



# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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## Worship Music

[Why Jesus?-  
The Afters](#)

[Broken Hallelujah -  
The Afters](#)

[Runaway-The Afters](#)

## Prayer

Lord, I admit that I need a fresh surge of supernatural power in my life right now. I ask You to release the resurrection power of Jesus Christ that resides in my spirit. Let it flow up into my body and mind so I can be rejuvenated and recharged with enough power to fulfill all the responsibilities and duties that lie before me. I know that in my own strength, I can't do everything that is required of me in the days ahead. But I also know that with Your supernatural power working in me, I will be able to do everything You have asked me to do, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

## Radio Stations

[KWVE ...Calvary Chapel](#)

[KLOVE](#)

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

## Bible Study Sites

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Pastor Chuck Smith

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

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Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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## Matthew 25:1-46 (AMP)

1 THEN THE kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish (thoughtless, without forethought) and five were wise (sensible, intelligent, and prudent). 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they did not take any [extra] oil with them; 4 But the wise took flasks of oil along with them [also] with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom lingered and was slow in coming, they all began nodding their heads, and they fell asleep. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, Behold, the bridegroom! Go out to meet him! 7 Then all those virgins got up and put their own lamps in order. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. 9 But the wise replied, There will not be enough for us and for you; go instead to the dealers and buy for yourselves. 10 But while they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were prepared went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other virgins also came and said, Lord, Lord, open [the door] to us! 12 But He replied, I solemnly declare to you, I do not know you [I am not acquainted with you]. 13 Watch therefore [give strict attention and be cautious and active], for you know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come. 14 For it is like a man who was about to take a long journey, and he called his servants together and entrusted them with his property. 15 To one he gave five talents [probably about \$5,000], to another two, to another one—to each in proportion to his own personal ability. Then he departed and left the country. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he gained five talents more. 17 And likewise he who had received the two talents—he also gained two talents more. 18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 Now after a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 And he who had received the five talents came and brought him five more, saying, Master, you entrusted to me five talents; see, here I have gained five talents more. 21 His master said to him, Well done, you upright (honorable, admirable) and faithful servant! You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little; I will put you in charge of much. Enter into and share the joy (the delight, the blessedness) which your master enjoys. 22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, Master, you entrusted two talents to me; here I have gained two talents more. 23 His master said to him, Well done, you upright (honorable, admirable) and faithful servant! You have been faithful and trustworthy over a little; I will put you in charge of much. Enter into and share the joy (the delight, the blessedness) which your master enjoys. 24 He who had received one talent also came forward, saying, Master, I knew you to be a harsh and hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you had not winnowed [the grain]. 25 So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is your own. 26 But his master answered him, You wicked and lazy and idle servant! Did you indeed know that I reap where I have not sowed and gather [grain] where I have not winnowed? 27 Then you should have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent away from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will be furnished richly so that he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away. 30 And throw the good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. 31 When the Son of Man comes in His glory (His majesty and splendor), and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them [the people] from one another as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats; 33 And He will cause the sheep to stand at His right hand, but the goats at His left. 34 Then the King will say to those at His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father [you favored of God and appointed to eternal salvation], inherit (receive as your own) the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you brought Me together with yourselves and welcomed and entertained and lodged Me, 36 I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you visited Me with help and ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see Me. 37 Then the just and upright will answer Him, Lord, when did we see You hungry and gave You food, or thirsty and gave You something to drink? 38 And when did we see You a stranger and welcomed and entertained You, or naked and clothed You? 39 And when did we see You sick or in prison and came to visit You? 40 And the King will reply to them, Truly I tell you, in so far as you did it for one of the least [in the estimation of men] of these My brethren, you did it for Me. 41 Then He will say to those at His left hand, Begone from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! 42 For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me and entertain Me, I was naked and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me with help and ministering care. 44 Then they also [in their turn] will answer, Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You? 45 And He will reply to them, Solemnly I declare to you, in so far as you failed to do it for the least [in the estimation of men] of these, you failed to do it for Me. 46 Then they will go away into eternal punishment, but those who are just and upright and in right standing with God into eternal life.

Shall we turn now to Matthew's gospel chapter twenty-five? In the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's gospel the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him what would be the signs that would precede the destruction of the temple, and then the signs of thy coming, and the end of the age. He had just left the scribes and the Pharisees, and told them that they would not see Him again, until they said, "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord".

And so Jesus was referring to another coming. And so the disciples were questioning what will be the signs of thy coming in the end of the age. And so He proceeded to tell them the various signs that would indicate His return, and then having given to them many of the signs and the events that would take place prior to His return, His coming in clouds of glory to establish God's kingdom here upon the earth. He then said to His disciples that the important thing for them was they should be watching, and they should be ready, because they will not know the day, or the hour that the Son of man is coming.

Paul wrote to us in first Thessalonians chapter five, he said, "of the times and the seasons you have no need that I write unto you, for you yourselves know perfectly well that the coming of the Lord is as a thief in the night, but you are not the children of darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief".

Now the Lord does expect us to be aware of the times and the seasons, however, we do not know the day, or the hour. Therefore, the

word of Christ to us is to be watching, and to be ready. And He gave to them a series of parables, and the emphasis of the parable was to be watching, or to be ready for the Lord, because you don't know when He is coming again. So the important thing is that you are watching, and that you are ready.

So we are continuing then, as we get into chapter twenty-five, these series of parables, which have as the chief thrust, the importance of us to be watching, and the importance for us to be ready when He returns. Because unfortunately there will be some who are not ready, and the coming of the Lord will catch them by surprise and they will not enter into the glorious marriage feast of the lamb.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven (Mat 25:1),

Then; when? When Jesus of course comes again!

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and they went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. And they that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all of those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise: Give us some of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there not be enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh (Mat 25:1-13).

Now with this particular parable there is both, the injunctions to be ready, for they that were ready went in, and then He concludes by saying, "watch therefore, because you don't know when He is coming".

Now again with the interpretation of the parable of the ten virgins, there are probably ten interpretations. Rather than try and go through the various ways that this parable has been interpreted, I will just share with you my understanding of the parable, and if you don't like my understanding, you can go ahead and pick something that fits your schema.

But I believe that the parable of the ten virgins, the ten virgins are representative of the whole church. That the five wise are representative of the true body of Christ. Now there is a vast church system in the world today, as Jesus said in His parables of the kingdom, how that the mustard seed grew into a tree, and every bird came and lodged in its branches. There are all kinds of birds lodging in the overall tree of the church, some of them not so good.

As we look at the church today in the world, I think that it is safe to say, for the most part the church is pretty apostate. There are surely many apostate ministers. As Paul the apostle said, "there will come up from among your own group, those who will depart from the faith, seeking to draw men after themselves, and many of them departing from our very Lord." And when you hear the unbelief and skepticism that is expressed by so many ministers today; unbelief in the Bible as God's inspired word, unbelief in the virgin birth in Jesus Christ, unbelief in the atoning death of Christ, and yet they call themselves ministers. And yet they are part of major denominations. And yet they are embracing all kinds of ungodly doctrines. And many of them are extremely opposed to any fundamental view of the scriptures and especially to any evangelical approach to man.

So the church encompasses a broad spectrum of people; some converted, and some unconverted. Surely this is declared in the messages of Jesus to the seven churches there in the second and third chapter in the book of Revelation. To many of the churches the word of the Lord was, "repent, or else I am going to come quickly." And the inference is that if you don't repent, you are going to be going into the Great Tribulation. In fact, He said that plainly to the church of Thyatira: "I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not, therefore I will cast her into the great tribulation, and those who commit fornication with her, unless they repent"(Revelation 2:21).

