

ARRESTED

MATTHEW 26



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

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The Fellowship of Ailbe

Arrested: Matthew 26
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Matthew 26: Introduction

In Matthew 26, we see Jesus preparing Himself and His disciples for the great events of redemption: His crucifixion and resurrection, and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus bolstered His disciples' confidence in the Word and spoke to them of the coming of the Kingdom, even as He submitted to the Word of God for His arrest and trial. His prayer in the garden shows how keenly aware He was of the depth of the suffering He was about to endure. But His calm resignation and resolute faith demonstrate that He trusted the Word of God and was already focused on the greater promises of the coming Kingdom.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Once More, for Emphasis

Pray Psalm 143.1, 2.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.
Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

Sing Psalm 143.1, 2.

(Divinum Mysterium: [*Of the Father's Love Begotten*](#))

Hear my earnest prayer, O Lord! Give ear to my pleas for grace!
In Your faithfulness and righteousness, look upon me with Your face!
Enter not to judgment with Your servant, Lord, with Your loving servant, Lord:
None can stand before Your Word.

Read and meditate on Matthew 26.1-5.

Prepare.

1. What did Jesus say to His disciples?
2. Who gathered with Caiaphas, and why?

Meditate.

Two days to go (v. 2). Two days until the most significant and momentous event of all history will play out in a remote Roman backwater, before an angry crowd of lost people, people not that different from you and me.

Matthew taps the brakes in his narrative, slowing down the action even more to give plenty of time for the importance of these events to sink in. The time he covers lengthens, as does the verbiage of his narrative. He is saying to us, “Slow down. Pay attention. All that I’ve written before has been pointing to this.”

As if to punctuate that point, Jesus once again, as He had beginning in chapter 16, told His disciples what was about to take place. In two days, during the Feast of Passover, the Lamb of God would be slain for the sins of the world (v. 2). No mention of the resurrection. No promises about His imminent return. Here Jesus sought to impress on His disciples the awful reality of what was about to occur, so that when it did, they would know that He had not walked into a trap, but was merely following the course laid out for Him from before the foundation of the world.

Matthew heightens the tension in these first five verses by switching quickly from Jesus’ camp to that of the “chief priests, scribes, and the elders” – the first time we’ve seen all these people mentioned together. A gathering has been convened (v. 3), and a course of action is being decided and set in motion. Jesus must die, but if possible, in a way that will keep “the people” from going into an uproar (vv. 4, 5). All the religious leaders were united in purpose, just as Jesus had predicted they would be (Matt. 21.45).

It should be very clear to us just Who is orchestrating these events.

Reflect.

1. Why did Jesus emphasize His death once again to His disciples? What should we learn from this?
2. What were the religious leaders trying to accomplish? What were they trying to avoid?
3. Who's in charge here, and how do we know it?

What did they consult together? That they might seize him secretly, or that they might put him to death? Both, for they feared the people. Thus they waited for the feast to be past, for they said, "Not on the feast day," lest he should make the Passion conspicuous. They were afraid of causing an uproar. Note that they never were afraid of the judgment of God but only the judgment of people. John Chrysostom (344-407), The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 79.3

I thank You, Lord, that You are in control, and I don't have to be afraid of anything as I...

Pray Psalm 143.3-12.

Meditate on Jesus' work of redemption. Let your soul cry out to Him for faith and courage. Look into His face, then face your day in the knowledge that He is with you.

Sing Psalm 143.3-12.

Psalm 143.3-12 (Divinum Mysterium: [*Of the Father's Love Begotten*](#))

See, the enemy pursued my soul; he has crushed and cast me down.
He has made me sit in darkness, Lord, like those dead and in the ground.
Thus my spirit faints within me, Lord, faints within my weary soul,
and my heart is no more whole.

I recall the days of old; on Your works I meditate –
all the wonders of Your mighty hand, works both small, O Lord, and great.
Lord, my thirsty soul cries out to You! To You, Lord, I reach my hand
in a dry and weary land.

Answer quickly, O my Lord! Do not hide from me Your face!
For my spirit fails and I am like those who do not know Your grace.
In the morning let me hear Your steadfast love; Lord I trust You, show my way!
I lift up my soul and pray!

