

Episode #934 Matthew 26 Part 7-Betrayed By Affection

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord had led His disciples back to their campsite at the Mount of Olives, and now He was facing the momentous events of this night in prayer.

III. Praying in Gethsemane. Matthew 26:36-46.

- A. Verse 41. This warning was true, and illustrates what they had failed to understand earlier in the evening. One might well be ready to sacrifice in one’s mind when one is calm and not yet in danger, but when the danger comes, fright and the desire for self-preservation can take over. They were willing in advance, but the time of trial was about to come, and they would all flee from it. “Spirit” is the Greek *pneuma*, connected with the mind. The mind is ready to do what is right, but the flesh is weak, Greek *asthenEs*, which can mean impotent, feeble, or even sick.
- B. Verse 42. As profound as the agony was that He was anticipating, and indeed it was profound beyond what we can know, I do not believe this is what He meant by the cup, but rather the fact that the cup was facing Him already, in Gethsemane, and short of the cross, and He desired it be taken from Him. Yet even then He is willing to submit to the Father’s will, if He does not choose to now deliver Him. Christ Himself showed His dependence on and trust in the Father, and was not disappointed. Should we do any less? When He asks us to trust even when we don’t understand, does He not ask us to do what He has done before us? “Will” is *thelema*, desire or wish.
- C. Verse 43. “Asleep” is *katheudo* again, meaning to fall asleep purposefully. They perhaps tried to watch and pray, but they were too tired, and gave in to the temptation to relax and fell asleep. We have all experienced our eyes being heavy when we are sleepy. Luke, not a disciple himself, gives them the most generous excuse, telling us they were asleep for sorrow, Luke 22:45. What was the use of staying awake and watching when the Lord assured them He was about to die anyway? Luke’s brief words tell us just how deeply the Lord’s words on this night had touched the hearts of His disciples, in spite of the fact that they clearly did not take them all in or understand them all. They were full of grief at what He told them was coming, and this as much as anything had worn them down to where they had no will to fight to stay awake. Still, however, that meant they abandoned the Lord to keep watch alone in His hour of suspense and agony.
- D. Verse 44. This shows that He prayed this same thing three times. We do not believe that He asked three times not to have to die for our sins, but rather that the weight on Him at that time would not drag Him down to death right there in the garden.
- E. Verse 45. “Sleep on” is again *katheudo*, indicating purposefully sleeping. “Rest” is *anapauo*. The Lord gives true rest, as He cried in Matthew 11:28. Yet these rested when He told them not to rest, and so were not ready for the trial when it came, as He warned them. The Lord’s words here are sarcasm, for there will be no more rest for His disciples this night. Having passed the trial in the garden, the hour for His great work of suffering and death has now come. This was the hour He spoke of as coming in the future, as we read in the book of John (2:4, 12:23, 12:27, 16:32. See also 7:30, 8:20, and 13:1). John, presenting Christ as God, emphasizes the fact that He knew and

was waiting for that hour in advance. Matthew has not mentioned the hour before now, but since we believe John was written first, all should recognize the reference. By “sinners” He meant both the religious leaders, their stooges, and the Romans. The religious leaders were quick to proclaim those who opposed them as sinners, but the reality was that they themselves were completely devoted to sin, and never did they show it more than on this night.

- F. Verse 46. “Rise” means go into action. This shows that His words, “sleep on now and take your rest” in the last verse were spoken sarcastically. This was His true command. By “My betrayer” He meant, of course, Judas.

IV. Betrayed in the Garden. Matthew 26:47-56.

- A. Verse 47. Again we have the nickname “the twelve” for these disciples. It is emphasizing the stunning fact. This was not just one of His disciples who betrayed Him. If it said that, it would be sad enough. But this was one of the twelve themselves! Shocking, horrifying, and sad.
 - 1. They knew that He forbade His disciples to even carry weapons (though on this night He had allowed them a pair of swords, Luke 22:38), but they wanted to make the Lord out to be a very dangerous criminal and leader of sedition. They were making this great show of sending an armed force to arrest Him.
 - 2. These chief priests and elders of the people were the very wicked ones who conspired against Him in verse 3. Almost universally it is assumed that it was Roman soldiers who arrested Him, yet none of the synoptic gospels have a word to say about any such thing. The only possible hint at this is that John uses a Roman word for the number of soldiers who came to arrest Him, but this could easily be explained by the temple guard ordering themselves after the Roman pattern. The temple guard were the only soldiers Judea was allowed to have, and they were supposed to be a religious force to guard the temple. They were directly under the control of the corrupt cabal that planned the Lord’s betrayal and unjust execution.
- B. Verse 48. The Lord had refused to give these wicked men a sign when they asked for it, saving the sign of Jonas the prophet, Matthew 12:39, 16:1-4. Now, they seek a sign from Judas the traitor, and he is more than willing to give them one of his own invention. They prefer this sign, not knowing that it will help to bring about the Lord’s true sign in its time. Yet they will not believe when they see it, so that sign will do them little good.
 - 1. “Kiss” this is literally the Greek word for affectionate love, as between friends *phileo*. They used love as a figure for a kiss, while we use it as a figure for sex! But they had a separate word for sexual love, *eros*. The only time the literal word for a kiss, *philema*, was used regarding Judas’ kiss was when the Lord referred to it in Luke 22:48. Judas uses the figure, letting the soldiers know that he will pretend to be affectionate towards Him, but they are to know that he really is thus betraying Him.
 - 2. Did Judas remember how the Lord had easily slipped away from those who sought to kill Him before? Perhaps this was another reason for the great crowd coming to arrest Him. Not that any crowd could have overcome God’s power, if He thought to put it forward!

- C. Verse 49. “Came” is again Matthew’s word *proserchomai*. He approached the King as His betrayer! “Greetings” in Greek is *chaire*, rejoice! A common greeting, but there was nothing to rejoice in for either Judas or the Lord in this meeting. *Rabbi* is the Hebrew for a teacher. Judas is the only one to call Him this in Matthew. (Peter calls Him this in Mark, and multiple disciples in John.) “Kissed” is the word *kataphileo*, meaning either to kiss repeatedly, or to kiss with tenderness and affection. Judas was putting on a great show of his love for the Lord, all the while his true heart was shriveled by hate. We know from John 13:27 that Satan had entered Judas for the carrying out of this work. Kissing with affection outwardly while a dagger to destroy is held in the heart is classic work of the original murderer and liar.
- D. Verse 50. “Comrade” or “companion” is perhaps a better word than “friend.” This word is used only in Matthew, and never for what we would think of as close friends. Never is it used when the other party is acting like a true friend. A true friend is a different word. Bullinger says this is not a question, but an ellipsis, “*Do that* for which thou art here.” “Came” is *proserchomai* again. The crowd now approached the King to arrest Him, and carry out this travesty of injustice. “Laid hands” or seized Him with their hands. Not the same word as when hands are laid on for healing or identification purposes.

V. Conclusion: Three times the Lord’s three most privileged disciples went to sleep rather than praying with Him! Then, it was too late, and the soldiers arrived. They tried to make the Lord out as a dangerous criminal by the crowd they sent to arrest Him. Judas, the traitor, feigned affection for the Lord to mark Him out to His enemies! What a sad reality his hypocrisy was. Let us ever remain faithful to our Lord, and beware the cunning wiles of those who are like Judas.