The church unfortunately is not a true representation of Jesus Christ. And I blush with shame at the history of the church. I blush with shame at the World Council of Churches today, the actions, the deeds of these men in the name of Christianity. But within this whole system of the church, God does have His faithful remnant, the true body of Christ. Jesus said to the church of Philadelphia, "thou has kept the word of my patience"(Revelation 3:10). There are those who are keeping true to the word of God. And within the church itself there is the true body of Christ.

Now the oil is representative in the scriptures of the Holy Spirit. There are those who are trying to do the work of the ministry, and the work of the gospel in the energies, and the abilities of their flesh, and their flesh only.

The church has developed magnificent programs. Some of the greatest genius of man has been dedicated to devising and scheming finance programs, and enlargement programs, and all of these kinds of things whereby the church might be built into a great organization and structure, that might influence the world through politics. But then there are those who are walking in the Spirit, who are filled with the Spirit, who are trusting in the Spirit to guide the church, to build the church. Paul tells us in Romans, "but as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"(Romans 8:14).

And so it is significant that there were those foolish virgins who had their lamps, but no oil. And as the result when the cry finally came, behold the bridegroom cometh, notice they were all lumped in one party until that final cry, and then the real nature was exposed. And those foolish virgins lacking the oil, as they began to trim the wicks, they said, "oh, our lamps are going out." And they realized at that time that they didn't have the true light, but it was also at that time too late. And while they were gone to buy the oil, the bridegroom

came, and they that were ready went into the marriage feast of the Lamb. They that were foolish, when they came back, they said, "open to us," but the Lord said, "I don't know you; too late."

Therefore, be ready. Not only that, walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, depend upon the Spirit of God, be filled with the Spirit; all of these are injunctions given to us throughout the New Testament. And watch, therefore, because you don't know when the Lord is coming.

Now again, the kingdom of heaven is as a man who is traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And to one he gave five talents (Mat 25:14-15),

And a talent is actually a weight, and so the value depends on whether or not it is copper, or silver, or gold.

and to another he gave two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and he took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went out and traded the same, and made them other five talents [or increased them]. And likewise he that had received the two, he also gained another two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. And after a long time the lord of those servants came, and reckoned with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought the other five talents, saying, Lord, you delivered unto me five talents: and behold, I've gained besides them five more talents. And his lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received the two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered unto me two talents: and behold, I've gained two other talents besides them. And his lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I know you, you are a hard man, you reap where you have not sown, you gather where you have not strowed: and I was afraid, and I went and hide the talent in the earth: and lo, there thou hast all that is thine [I give you back the talent you gave me]. And his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I reaped where I did not sow, and I gathered where I had not strowed: you ought therefore have put the money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury [or interest]. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it to him which has ten talents. For unto everyone that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has. And cast ye thee unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mat 25:15-30).

Here obviously the Lord is telling us that He is wanting us to be productive with His things. Whatever God has entrusted into our care or keeping, God expects us to use it and to be productive with it. Not to bury, or to hide, not to try to just to preserve, but the Lord wants us to increase that which He has entrusted into our keeping. Now it is interesting to me that the amount that he gave to each one was according to that person's abilities. But the person who had the two was rewarded just as that one who had the five, in that in their doubling of what was given to them, they were each commanded of the Lord as good and faithful servants, and were given their place into the kingdom.

This parable would seem to indicate that our position in the kingdom of God, when Jesus comes to establish that kingdom upon the earth, will be relative to the faithfulness now to the things of God that God has entrusted into our care. If God has placed things in my keeping then I am responsible to be using those things to increase the kingdom of God. And if I am faithful now in those things that God has entrusted to me, then according to that faithfulness will be my position in the coming kingdom. In one of the gospels it says He said to him, "be thou ruler over ten cities, enter into the joy of thy lord"(Luke 10:17).

The Bible teaches that we are going to live and reign with Jesus Christ. Jesus in His message to the churches, to those who overcame, He said, that they would rule over the earth with a rod of iron. Looking forward to that day when Christ shall establish His kingdom, and our position in the kingdom determined on how I handle now those things God has entrusted to me.

Now God has entrusted to each one of His servants something. And to each one that was entrusted by God with whatever it was, it was his responsibility to use it, to bring an increase unto the Lord. It should cause each of us to seriously examine our own lives, and seek first of all to understand what is it that God has entrusted to me of His kingdom, of His kingdom's goods. And then what am I doing with what God has entrusted to me? Am I a faithful servant, or am I slothful in spiritual things, in the things of the kingdom? Do I have a very slothful attitude, just seeking to hang onto the status quo, rather than really seeking to use those things of God to their best advantage?

Now Jesus declares in verse thirty-one;

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. And then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was hungry, and you gave me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry and fed thee, or thirsty and gave you a drink? When did we see you a stranger, and took you in? or naked, and clothed you? or when did we see you sick, or imprisoned, and came unto you? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was hungry, and you did not give me meat: I was thirsty, you did not give me a drink: I was a stranger, you did not take me in: I was naked, and you did not clothe me: sick, and imprisoned, and you did not visit me. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or imprisoned, and did not minister unto you? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal (Mat 25:31-46).

When Jesus returns to the earth in glory to establish His kingdom upon the earth, the first order of business at His return will be the judgement of the nations, in which it will be determined which of those people who have survived the Great Tribulation will be allowed to enter into the kingdom age. And so all of the people of the nations will be gathered before Christ for this period of judgement. So it is possible that a person could survive the Great Tribulation and see the Lord when He comes again, and still not be able to enter into the kingdom age. There will be a definite division at that point, as He separates the people, the nations, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

In Daniel chapter twelve, as Daniel is asking the Lord "How long till the end?" And the Lord informs Daniel, "from the time the daily oblations and sacrifices are caused to be ceased, unto the end shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days". And He said, "blessed is he who comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-fifth day."

I believe that that signifies that this particular period of which Jesus is referring here in Matthew twenty-five will probably last for forty days, which is the number of judgement in the scriptures, forty is the number of judgement. "And it rained for forty days and forty nights", and this is a numeric kind of symbolism, the number of judgement. And it would appear that Jesus will be judging for forty-five days, actually, from the one thousand two hundred and ninety to one thousand and three hundred and thirty-fifth.

This period of judgement, though, in which Jesus will be judging the nations, as the Lord said to Daniel, "blessed is he who comes to the one thousand and three hundred and thirty-fifth day"; that is, if you make it to then you're in the kingdom. He will have cast off from the kingdom at that point, those that He deems unworthy to enter in.

Now notice to those referred to as His sheep He said "come ye, blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. It is interesting how that so often the scripture refers to God's plan for our lives, having existed from the foundations of the world. "Chosen in Him," Paul said, "from the foundations of the word." God's plan, God's eternal plan for His children to share in the glory of His kingdom. Jesus prayed, "Father I would that they who have been with me might share with me in the glory. That they might see me with the glory that I have with you before the world ever was"(John 17:5). The glory of God's kingdom. Those who will be able to share it.

Now when did we see you hungry, when did we see you thirsty, when did we see you in these conditions? And Jesus responds, "Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these, you did it to me."

There is a very beautiful story of a Martin of Turin. He was a soldier and he was a Christian. And as he was entering into a city on a cold day, there was a beggar in rags asking him for help. But Martin didn't have any money, and so he took his coat, his Army coat, and he cut it in half, and he gave half of it to this beggar. It was sort of a tattered coat and all, but he was willing to share it with this man in need. That night, it is said that Martin had a dream. And in his dream he saw the Lord standing with all of His holy angels in heaven, and the Lord was wearing half of an army coat. "Inasmuch as you've done it unto the least of these my brethren, you've done it unto me."