Rescue me from all my enemies! Lord, I refuge seek in You.
Let me know Your will, O Lord my God; make me know what I must do.
Let Your Spirit lead me on to level ground; save my life! Preserve my soul!
Rescue, Lord, and make me whole!

2 A Beautiful Work, and an Ugly One

Pray Psalm 27.4-6.

One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.
For in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock.
And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Sing Psalm 27.4-6.

(Joanna: *Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise*)
One thing we request but to dwell with You, Lord,
Your beauty to test and to think on Your Word.
In trouble You hide us secure in Your grace;
no foe may o'erride us: We sing of Your praise!

Read Matthew 26.1-16; meditate on verses 6-16.

Prepare.

1. How did Jesus describe what the woman did for Him?
2. Why did Judas betray Jesus to the religious leaders?

Meditate.

We know from John 12.1-8 that Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointed Jesus. We also know, from that same passage, that the disciple inciting the grumbling at that time was Judas. Surely we can expect that he was cheerleading the complaining here, too.

Here is a microcosm of the world we live in: The purest, humblest beauty exists in close proximity to the most self-centered ugliness imaginable.

And the focus of each is Jesus.

This is probably a different woman, since Mary's anointing occurred six days before the Passover, even before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and she is reported to have anointed His feet, not His head (as here). This seems to have happened on the day of the Passover meal.

Did the woman know that she was "pouring this fragrant oil" on Jesus to prepare Him for His burial (v. 12)? We don't know; but that's how Jesus interpreted it. If she *did* know, then she was one of the few disciples who understood why Jesus had come and what He was about to do.

The aroma of the “fragrant oil”, poured over the head of Jesus, surely would have filled the house, attracting the attention of everyone there. (Was Paul thinking of this incident in 2 Cor. 2.15, 16?) Jesus said she did a “good work” for Him (v. 10, ἔργον καλόν, *ergon kalon*). This could also be translated a “beautiful” work, which it surely was, as most in the house would have experienced it as pleasant, even delightful. But as a work of beauty – like all true works of beauty – it points beyond itself to the one true Beautiful One. So significant was the woman’s gesture, that Jesus made a point of telling us that this self-denying act of beauty would always accompany the telling of the Gospel (v. 13). It reminds us that the Gospel is *the* beautiful thing, because it connects us with *the* Beautiful One.

Meanwhile, Judas fumed. In a snit, he left the gathering and went to the religious leaders, intent on getting something for himself out of this whole Jesus thing (vv. 14-16). After all, since he’d lost the opportunity to pilfer any proceeds from the sale of the fragrant oil (Jn. 12.6), he’d get what he wanted by some other course. His betrayal of Jesus ranks as one of the ugliest acts in all of human history. We’ll see those thirty pieces of silver again, once they’ve fulfilled their purpose in the history of redemption.

The woman’s offering is an act we’re all capable of, in the power of God’s Spirit, using beautiful and good works to point others to Jesus. But Judas’ ugly betrayal is also within our reach, unless we guard our souls against self-interest or the fear of men.

Reflect.

1. Why do people experience “good” and “beautiful” as desirable things?
2. How can we keep from being led into sin by self-serving motives?
3. How would you counsel a new believer to prepare each day to live for things good and beautiful, and to avoid things ugly and self-serving?

The ointment with an agreeable odor represents what the faithful do for God. This very work of the faithful of God, which is ointment, becomes something else for the good of humanity—for instance, almsgiving, visits to the sick, welcoming strangers, humility, gentleness, pardon, and so forth. These are things that benefit human beings. Origen (185-254), Commentary on Matthew 77

Lord, give me grace to do beautiful work today, work that points to You, as I...

Pray Psalm 27.1-3, 7-14.

Wait on the Lord in prayer, until you see more of His beauty and realize more of His strength. Seek His face, then ask Him to guide and strengthen you for the day ahead.

Sing Psalm 27.1-3, 7-14.

Psalm 27.1-3, 7-14 (Joanna: [Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise](#))

Lord, You are our Light and our Savior most dear!
You guard us with might; therefore, whom shall we fear?
Though evil surround us, our enemies fall;
no harm shall confound us when on You we call.

Hear, Lord, when we cry and be gracious, we pray!
Lord, do not deny us Your favor this day!
Our help, our salvation, though others may fall,
preserve our good station when on You we call.

