priests and elders send their servants while they stayed with their families?

John 18:3 = No, some of the religious officials were in the crowd to make sure they got Him

Note: Passover is during full moon, Torches needed only to find Jesus if he ran and hid

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Betrayed with a Kiss (*Matthew 26:48-50*)

How did Judas know where to find Jesus?

John 18:2 = Jesus frequently went to Gethsemane to pray

Without photographs, how would the "temple police" know which man to arrest?

Matthew 26:48-49 = Judas identified Jesus with a kiss, a normal form of greeting

Did Jesus know what Judas was doing? = In Matthew, Jesus called Judas His friend

Luke 22:47-48 (*Matthew 26:50*) = Yes and pointed it out to Judas

How much resistance did Jesus offer to those trying to arrest Him? = He told them to let the others go

John 18:4-9 = None, Even went out to them, surprising them

What other prophesy did Jesus' response fulfill?

Isaiah 53:7 = *Led like a lamb to the slaughter...did not open His mouth* - in defense

I'll Save You (*Matthew 26:51-56*)

Who impetuously seized the opportunity to show Jesus his strong support?

John 18:10 = Peter defended Jesus by cutting off a servant's ear with a sword

Note: Only John mentions it was Peter. = John written last, likely after Peter was executed.

Other gospels were written while Peter was alive. = Didn't name to protect Peter(?)

Why did Peter have the sword? = A small ceremonial sword to prepare the Passover lamb

Luke 22:35-38 = Jesus told the disciples to bring one to fulfill Isaiah 53:12

Was Peter trying to warn the crowd by just cutting off an ear?

Luke 22:49-50 = No, the fisherman wasn't just aiming for an ear

How did Jesus thank Peter for defending Him?

Matthew 26:52-54 = He didn't, He scolded Peter for interfering with God's plan

What about the poor servant with the missing ear?

Luke 22:51 = Jesus *touched the man's ear and healed him*

What did Jesus have to say to those arresting Him?

Matthew 26:55-56a = Why use force to arrest me? Why not in the temple?

What prophesy of Jesus was fulfilled at the end of this story? = Fulfilled Zechariah 13:7

Matthew 26:56b = *Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled*

How anxious were the disciples to desert Jesus?

Mark 14:50-52 = One fled so quickly he left without his clothes

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I been in deep distress? Did I turn to God as Jesus did?
(*Matthew 26:36-39; Deut. 4:7; 2 Samuel 12:15-23; Psalm 4:1; Philippians 4:6-7; James 5:13-18*)
2. When and how have I helped a friend through a difficult time?
(*Matthew 26:38; Ruth 1:8-17; 1 Samuel 20:1-4, 27-33, 41-42; Job 2:11-13; Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:10; James 5:19-20*)
3. Can Jesus count on me to watch and pray or will I lose interest and sleep like the disciples?
(*Matthew 26:40-45; Exodus 17:8-13; Hebrews 10:36-39; James 1:12; 5:7-11; Revelation 2:2-3*)
4. When and how have I betrayed, denied or deserted Jesus?
(*Matthew 26:47-50, 56b, 69-75; Luke 12:8-9; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Timothy 4:14-15; Revelation 2:2-5*)
5. When have I started to take matters in my own hands when God had a better plan?
(*Matthew 26:51-54; 1 Samuel 10:1, 8; 13:7-14; 15:1-3, 7-26; Luke 12:35-48; Acts 16:6-10*)