You know whatever we do we should do as unto the Lord. And whatever we do as unto the Lord, the Lord will reward us for it. So important that we be interested in people around us, in the needs of people around us. How can I say that the love of God dwells in my heart, if I close up my heart to the needs of people?

James in his practical exposition, bringing Christianity into the practical aspects said that if you just say to a brother, "Oh be fed, be warm"(James 2:16) and all, and yet you don't actually give him something, what good have you really done him? And he exhorts us actually to the practical aspects of reaching out, having compassion for those that are in need and reaching out to help those that are in need. Surely in these days of economic crisis, we as true children of God should be very concerned with those less fortunate ones in our midst, around us, who are in need of help at this time. How can we apply luxuries upon ourselves, when someone next to us is going hungry?

Jesus said "Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these, you did it to me." And those who we are ignoring the needs of those around them, the goats, "inasmuch as you didn't do it unto them, you didn't do it to me," Jesus said. Now there was one thing that I thought was interesting there, "depart from me", verse forty-one, "ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." God did not prepare Gehenna for men; it was prepared by God for Satan. Therefore God does not cast men into hell. He didn't prepare it for men; He prepared it for Satan. However, if a person wants to align himself with Satan and go there, God will do His best to stop him. God has done his best to stop him. He has sent His only begotten Son to save men from that fate. But if a person wants to reject God's provisions, if a person is bent upon rebelling against God, and joining with Satan's rebellion against God's kingdom, then a man can by his own volition and his own choices spend eternity apart from God. The last verse, "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to life eternal." Now the question of whether or not a person is in torment and suffers forever is an issue that I hope doesn't exist, but I dare not seek to change what God has said or to modify what God has said. And here Jesus said "depart from me, ye cursed into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to life eternal".

Now just what that does mean, I am not prepared to say. But I dare not try to modify it or change it. But really why should you be so concerned about it, if you're not going there. You know rather than being all upset over that aspect, just look for the Lord, and escape the place, and then you don't have to worry about it. Whether or not it's temporarily, whether or not you are consumed there, whether or not you're going to go on for a period of time, or whatever. As I say I would hope that, but I don't know.



#### Matthew 26:1-75 (AMP)

1 WHEN JESUS had ended this discourse, He said to His disciples, 2 You know that the Passover is in two days—and the Son of Man will be delivered up treacherously to be crucified. 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the [open] court of the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, 4 And consulted together in order to arrest Jesus by stratagem secretly and put Him to death. 5 But they said, It must not be during the Feast, for fear that there will be a riot among the people. 6 Now when Jesus came back to Bethany and was in the house of Simon the leper, 7 A woman came up to Him with an alabaster flask of very precious perfume, and she poured it on His head as He reclined at table. 8 And when the disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, For what purpose is all this waste? 9 For this perfume might have been sold for a large sum and the money given to the poor. 10 But Jesus, fully aware of this, said to them, Why do you bother the woman? She has done a noble (praiseworthy and beautiful) thing to Me. 11 For you always have the poor among you, but you will not always have Me. 12 In pouring this perfume on My body she has done something to prepare Me for My burial. 13 Truly I tell you, wherever this good news (the Gospel) is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will be told also, in memory of her. 14 Then one of the Twelve [apostles], who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 And said, What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you? And they weighed out for and paid to him thirty pieces of silver [about twenty-one dollars and sixty cents]. 16 And from that moment he sought a fitting opportunity to betray Him. 17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread [Passover week], the disciples came to Jesus and said to Him, Where do You wish us to prepare for You to eat the Passover supper? 18 He said, Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, The Master says: My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples. 19 And accordingly the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they made ready the Passover supper. 20 When it was evening, He was reclining at table with the twelve disciples. 21 And as they were eating, He said, Solemnly I say to you, one of you will betray Me! 22 They were exceedingly pained and distressed and deeply hurt and sorrowful and began to say to Him one after another, Surely it cannot be I, Lord, can it? 23 He replied, He who has [just] dipped his hand in the same dish with Me will betray Me! 24 The Son of Man is going just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better (more profitable and wholesome) for that man if he had never been born! 25 Judas, the betrayer, said, Surely it is not I, is it, Master? He said to him, You have stated [the fact]. 26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread and, praising God, gave thanks and asked Him to bless it to their use, and when He had broken it, He gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is My body. 27 And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you; 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which [ratifies the agreement and] is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I say to you, I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it with you new and of superior quality in My Father's kingdom. 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus said to them, You will all be offended and stumble and fall away because of Me this night [distrusting and deserting Me], for it is written, I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. 32 But after I am raised up [to life again], I will go ahead of you to Galilee. 33 Peter declared to Him, Though they all are offended and stumble and fall away because of You [and distrust and desert You], I will never do so. 34 Jesus said to him, Solemnly I declare to you, this very night, before a single rooster crows, you will deny and disown Me three times. 35 Peter said to Him, Even if I must die with You, I will not deny or disown You! And all the disciples said the same thing. 36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He told His disciples, Sit down here while I go over yonder and pray. 37 And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to show grief and distress of mind and was deeply depressed. 38 Then He said to them, My soul is very sad

and deeply grieved, so that I am almost dying of sorrow. Stay here and keep awake and keep watch with Me. 39 And going a little farther, He threw Himself upon the ground on His face and prayed saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will [not what I desire], but as You will and desire. 40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and He said to Peter, What! Are you so utterly unable to stay awake and keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 All of you must keep awake (give strict attention, be cautious and active) and watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42 Again a second time He went away and prayed, My Father, if this cannot pass by unless I drink it, Your will be done. 43 And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were weighed down with sleep. 44 So, leaving them again, He went away and prayed for the third time, using the same words. 45 Then He returned to the disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of especially wicked sinners [whose way or nature it is to act in opposition to God]. 46 Get up, let us be going! See, My betrayer is at hand! 47 As He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve [apostles], came up, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, The One I shall kiss is the Man; seize Him. 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, Hail (greetings, good health to You, long life to You), Master! And he embraced Him and kissed Him with [pretended] warmth and devotion. 50 Jesus said to him, Friend, for what are you here? Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and arrested Him. 51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached out his hand and drew his sword and, striking the body servant of the high priest, cut off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, Put your sword back into its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53 Do you suppose that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will immediately provide Me with more than twelve legions [more than 80,000] of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must come about this way? 55 At that moment Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out with swords and clubs as [you would] against a robber to capture Me? Day after day I was accustomed to sit in the porches and courts of the temple teaching, and you did not arrest Me. 56 But all this has taken place in order that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples deserted Him and, fleeing, escaped. 57 But those who had seized Jesus took Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had assembled. 58 But Peter followed Him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest's home; he even went inside and sat with the guards to see the end. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole council (the Sanhedrin) sought to get false witnesses to testify against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death; 60 But they found none, though many witnesses came forward [to testify]. At last two men came forward 61 And testified, This Fellow said, I am able to tear down the sanctuary of the temple of God and to build it up again in three days. 62 And the high priest stood up and said, Have You no answer to make? What about this that these men testify against You? 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, I call upon you to swear by the living God, and tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God. 64 Jesus said to him, You have stated [the fact]. More than that, I tell you: You will in the future see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Almighty and coming on the clouds of the sky. 65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and exclaimed, He has uttered blasphemy! What need have we of further evidence? You have now heard His blasphemy. 66 What do you think now? They answered, He deserves to be put to death. 67 Then they spat in His face and struck Him with their fists; and some slapped Him in the face, 68 Saying, Prophecy to us, You Christ (the Messiah)! Who was it that struck You? 69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and one maid came up to him and said, You were also with Jesus the Galilean! 70 But he denied it falsely before them all, saying, I do not know what you mean. 71 And when he had gone out to the porch, another maid saw him, and she said to the bystanders, This fellow was with Jesus the Nazarene! 72 And again he denied it and disowned Him with an oath, saying, I do not know the Man! 73 After a little while, the bystanders came up and said to Peter, You certainly are one of them too, for even your accent betrays you. 74 Then Peter began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not even know the Man! And at that moment a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered Jesus' words, when He had said, Before a single rooster crows, you will deny and disown Me three times. And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings (Mat 26:1),

This is the end of now the Olivet discourse.