Lord, teach us; Lord, lead us because of our foes!
Hear, Lord, when we plead for release from their woes.
Had we not believed all Your goodness to see,
our heart sorely grieved and in turmoil would be.

Wait, wait on the Lord; persevere in His grace.
Hold fast to His Word; seek His radiant face.
Be strong, set your heart to abide in His Word;
His grace He imparts; therefore, wait on the Lord.

3 On Top of It All

Pray Psalm 126.5, 6.

Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves *with him*.

Sing Psalm 126.6.

(Truro: [*Shout for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*](#))

They who in tears of sorrow sow, and cast their seed on every hand,
with joy shall reach their heav'nly home, and bring the harvest of their land.

Read Matthew 26.1-30; meditate on verses 17-30.

Prepare.

1. Why makes this supper so significant?
2. How did the supper end?

Meditate.

We can see that Jesus is sovereign in the details that are unfolding in these final days of His earthly ministry, as we notice the way He arranged to eat the Passover with His disciples. He chose that “certain man” (v. 18) to have a room in his house, where the disciples could make ready for their meal with the Lord. He orchestrated all the events of the evening, directing them toward His arrest and crucifixion, but in a larger sense, to the salvation of the world. Jesus is descending into hell; but He remains on top of the world.

Jesus went to that supper knowing that Judas would betray Him (vv. 20, 21). It was important that Judas should know that Jesus knew, without His making a public scene. Notice Jesus’ affirmative response to Judas’ question, “Rabbi, is it I?” “You have said it” (v. 25). It’s like we might say, “You said it!” Jesus will say the exact same phrase before the high priest later in this chapter, to affirm the priest’s demand: “Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” “You said it!”

A recent poll revealed that 30% of those who describe themselves as evangelical and born-again do not believe that Jesus is God. Maybe they should let Jesus speak to them about that, or stop claiming to believe in Him at all.

Jesus taught His disciples that the bread and wine, which they took together “as they were eating” (v. 26), were His body and blood. He cannot have meant this literally, because His body and blood were intact in Him at the moment. He must have meant it figuratively or symbolically. The bread He and His disciples ate was true bread, and the wine was true wine – nothing more. But Jesus gave these powerful symbols to the Church in such a way as that, when we participate faithfully in the Lord’s Supper, we have true fellowship with His body and blood, as Paul explained (1 Cor. 10.16, 17). It is a mystery how this can be so, but it is so.

Leaving the room, the disciples and Jesus sang a hymn. Here again we see that Jesus, knowing

everything that was ahead of Him, knew how to stay on top of it all. Singing lifts our souls to the Lord, bears witness to our faith in Him, fortifies our unity in Christ, and reminds us of the joy and delight that are ours in the Lord, come what may. We should follow this example more in our own discipleship.

Reflect.

1. Why was it important that Jesus demonstrate His sovereignty in these details?
2. Why is the Lord's Supper so important for our fellowship with Jesus?
3. What do the elements of the Lord's Supper represent? What are we saying by taking them?

He who was the traitor did not call him Lord but teacher, as if to have an excuse, upon rejecting the Lord, for having betrayed at most a teacher. "Jesus answered, 'You have said so.'" The traitor was put to shame by the same response Christ would later give to Pilate. Jerome (347-420), Commentary on Matthew 4.26.25

Lord, You are sovereign in every area of my life, so help me submit to You today so that I...

Pray Psalm 126.1-5.

Weep tears for your sins, but give thanks for the body and blood of Lord, Who takes away the sins of the world.

Sing Psalm 126.1-5.

Psalm 126.1-5 (Truro: [*Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*](#))

When God restored our fortunes all, we were like those who sweetly dream.
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled, made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said, "The Lord has done great things for them!"
Indeed, great things our God has done, Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King! Let grace like flowing streams prevail.
All they with tears of joy shall sing who sow while yet they weep and wail.

4 Willing Spirit, Weak Flesh

Pray Psalm 55.1-3.

Give ear to my prayer, O God,
And do not hide Yourself from my supplication.
Attend to me, and hear me;
I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily,
Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the wicked;
For they bring down trouble upon me,
And in wrath they hate me.

Sing Psalm 55.1-3.

(Bread of Life: *Break Thou the Bread of Life*)

Hear now my prayer, O Lord, hide not from me.
Answer me by Your Word and set me free!
Wicked men sore oppress; restless am I.
Lord, ease my soul's distress and hear my cry!