He now said to his disciples, Now you know that in two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified (Mat 26:1-2).

Now this is interesting, because this apparently was on Monday, that Jesus gave the Olivet discourse. He had made His triumphant entry on Sunday, which is known as Palm Sunday, and then the next day He came back into the temple. And He had been there the day before and cleansed the things, drove out the moneychangers. The next day when He came back the scribes and the priests and all said, "By what authority?" and they challenged Him on the issue. And so as they were leaving the temple they said, "Lord what will be the sign of your coming, and the destruction of the temple?" And Jesus gave this Olivet discourse.

Now as He had finished the discourse, now He said to His disciples, "You know in two days it's going to be the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is to be betrayed, to be crucified." Now if He was saying this on Monday, it meant that the feast of the Passover in two days would of course be on Wednesday. And Jesus was crucified on the feast day, the feast of the Passover. So it would appear that Jesus was probably crucified on Wednesday, which would then give you the three days, and the three nights in the heart of the earth. People have an awful hard time figuring that from a Sunday aspect, from a Friday crucifixion to a Sunday morning; three days and three nights takes a lot of juggling. So after two days, the feast of the Passover and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Then assembled together the chief priests, the scribes, the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, the high priest was called Caiaphas (Mat 26:3),

Actually there were two high priests, Caiaphas and Annas. Caiaphas the appointment of the Roman government, and Annas the accepted one by the people, the religious people.

And they consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people (Mat 26:4-5).

So they were doing their best to keep this from happening on the feast day, and yet in order that it might really fulfill the types of the Old Testament, it was important that Jesus be crucified as the Lamb of God on the feast day. So they were trying to avoid the feast day, but yet there was no way that they could, because that was appropriate that that feast of the Passover, in which they remembered how that the lamb was slain in order to save the first born. So the Lamb of God establishing now a new covenant of God, with people. It was important that it be on that day that commemorated the Passover lamb, Christ our Passover suffering for us.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and she poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. And when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? (Mat 26:6-8)

Now in John's gospel he tells us that the disciple that declared this was Judas Iscariot.

When this woman came and poured this expensive perfume on Jesus, perfume that was worth several thousands of dollars, Judas became indignant, and he said, "what purpose is this waste?" Now John tells us that Judas said, "that could have been sold for several thousand dollars, and we could have given the money to the poor."

But John tells us that he said it not because he was really interested in the poor, and this is of course were Jesus Christ Superstar really stumbled and fell on his nose, and really revealed the true character of the whole portrayal. Because in this portion, they seem to make Judas appear to be the hero of the whole issue. Here Judas is a very benevolent man. He has a great concern for the poor. And this waste, this extravagant waste upon Jesus, when the money could have been given to the poor, and Judas comes out as the shining hero. And Jesus becomes in that portion of the play, an extravagant careless person, who is disregarding the needs of others.

But had they only read on, John said that Judas said this not because he cared for the poor, but because he was holding the money and had been feeding out of it. So Judas wasn't really a very magnanimous kind of an individual concerned with the poor. He is holding the bag of money and had been feeding out of the money. And he figured, wow, if we had that in the treasury there would be more to pilfer.

So they said,

This ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And when Jesus understood it, he said to them, Why do you trouble the woman? for she has wrought a good work upon me. You'll have the poor always with you; but me you will not always have. For in that she has poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. And I say unto you, that wherever the gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this be declared, that this woman has done, and told for a memorial of her (Mat 26:9-13).

Now in this, Judas was rather rebuked by Jesus for the statement he made. So he left.

One of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and he said unto them, What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought the opportunity to betray Christ (Mat 26:14-16).

Of course the thirty pieces of silver was a price that was predicted in prophecy in the Old Testament in the book of Zechariah chapter eleven, verses twelve and thirteen. And then it was told also by Zechariah that the silver would be cast down in the house of the Lord, and used to buy a potter's field. Thirty pieces of silver was the price that you would have to pay to your neighbor if you had an ox who was always goring people, or going around butting people with his horns, and he happened to gore your neighbor's servant and killed him. You would have to pay your neighbor thirty pieces of silver for his gored slave, in order to compensate him for the lost of his servant.

As in Zechariah said, "and name for me the price of which I am priced of you." And they measured out thirty pieces of silver. And he said, "a good price, that I was priced at them, and throw it down in the house of the Lord." And so Judas turning against Christ, seeking now to betray Him, looking for the opportunity.

Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where will you that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover (Mat 26:17-19).

Now remember that among the Jews their day does not begin at midnight, as does ours, their day begins at sundown. So they celebrate their Sabbath dinner not on Saturday night, but on Friday night, because their Sabbath begins at sundown Friday night, and goes till sundown Saturday night. So Jesus having the Passover dinner with His disciples, had it at the beginning of the day of Passover, which began at sundown. And so in the evening they ate the Passover meal together, but that day continued until sundown the following day. So that on the first day of the feast of the Passover, as the disciples came, it was to prepare the meal for the Passover.

And then was not like we take a piece of bread and we drink a cup, and have communion, but theirs was a feast. They would roast the lamb and they would eat the whole thing. It was just a time of feasting. And in the early church they had feasts they called the agape feast. And so at sundown, they were to have the thing ready, and prepared, and they ate then the Passover dinner with Jesus. And then of course it was that night that Judas came in the garden of Gethsemane, and the following day, which would have been the day of the feast of the Passover, is when Jesus was crucified.

So when the even was come, Jesus sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you is going to betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and they began every one of them to say to him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dips his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. Now the Son of man is going as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born (Mat 26:20-24).

What an awesome thing to say of an individual, but while that might be said of every man who betrays Christ, well might that be said of every man who refuses to except Jesus Christ. "It would have been good for that person, had they never been born", than to be born and to live and to reject God's provision for their Salvation. You'd be better off if you'd never been born, than to reject God's love.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? (Mat 26:25)

Of course he had already made the agreement, he knew it was him, he had already made the covenant.

And Jesus said, You said it. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and he blessed it, and he broke it, and he gave it to the disciples, and he said, Take, eat; this is my body (Mat 26:25-26).

The broken bread, Jesus relates it now to His body.

And he took the cup, and he gave thanks, and he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Mat 26:27-29).

Now here Jesus institutes what we commonly call the Lord's supper, that which we observe here at Calvary Chapel, we'll be observing Thursday night. As we take the broken bread, and as we take the cup, and as we remember Jesus Christ, His body broken for us, His blood that was shed for our sins; as we remember the new covenant that God has made in the blood of Jesus Christ.

The old covenant was established through Moses. The covenant whereby men could relate to God, whereby a man might come to God. And under the old covenant man approached God through a priest, who offered a sacrifice for that man and for that man's sin. And the priest would go in and approach God for that man. Jesus said, now we're establishing a new covenant. A new approach to God. That approach is through Jesus Christ.

In the book of Hebrews the author goes through great length to declare how much better covenant we have through Jesus Christ. Showing that the covenant that God had established by the priesthood of Levi was something that had to be continued year by year. Had the sacrifice been complete, they would not have had to make it every year, going into the Holy of Holies.

But Jesus Christ has established a better covenant, a better way in once and for all given His life for us, that we through Him might be able to come to God, and to relate to God. The whole basis of God's covenant with men is relationship with men, men with God, and that basis by which I can come to God and relate to God.

Now God has made a way for all of us to come, and it's through Jesus Christ, and the blood that He shed for our sins. And so Christ is establishing now through this memorial the Passover, that of which the Passover supper was always looking forward to. They observed the Sabbath and the new moons and all, Paul said, "which were all a shadow of things to come. But the substance, the body is of Christ". All of the observances of the Passover feast in the Old Testament were all of them just looking forward to the actual Lamb of God, who would give His life for the sins of the world, and establish a covenant whereby men through Him could come into a oneness with God. So that beautiful covenant whereby we come to God through Jesus Christ.

Now I look forward to that day when I drink of it in His Father's kingdom with Him. I am going to have a glorious Lord's supper some day. And we're going to just be there with Jesus in the kingdom of God.

Now when he had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives (Mat 26:30).

I wish they would have had a twenty-four track-recording studio in those days. Man, I would love to have a cassette of Jesus singing with His disciples. The twelve singing men, Judas was already gone, that left the eleven with Jesus. What did they sing? Actually they sang Psalm 136. This is the psalm that they traditionally sang at the close of the Passover. And so you can go back and read the lyrics of the song that Jesus sang, the hymn that He sang with His disciples there in Psalm 136, that Hallel psalm, which traditionally sang at the end of the Passover feast.

"Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever. Oh give thanks unto the God of gods for His mercy endures forever. Oh give thanks to the Lord of lords for His mercy endures forever. To Him who alone does great wonders, for His mercy endures forever. To Him by His wisdom has made the heavens"(Psalms 136:1-5), and on through that psalm that declares the glorious mercies of God. And the law came by Moses, but grace and truth in Jesus Christ. The demonstration of God's mercies for men.

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, [in Zechariah] I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. And Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of you, yet will I never be offended. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times. And Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. And likewise also said all the disciples (Mat 26:31-35).

Peter is guilty here of boasting in his flesh. And really in a sense declaring that his love was superior to the love of the other disciples. When Jesus told him the prophecy of Zechariah, "smite the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered abroad"(Zechariah 13:7). All of you are going to be offended tonight because of me. Peter said, "Lord, though they may be offend you, I will never be offended." Boasting in the flesh. I will never be offended.

And Jesus responded, "Peter before the cock crows you will have denied me three times." Peter continued to argue with the Lord. Arguing with the Lord has to be folly. Have you ever engaged in that folly? I have; I've found myself arguing with the Lord. I was always wrong. Peter was challenging the statements of Jesus. "Though they, I will never be. Lord, I would never deny you, I would die for you".

Do not doubt Peter's sincerity. Do not doubt his devotion. I believe that Peter was absolutely sincere when he declared this. I believe at that moment Peter believed what he was saying to be absolutely true. I believe that Peter felt that he would actually lay down his life for Jesus. "I would die with you. I would never deny you." But it does show us the folly of vows that are made predicated upon the ability of our flesh. To make a promise to God, to make a vow to God is only to trust in the flesh.

Jesus later on will say to Peter, "Peter your spirit indeed is willing"; that's right, your spirit is right, there is no problem there, but your flesh is weak. A common ailment that we all know. It isn't a question of my spirit. It isn't a question of my love. It isn't a question of my devotion. It isn't a question of my sincerity, or even of my desire. The question is the weakness of my flesh; that 's the problem. That's where the problem lies. I love the Lord. I want to serve the Lord with everything I have. My problem is that I am living in a body of flesh, and it is weak.

Now it is important that I know that it is weak, so that I do not trust in it. And this is what Peter was needing to learn. Jesus knew it all the time. The Bible says, "He knows our frame, He knows we're but dust." I don't know my frame. I am often prone to think that I am stronger than I really am. Why is it that I think I really am more capable than I really am? And because of my feelings of ability, the confidence that I sometimes have in my ability, God must reveal to me the weakness of my own flesh in order that I will learn not to rely upon myself, but to rely completely on Him.

If I am relying in myself, If I become a self-reliant person, then my strength is always limited to me. My abilities are always limited to me. But if I learn that I am weak, that I can't do it, and I learn to trust in the Lord and to trust in His strength and trust in His ability, then I have unlimited strength and unlimited ability. And God wants to bring you to the broader dimensions of unlimited strength, unlimited potential, unlimited abilities, but trusting in Him to do the work. And Peter needed to learn that. And his spirit indeed was willing, but his flesh was weak. Jesus knew it. Peter didn't. Peter needed to know it. And of course he found out in a little while.

Then came Jesus with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said unto his disciples, Sit here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be sorrowful and very heavy (Mat 26:36-37).

The whole thing, the pressure began to come upon Jesus at this point.

And he said unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me (Mat 26:38).

It's almost as though Jesus is bringing these three who He had brought into that close intimate relationship with Himself, the three who had the privilege of being on the Mount of Transfiguration with Him. The three that were so often designated for special missions. "Fellows stay with me, watch with me, my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death, watch with me." Sort of reaching out for that support from these His closest associates.

And he went a little farther, and he fell on his face, and he prayed, saying, O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me (Mat 26:39):

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins. "Father if it is possible let this cup pass from me." If what is possible? If remission of sins is possible? Oh how this speaks against the blasphemous works of men to be accepted by God. A man thinking that he can offer to God his own good works, in order that he might receive the remission of his sins. How this speaks against the efforts of man to be accepted by God, by any other means. If it is possible, if salvation for man is possible, if man can be saved by being sincere, if man can be saved by being good, if man can be saved by being moral, if a man can be saved by being religious, if there is some other way by which sins might be remitted, let this cup pass from me.

Christ is calling now for an alternate plan. And yet He declares,

nevertheless not my will, thine will be done (Mat 26:39).

There submitting Himself unto the will of the father, is what involves the taking up of the cross. Jesus said to us that if we would come after Him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross. What does He mean, take up our cross? It means that I too must submit my will totally to the Father.

Let me say that it takes far greater faith to submit yourself totally to God, and to commit your life and all, totally to God, that takes far greater faith, than it does to insist that God heal you or that God do something for you. These people that are going around declaring that you should demand from God whatever you want, and insist upon it, make your confessions, and God must act aqueous to your will, have no understanding of God, the nature of God nor our relationship to Him.

Jesus expressed His will, and that's fine. I often in prayer express my will to God. "Lord this is what I would like to see, this is what I would like to have." But whenever I express my will to God I always make that reservation; "Nevertheless, not my will, your will be done." Because I know that God's will is much better than mine, and God's ways are much better than mine. And Jesus here is declaring, "if it's possible, let the cup pass; nevertheless not what I will."

Now what the cross of Christ then declares, and should declare to all men is that there is only one way by which a person can be saved, for had it been possible, surely God would have taken an alternate way, as His Son cried out to Him there from the garden. If you could be saved by being good, or moral, or whatever, then God would have inaugurated morality, a law, a code, by which you could live and abide, and be accepted by God, be forgiven. But such was not the case. The new covenant must be established in the blood of Jesus Christ. The cross was an essential for salvation. And that's why the cross offends people today. Because the cross always declares, "there is only one way by which a man can approach God, and that's through Jesus Christ".

Now he came to his disciples, and he found them asleep, and he said to Peter, Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (Mat 26:40-41).

Here when Jesus needed their support more than any other time, He would bereft of it, for they were sleeping, instead of watching, instead of praying, instead of being there to encourage and strengthen, His disciples were weary, and they were sleeping. And Jesus wakes them up and sort of chides them, "could you not watch one hour, watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation?" And then, understanding, "I know your spirit indeed is willing, that's not your problem, your flesh is weak, I know that."

And he went away again the second time, and he prayed, and he said, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done (Mat 26:42).