Read Matthew 26.1-35; meditate on verses 31-35.

Prepare.

1. What did Jesus say about the disciples?
2. How did Jesus counter Peter's objection?

Meditate.

We might wonder what Peter's problem was. When Jesus said something he didn't agree with, he rebuked Him, and contradicted His Word, which invariably left Peter embarrassed (cf. Matt. 16.21-23).

But aren't we just like Peter in many ways? Jesus says, "As you are going, make disciples." We say, "That's the pastor's job." Jesus says, "You shall be My witnesses." We say, "Nobody wants to hear it." Jesus says, "Take up your cross." We say, "Right after I get back from the golf course, Lord." Jesus says, "Men ought always to pray." We say, "Prayer doesn't work for me."

We're just like Peter, so let's not be too hard on him here. We can diagnose Peter's problem. He didn't want His Lord to suffer. He felt like he could do something to prevent that. In his spirit, he really, really wanted to keep Jesus from suffering. But, as we shall see, when push came to shove, and a little girl challenged him as being a follower of Jesus, Peter caved. His flesh was weaker than his spirit.

But when Peter received the *Holy Spirit* of God, then he became the man he and Jesus wanted him to be. We have the Spirit, so whatever Jesus commands us, we can understand. And whatever He calls us to do, His Spirit makes us willing and able to the task (Phil. 2.13).

Peter would deny Jesus because he was relying on his spirit and his strength. We can follow and obey Jesus when, as Peter would come to know, we rely on His Spirit and His strength for whatever He

calls us to do.

Reflect.

1. Why did all the disciples desert Jesus? What should we learn from this?
2. What does it mean to draw on the Spirit and strength of God for our daily lives?
3. How can believers help and encourage one another to be faithful in their walk with and work for the Lord?

It was not only out of carelessness but almost also out of wickedness that he said, "Even if all fall away because of you, I will not fall away." He made a rash promise because he did not know the deceitfulness of human nature. This is why Peter didn't simply fall away from Jesus or even deny him once but abandoned him so completely that he denied him three times. Origen (185-254), Commentary on Matthew 88

Fill me with Your Spirit, Lord, and grant me Your strength for this day, so that I...

Pray Psalm 55.9-15.

If Peter could betray the Lord, so can we. Pray that the Lord will give you strength to serve Him faithfully today.

Sing Psalm 55.9-19.

Psalm 55.9-19 (Bread of Life: [*Break Thou the Bread of Life*](#))

Let judgment fall, O Lord, let violence cease;
daily they mock Your Word while sins increase.
You were for us betrayed; You bore our grief.
By You was judgment stayed for our relief.

Lord, I will call on You, answer and save!
Morning and evening too, my voice I raise.
Grant me Your peace, O Lord; answer my foes!
All who reject God's Word He overthrows.

5 “Not My Will...”

Pray Psalm 88.1-3.

O LORD, God of my salvation,
I have cried out day and night before You.
Let my prayer come before You;
Incline Your ear to my cry.

Sing Psalm 88.1-3.

(Picardy: [*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*](#))

Lord of my salvation, hear me, as I cry by night and day;
Hear my plea, O Lord, bend near me; O, receive me when I pray!
For my soul is weak and weary, and my life draws near the grave.

Read Matthew 26.1-46; Meditate on verses 36-46.

Prepare.

1. What did Jesus teach His disciples about prayer?
2. For what did Jesus pray?

Meditate.

Jesus prayed. He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Yet He prayed. And in this glimpse into His prayer life, we see just how important prayer was to Him.

O, that prayer might be equally important to us!

Jesus told His disciples that by watching in prayer, they would be able to face whatever temptation came to them (v. 41). Prayer is crucial for recognizing temptation and having the strength from God to resist it (cf. Ps. 73). The disciples, rather than follow the Lord’s instruction and example, failed in their prayers and went to sleep. The rest is history.

Jesus persevered in prayer, praying earnestly – flat on His face (v. 39) – that God would deliver Him through this time of trial. He was deeply sorrowful and distressed (v. 37), not only for Himself, but for His disciples as well. His prayer probably included some intercession for them (cf. Jn. 17). But above all, Jesus prayed that God’s will, not His, would be done (v. 42). And if that meant His suffering – and He knew that it did (in v. 42, the Greek particle *εἰ*, *ei*, can be translated “since” as well as “if”) – then He would gladly accept it, and rest in the will of His Father.