Consigning Himself now completely to the Father's will. "Lord, your will be done."

And again he came and found them asleep: for their eyes were heavy. And so he left them, and he went away again, and he prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then came he to his disciples, and he said unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest (Mat 26:43-45):

Now these are not words of scorn or rebuke, but these are words of tender love to those men that He had become so close to.

Notice there is a colon there. Sleep on now, take your rest. Probably there is an interval of several hours designated by that colon. And I believe that during this interval of time, as the disciples weary, or sleeping there on the ground in the garden of Gethsemane that Jesus just sat, "you can't watch with me, but I watch over you". And He was waiting, waiting for Judas to come. Waiting for the inevitable to happen.

And I think He was just sitting there, looking at these fellows loving them, and praying for each of them. I think He just sort of went around in the circle and said, "Oh Lord there is Peter. He is going to blow it so bad, and he is going to be so discouraged. He is going to feel so guilty, and it's just going to eat at him. Lord just really help Peter. Lord just really work in his life. Father use him as the instrument to strengthen the others, when you've done your work in him.

Jesus said, "Peter I have prayed for you that your faith fail thee not, and when thou art converted strengthen your brothers." I think Jesus was probably praying that right at this moment as He was sitting there watching the disciples. And there is an interval of time of perhaps several hours because He had gone to the garden after the dinner, and the dinner usually began somewhere around six o'clock or so. And after the dinner they had gone in the garden. And there He spent the time in prayer, and then, it wasn't until towards morning when Judas came out, because it was while He was still at Caiaphas that the rooster began to crow, indicating that it was getting to be close to morning. They start crowing at about five o'clock in the morning or so.

So for a couple of hours, probably Jesus just sat there looking at them, watching over them, praying for them. Knowing the heartache, knowing the confusion that they were going to be experiencing, knowing the whole experience, the trauma that they were going to go through, when they saw Him crucified. I think that He was just praying that the Father would strengthen them. And how often I wonder, He sits over us, watching us as our Lord. You know He is there making intercession for us, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for you. And how many times He just sits watching you as you sleep. And He says, "Now Father, they're going to have a rough day tomorrow. They're going to be facing a lot of problems. Lord, just really strengthen them, Father minister to them and all".

How beautiful Jesus sitting there in the garden watching over His disciples. Now that interval time is past, and Jesus then said, "fellows wake up",

Behold, the hour is at hand, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand who betrays me (Mat 26:45-46).

He could probably hear the soldiers coming through the garden. Hear them as they were coming down the path from the Kidron Valley, making their way from the house of Caiaphas and all, and noise seems to travel so easily in that country.

And while he yet spoke, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him (Mat 26:47-49).

This is an interesting word in the Greek, because it says in the Greek there is a word for kiss, which is the peck on the cheek that you give your wife when you leave in the morning. And then there is another Greek word for kiss, which is a passionate kiss. And it is interesting that these two Greek words are employed. Judas said, whomever I kiss, that is sort of a peck on the cheek kind of a thing, but when Judas came and it said, "he kissed Him", the other Greek word is used, kissed Him passionately.

And Jesus said unto him, Friend, why have you come? Then they came, and they laid hands on Jesus, and took him (Mat 26:50).

Another gospel says, "Judas you betray me with a passionate kiss!"

And, behold, one of them which was with Jesus (Mat 26:51)

We know from the other gospels it was Peter. Of course you just know it anyhow, wouldn't you.

stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear (Mat 26:51).

He can be glad that Peter was half-asleep; he would have had his head.

Then said Jesus unto him, Put again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Don't you realize that I could pray to the Father, and he would presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? (Mat 26:52-53)

Peter don't you realize yet what's going on? I don't have to do this. He was submitting to the will of the Father. "I could escape this right now. I could say okay Father, it's enough", and twelve legions of angels would come down and deliver Him out of their hands. He didn't need Peter swinging away with his sword.

In the Old Testament we read that when the angel of Lord passed through the army of the Syrians, the camp of the Syrians, in one evening one angel slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand. Imagine what twelve legions could do, but the Roman legions, of which they were so familiar and terrified, what could they do against a legion of angels or even against one angel?

"Peter don't you realize that I could call twelve legions of angels to deliver me, but if I did that,

how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? (Mat 26:54)

If I call now for deliverance, how could the scriptures be fulfilled? How could man be saved?

And in the same hour Jesus said to the multitudes, Are you come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, you didn't lay hands on me. But all of this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. And then all of the disciples forsook him, and fled (Mat 26:55-56).

They suddenly just sort of disappeared in the darkness of the garden, and the attention was upon Jesus, and He was alone.

And they that laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and he went in, and he sat with the servants, to see the end. And now the chief priests, and the elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but they found none; though many people bore witness, yet they really didn't find any that they could use. Until finally there came two witnesses, who said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Don't you answer anything? what is it which these are witnessing against you (Mat 26:57-62).

Now of course Jesus talking about the temple of His own body. In asking for a sign, He said, "destroy this temple, and in three days I build it." And now they are using this phrase and saying, "He said destroy the temple of God and He could rebuild it in three days."

Of course even when Jesus said that, they challenged Him. They said, "Hey, we've been forty-six years building this thing. What do you mean build it in three days?" But He was talking about the temple of his own body.

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him (Mat 26:63),

Now Jesus didn't respond until the high priest, then with this oath challenged him. He said,

I adjure thee by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God (Mat 26:63).

Now he is adjuring him by the Father, by the living God. And so Jesus then responds to him, and

He said unto him, Thou hast said [or you said it]: nevertheless [He said], I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his clothes saying, He has spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of any witnesses? behold, now we have heard the blasphemy. What do you think? And they all answered and said, He is guilty of death. And they did spit in his face, and they buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands (Mat 26:64-67),

In Isaiah chapter fifty, verse six as Isaiah is prophesying concerning Jesus he said, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

Spitting is in that oriental culture a sign of total disdain. And that isn't really the spitting of the saliva that is in your mouth, they really dig deep. And it's horrible. We've had them spit at us over there. The people in that culture, if you take a picture for instance, and they don't want you to take a picture of them, then you better be able to duck. They show their disdain by just spitting on a person. It's just absolute disdain. It's one of the most shameful things that you can do to a person, of course that's easily recognized.

Now Isaiah said, "they plucked His beard". Grabbed a handful and pulled out the buffeted His face. One of the gospels tells us that they covered His face, and then buffeted Him, which is far more painful. Our bodies are marvelously designed, and we have tremendous reflex actions. So that if I see a blow coming, my body instinctively reacts to that blow, and I give with it. And by given with that blow, I am cushioning the blow, so it isn't as severe.

When the quarterbacks really get hurt, is when they get blindsided. They see those big two hundred and seventy-five-pound tackles coming at them, and they relax and they just sort of go limp and roll with it. And you're in good shape as long as you can see it, and your body responds and reacts, and with that reflex action you give with the punch. But if you don't see it when you're blindsided, you're not expecting it, that's when you really get injured, that's when you really get hurt.

And the same in boxing. It's when you're coming in that a guy catches you flush, and you're not able to move back. A lot of people say, oh how can he take all that punishment? Well you learn to give with the blows. You learn to be relaxed and you cushion the blow by giving with it. The knockout punch is when a guy isn't giving, he is coming in, and suddenly you catch him with a blow, as he is coming in, and he gets the full force of it, and that's the thing that knocks a guy out.

Now in covering the face of Jesus, it took away this advantage of reflex actions, and of cushioning the blows, so that with the face covered and then they began to hit Him, it was the full impact of the blow. And then they would cry out,

Prophecy, who was it, name me, who was it that hit you? (Mat 26:68)

All of this He endured because He loved you.

Now Isaiah goes on in chapter fifty-two, to tell of that suffering that Jesus received, and He said, "as many as were astonished at thee, for His visage was so marred, more than any man, and His form more then the sons of men"(Isaiah 52:14).

In the Hebrew that is declaring that His face was so marred, you could not recognize Him as a man. By the time they pulled out His beard, and put the sack over His head and began to hit Him on the face and buffed Him, the face began to swell up, and contusions, and bruises, and the whole thing. When they were through with Him, you could not recognize Him as a man, as a human being. And Isaiah said, we, as it were, hid our face from Him. That is, looking at Him was such a shocking experience, you couldn't stand to see it.

You ever come upon an accident, and you see persons that are so mangled, that you just had to turn your head, you just couldn't look? That's what Isaiah is saying it was like. We, as it were, hid our faces from Him. But then Isaiah said, "but He was bruised, He was wounded for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). It was for me, wounded for me, chastised for our peace.

Now Peter was sitting outside of the palace (Mat 26:69):

And how it must have hurt for him to see all of this going on. But yet by this point, seeing such fierce anger, and the crowd turned against Jesus with such venom, fear gripped his heart.

And when a damsel came to him, and said, You were also with Jesus of Galilee. He denied before all of them, saying, I don't know what you are talking about. And when he was gone out to the porch, another maid saw him, and she said unto those that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man (Mat 26:69-72).

"I swear to you, I don't know Him."

And after awhile there came unto him those who were standing by, and they said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for your speech gives you away. [You have the accent of a Galilean.] And then began he to curse, and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crows, you shall deny me three times. And he went out, and wept bitterly (Mat 26:73-75).

How my heart goes out to Peter, because I can identify with Peter. For I have been in the same place, where I have done that which I swore I would not do. That which I promised God I would never do. I have failed. My flesh has failed. I also am guilty of denying the Lord by actions, by deeds, denying the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The comforting thing to me is the fact that Peter was restored. Not only restored, but God used him in a marvelous way. Though Peter had many flaws, though he was impulsive, though he would swing easily with the sword, though there were many times when he was rebuked, and though he was even guilty of failing under the pressure in the crisis, yet the Lord took Peter and used him in such a marvelous way, as an instrument and the development of the church. That encourages me, because I know that God can use men like Peter, and thus He can use men like me.

But it is first of all necessary that God prepare that man that He uses. For you are His workmanship, created together in Christ Jesus unto the good works that God has before ordained that you should walk therein. And God is working in our lives to take away our confidence in our flesh, to bring us to the awareness of our need of relying totally upon Jesus Christ. So that as God begins to do the

work in and through our lives we will not be taking the credit, or the glory for the work that God has done. But recognizing that my flesh is weak, and in and of myself I can do nothing, as God works through me, I can only praise God, and magnify the Lord, who uses imperfect instruments to do His work as He anoints them with the power of His Holy Spirit. And I can only seek to be empowered by the Spirit of God in such a way that it will over compensate for the weakness of my own flesh, and then I glory in the victory that God gives to me through the Spirit.

God wants to work in each of us. God has given to each of us a talent. It is important what we do with that talent. It is very important that we do not bury it, but that we use it for His glory. That we increase that which God has entrusted to us, and give it back to Him with the increase.

Shall we pray?

Father, we thank you for these lessons. Hide them away in our hearts. Teach us thy truth in Jesus' name. Amen.



Matthew 27:1-66 (AMP)

1 WHEN IT was morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people held a consultation against Jesus to put Him to death; 2 And they bound Him and led Him away and handed Him over to Pilate the governor. 3 When Judas, His betrayer, saw that [Jesus] was condemned, [Judas was afflicted in mind and troubled for his former folly; and] with remorse [with little more than a selfish dread of the consequences] he brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. They replied, What is that to us? See to that yourself. 5 And casting the pieces of silver [forward] into the [Holy Place of the sanctuary of the] temple, he departed; and he went off and hanged himself. 6 But the chief priests, picking up the pieces of silver, said, It is not legal to put these in the [consecrated] treasury, for it is the price of blood. 7 So after consultation they bought with them [the pieces of silver] the potter's field [as a place] in which to bury strangers. 8 Therefore that piece of ground has been called the Field of Blood to the present day. 9 Then were fulfilled the words spoken by Jeremiah the prophet when he said, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him on Whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, 10 And they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me. 11 Now Jesus stood before the governor [Pilate], and the governor asked Him, Are you the King of the Jews? Jesus said to him, You have stated [the fact]. 12 But when the charges were made against Him by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer. 13 Then Pilate said to Him, Do You not hear how many and how serious are the things they are testifying against You? 14 But He made no reply to him, not even to a single accusation, so that the governor marveled greatly. 15 Now at the Feast [of the Passover] the governor was in the habit of setting free for the people any one prisoner whom they chose. 16 And at that time they had a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. 17 So when they had assembled for this purpose, Pilate said to them, Whom do you want me to set free for you, Barabbas, or Jesus Who is called Christ? 18 For he knew that it was because of envy that they had handed Him over to him. 19 Also, while he was seated on the judgment bench, his wife sent him a message, saying, Have nothing to do with that just and upright Man, for I have had a painful experience today in a dream because of Him. 20 But the chief priests and the elders prevailed on the people to ask for Barabbas, and put Jesus to death. 21 Again the governor said to them, Which of the two do you wish me to release for you? And they said, Barabbas! 22 Pilate said to them, Then what shall I do with Jesus Who is called Christ? 23 They all replied, Let Him be crucified! And he said, Why? What has He done that is evil? But they shouted all the louder, Let Him be crucified! 24 So when Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but rather that a riot was about to break out, he took water and washed his hands in the presence of the crowd, saying, I am not guilty of nor responsible for this righteous Man's blood; see to it yourselves. 25 And all the people answered, Let His blood be on us and on our children! 26 So he set free for them Barabbas; and he [had] Jesus whipped, and delivered Him up to be crucified. 27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the palace, and they gathered the whole battalion about Him. 28 And they stripped off His clothes and put a scarlet robe (garment of dignity and office worn by Roman officers of rank) upon Him, 29 And, weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a reed (staff) in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they made sport of Him, saying, Hail (greetings, good health to You, long life to You), King of the Jews! 30 And they spat on Him, and took the reed (staff) and struck Him on the head. 31 And when they finished making sport of Him, they stripped Him of the robe and put His own garments on Him and led Him away to be crucified. 32 As they were marching forth, they came upon a man of Cyrene named Simon; this man they forced to carry the cross of Jesus. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha [Latin: Calvary], which means The Place of a Skull, 34 They offered Him wine mingled with gall to drink; but when He tasted it, He refused to drink it. 35 And when they had crucified Him, they divided and distributed His garments [among them] by casting lots so that the prophet's saying was fulfilled, They parted My garments among them and over My apparel they cast lots. 36 Then they sat down there and kept watch over Him. 37 And over His head they put the accusation against Him (the cause of His death), which read, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. 38 At the same time two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right hand and one on the left. 39 And those who passed by spoke reproachfully and abusively and jeered at Him, wagging their heads, 40 And they said, You Who would tear down the sanctuary of the temple and rebuild it in three days, rescue Yourself from death. If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross. 41 In the same way the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, made sport of Him, saying, 42 He rescued others from death; Himself He cannot rescue from death. He is the King of Israel? Let Him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in and acknowledge and cleave to Him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now if He cares for Him and will have Him, for He said, I am the Son of God. 44 And the robbers who were crucified with Him also abused and reproached and made sport of Him in the same way. 45 Now from the sixth hour (noon) there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour (three o'clock). 46 And about the ninth hour (three o'clock) Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?—that is, My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me [leaving Me helpless, forsaking and failing Me in My need]? 47 And some of the bystanders, when they heard it, said, This Man is calling for Elijah! 48 And one of them immediately ran and took a sponge, soaked it with vinegar (a sour wine), and put it on a reed (staff), and was about to give it to Him to drink. 49 But the others said, Wait! Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him from death. 50 And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. 51 And at once