Three times Jesus came before the Father with this same prayer. After the third time, His soul was settled into the will of God, and He was ready to face what would happen next.

We need prayer more than we know. If we knew how to pray like Jesus, we would realize just how great a blessing and privilege this discipline is.

Reflect.

1. Why is prayer so important for Christians?
2. Why was it God’s will that Jesus should suffer as He did?

3. Should we include in our prayers something like “Your will be done”? Explain.

Having brought with him Peter, James and John, he began to grieve. Before he brought them along with him, he did not feel sad. It was only after they had accompanied him that he grew exceedingly sad. His sadness thus arose not from himself but from those whom he had taken with him. Hilary of Poitiers (315-367), The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 83.1

Father, whatever this day holds for me, let Your will be done! Help me especially as I...

Pray Psalm 88.4-18.

As you pray this psalm, think of Jesus, as He prayed before the Father, before descending into His suffering. Give thanks and praise for His sacrifice.

Sing Psalm 88.4-18.

Psalm 88.4-18 (Picardy: [*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*](#))

Like a person thought to be dying, like a man whose strength is gone;
like one with the slain now lying, like a dead and buried one:
For Your mercy I am sighing, cut off from Your hand and gone.

In the lowest pit You have set me, in a deep and darkening place;
all Your holy wrath has beset me, overwhelming me in waves.
All my former friends forget me; on me now they look with hate.

All day long I cry in vain, Lord, as my eye is wasting away.
Can a dead man sing Your praise, Lord? Can I testify from the grave?
Will I tell Your love again, Lord? Will I sing Your pow’r and grace?

Morning comes and, Lord, I am crying: Why do You my soul reject?
From my youth have I been dying; pain and terrors sore afflict.
Fear and anger, sorely trying, overwhelm, destroy, reject.

All day long my foes surround me, like a threat’ning, rising flood.
Circling round they sought and found me, taking from me all that is good.
Friend and lover gone, they hound me – all my friends in darkness stood.

6 Betrayed

Pray Psalm 22.23, 24.

You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard.

Sing Psalm 22.23-25.

(Darwall: [Rejoice, the Lord is King](#))

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,
nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

Read Matthew 26.1-75; meditate on verses 47-75.

Prepare.

1. Why did Jesus submit to being arrested?
2. How did the disciples react to this situation?

Meditate.

This is what it means to be completely submitted to the Word of God. A mob arrived where Jesus was finishing His time of prayer in the garden. Judas stepped forward to greet Jesus with a kiss. After a brief scuffle, the rash act of one of His disciples, Jesus was taken into custody.

Just like that? He Who walked on water? Healed the lame? Gave sight to the blind? Cast out demons? Raised the dead? Could command twelve legions of angels? He just gave Himself up to wicked, violent men?

Yes. Because He knew the Word of God, and He understood that Word to be God's will for His life (v. 42). Twice in this passage Jesus insisted that He must submit to the Word of God (vv. 54, 56). He spoke this mainly for His disciple's sake, knowing they were all about to abandon Him (v. 56). Thus, He encouraged them to follow His example and trust in the Word of God, which would include His own words to them, in which He promised to rise from the dead and give them the Kingdom.

Jesus knew that what was best for all was not His convenience, comfort, or safety, but the fulfillment of God's Word. He knew the crucifixion was at hand, and how terrible, how humiliating and agonizing that would be (cf. Ps. 22.1-21; Ps. 88). But He was already looking through the crucifixion to the joy of the Kingdom that God the Father had set down before Him (Heb. 12.2; cf. Ps. 22.21-31).

The trial before the Sanhedrin was a mockery. But Jesus submitted to it, insisting that He is the

Christ, the Son of God, and warning that all those present would one day see the truth of this (vv. 57-67). What courage! What confidence in the Word and power of God!

And what a contrast to Peter, cowering before mere peasants, as he denied the Savior three times (vv. 69-75).

God's will for us is that at all times we should submit to His Word. That may involve inconvenience, difficulty, hardship, and even suffering. But at the end of it, there is joy in knowing the Lord is with us always, and in holding fast to His unshakeable Word. Following Jesus means submitting to the Word of God just as He did.

Reflect.

1. Jesus chose not to rely on violence in this situation. Why?
2. What will it mean for you to submit to the Scriptures today?
3. How can believers help one another to keep their eyes on Jesus and to submit always to His Word?

*"Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" By these words he quenched their anger, appealing to holy Scripture. He prayed that the disciples might accept meekly whatever befell him when they had learned that this also is occurring according to God's will. John Chrysostom (344-407.), *The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 84.1**

Whatever it requires of me, Lord, help me to submit to Your Word, especially as I...

Pray Psalm 22.26-28.

Praise God for His Kingdom, and thank Him for the suffering of Jesus, by which He earned the Kingdom He has now given to us.

Sing Psalm 22.26-28.

Psalm 22.26-28 (Darwall: [Rejoice, the Lord is King](#))

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.

Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.

Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;

all those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.

The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

7 His Father's Kingdom

Pray Psalm 22.29.

All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
All those who go down to the dust
Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

Sing Psalm 22.29.

(Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth)

All the prosp'rous of the earth shall before His mercy fall;
bending low before His worth, hear them humbly on Him call.
Even those low in the grave He will by His mercy save.

Read and meditate on Matthew 26.1-75.

Prepare.

1. What did Jesus teach us about submitting to Scripture in this chapter?
2. How did the disciples respond to Jesus' being arrested?

Meditate.

The events of this chapter are familiar to all who know, love, and serve Jesus Christ. They fill us with sadness. We feel a certain shame in reading about the disciples' betrayal and Jesus' arrest and trial, because we seem to understand that, had we been there with Him, we'd have run away like all the others.

We perhaps think of the events of this and the next chapter in Matthew's gospel as Jesus' darkest hour. If we read Psalm 88 along with these two chapters, and see Jesus sweating drops of blood in prayer, and hear Him crying to His Father from the cross, we can believe that His suffering was infinitely great.

But there is a glimmer of hope in this chapter, and it affords a glimpse into the mind of Christ as He entered into the full measure of His suffering: "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (v. 29). Jesus is looking ahead to the coming of the Kingdom, which God will give Him as the prize of His great victory, and which He will bestow on His saints for the reconciliation and restoration of the world (cf. Dan. 7.13-18; 2 Cor. 5.17-21).

In Psalm 22, the suffering Servant is looking through the gloom and pain to the bright morn into which His Spirit will spring like a deer of the dawn. Psalm 22.1-21 graphically depicts the sufferings of Jesus on the cross. But then verses 21-31 spread out what the writer of Hebrews referred to as "the joy that was set before Him" which by envisioning, He was able to "endure the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12.2).

Submitting to God's Word does not mean only submitting to the disciplines and difficulties that come with following Jesus. It also means submitting to the vision of His Father's Kingdom, the Kingdom which Jesus secured by His death and resurrection, and which He bestows on us from His

throne at the right hand of God. See Jesus seeing this Kingdom coming in glory. It is a vision of joy unspeakable, power for righteous living, and peace that nothing can disrupt. Submit to God's Word concerning our calling to seek His Kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2.12). If you do, you will find strength to bear up through whatever this sinful world may throw at you today.

Reflect.

1. What is involved in seeing through the present to the coming of the Kingdom?
2. What does it mean to pray for the coming of the Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven?
3. How should living with a Kingdom perspective affect the way we conduct our lives in our Personal Mission Field?

"Till that day when I shall drink it new with you." It is plain from these words that he promises to them a glory which they will share with himself. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Matthew 26.29

Lead me in Your Kingdom path today, O Lord, so that I...

Pray Psalm 22.30, 31.

As Jesus entered into His suffering, He saw His Kingdom coming on earth. He saw you in it. Talk with Him about how you should serve Him today.

Sing Psalm 22.30, 31.

Psalm 22.30, 31 (Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Let the generations all witness to His saving grace;
let them to all nations call, "Bow before His holy face!"
Let the children of the earth hear of Jesus' saving worth!

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What do we learn from Jesus in this chapter about submitting to the Word of God?
2. What glimmer of hope shines forth in this chapter? How should that encourage and instruct us?
3. Why is the Lord's Supper important? What are we doing when we take it?
4. How was Jesus resolutely and calmly able to enter into His sufferings?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Matthew 26.1-75? How are you putting that lesson to work in your Personal Mission Field?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.