the curtain of the sanctuary of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep in death were raised [to life]; 53 And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. 54 When the centurion and those who were with him keeping watch over Jesus observed the earthquake and all that was happening, they were terribly frightened and filled with awe, and said, Truly this was God's Son! 55 There were also numerous women there, looking on from a distance, who were of those who had accompanied Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him. 56 Among them were Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. 57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59 And Joseph took the body and rolled it up in a clean linen cloth used for swathing dead bodies 60 And laid it in his own fresh (undefiled) tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a big boulder over the door of the tomb and went away. 61 And Mary of Magdala and the other Mary kept sitting there opposite the tomb. 62 The next day, that is, the day after the day of Preparation [for the Sabbath], the chief priests and the Pharisees assembled before Pilate 63 And said, Sir, we have just remembered how that vagabond Imposter said while He was still alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Therefore give an order to have the tomb made secure and safeguarded until the third day, for fear that His disciples will come and steal Him away and tell the people that He has risen from the dead, and the last deception and fraud will be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said to them, You have a guard [of soldiers; take them and] go, make it as secure as you can. 66 So they went off and made the tomb secure by sealing the boulder, a guard of soldiers being with them and remaining to watch.

This time shall we turn in our Bibles to Matthew's gospel chapter twenty-seven? In the twenty-sixth chapter we left Jesus before the high priest, the Sanhedrin, and Peter had just outside of this group denied his Lord. And at this moment he is out somewhere weeping bitterly over his failure.

Now when the morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took council against Jesus to put him to death: and when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor (Mat 27:1-2).

Now the reason for the pretrial of Jesus was that they might be able to frame some charges against Him to bring to the Roman governor. What they accused Jesus of was blasphemy because He said that He was the Son of God. The high priest said, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us, are you the Messiah, the Son of God?" And Jesus said, "you've said it." And this guy ripped his clothes, and he said, "what need we of any further witnesses, you've heard Him with His own mouth, it's blasphemy"(Mat 26:63-65).

However, the Roman government had taken away from the Jews the right of capital punishment, just a few years earlier. And so the Jews did not have the authority to order a person put to death. And they were desiring that Jesus should be put to death. So they could not bring the charges of blasphemy before Pilate because Pilate would say, that's your own religious matter, you guys settle it on your own.

So they had to bring charges against Jesus that would hold in the Roman court, and so they made actually charges of insurrection against the Roman government. The charge that Jesus was saying that they shouldn't pay taxes to Rome, and the charge that Jesus declared Himself the king, and thus was setting Himself up against the Roman government, because He said that He was king.

Now these three charges are actually false charges that were made against Christ, scurrilous charges of which they could not offer any real proof. Pilate, being a seasoned judge, was able to see through their charges. And having examined Jesus, of course he realized that Jesus was innocent of these charges made against Him. However, at this point they were seeking to develop the charges. They bound Him, and then brought Him to the governor Pontius Pilate.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priest and to the elders (Mat 27:3),

Now there is the theory by some, and it is plausible that Judas Iscariot by his betraying of Jesus was trying to force the hand of Jesus to establish the kingdom. That Judas didn't like Jesus talking about the kingdom being prolonged, and he was getting impatient, even as John the Baptist earlier got impatient, and sent his disciples to Jesus and said, "Hey, are you the one that we are looking for, or shall we look for someone else?"(Mat 11:3). In other words, let's get this show on the road. And Judas himself was actually seeking to force Jesus to declare the kingdom, to manifest Himself as the king. And thus, it was actually a plan gone awry, in a sense, so that when he saw that Jesus was condemned, suddenly he realized that the whole plan had backfired on him, and he repented for what he had done.

However, that's reading into Judas, motivations of which we have no way of proving; it's just interesting speculations. It should be noted that there are two kinds of repentance. I think that if you would go to San Quentin, you would find that every prisoner there was repentant. They were all of them sorry. Very few of them sorry for what they did, but most of them sorry that they got caught. And there is two kinds of repentance that way. Sorry that the plan backfired perhaps or really sorry for what he did.

Now just what it was, we do not know. But Peter failed the Lord, and he repented, and he went out and wept bitterly. Contrasted to Judas, he repented, and we read, he went out and hanged himself. He brought the thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests and to the elders and he said,

I have sinned (Mat 27:4) And there is the confession of sin on Judas' part,

in that I have betrayed innocent blood (Mat 27:4).

It is interesting to me how that God all the way through was bearing witness to the innocence of His Son Jesus Christ. Judas, who betrayed Him said, "I have betrayed innocent blood." Pilate as he examined Him said, "I have examined Him, and I find no fault in Him." Later the thief on the cross said to the other one, "look this man has done nothing amiss." Look how many places God was attesting to the innocence of Jesus Christ, so that we would realize that He was dying not for His own guilt, not for His own sin, but He was dying for our guilt, and for our sins. For God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself.

And so the priest at this point having finished with Judas said to him:

What is that to us? [That's your problem] And so he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went out and hanged himself (Mat 27:4-5).

Now according to the account in the book of Acts, he fell on the ground, and his body burst open, so that the theory is that when he hanged himself, the rope broke and his body actually then fell to the ground.

Now the chief priest took the silver pieces, and said, It's not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood (Mat 27:6).

Interesting that they are interested in this little point of the law, when their trial of Jesus was actually illegal. Under their law it was illegal to try a man the day that he was arrested. And yet they arrested him in the garden, and brought Him right in and tried Him. Also, we read that the day was the preparation for the Passover. And it says, and the next day, because it was the Sabbath day, they wanted to hasten the death of the prisoners by breaking their legs, because there was a preparation for the Passover, and they didn't want the bodies hanging there. But the interesting thing is this, the next day they came to Pilate and said, "Now we've heard that while He was alive He said He was going to rise after three days." And they are coming to Pilate on a business issue on the Sabbath day was completely against their law, and that violation of the Sabbath was one of the chief causes that they had against Jesus.

How convenient it is, to use the law, but how easy it is to abuse the law, when the necessity is there.

So they took counsel, and they bought with them the potter's field, to bury the strangers in. [And] wherefore that field is called, The field of blood, unto this day [Aceldama]. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, and the price of him that was valued, whom the children of Israel did value; and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me (Mat 27:7-10).

Now at this point a problem arises, because that prophecy doesn't appear in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah. And just what the answer is to that I don't know. If Matthew made a mistake, and I know that it is very possible when a person is writing or speaking to make a mistake in reference. And if you will go back over my tapes I am certain that you find I have made a lot of mistakes in making reference to the Old Testament prophets. In fact I have a crazy crossover network in my mind that many times when I am talking about Noah, I call him Moses or I am talking about Moses, I call him Noah. And there is a crossover network, there is a switch loose up there, and it vibrates and gives a crossover every once in awhile.

Or it is possible that one of the earlier copyists, who was copying the scripture, as he was copying made the mistake and put Jeremiah, instead of Zechariah. But it is obvious that this prophecy is in Zechariah chapter eleven, and so there is that problem that does exist in this particular verse. And I only recall it to your attention before someone else does, and you can work with it.

And Jesus stood before the governor [that is Pilate]: and the governor asked him, saying, Are you the king of the Jews? (Mat 27:11)

Now this was one of the charges, one of the three charges that they laid against Jesus. He said, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

And Jesus said, Thou sayest it, [or you said it] (Mat 27:11).

Affirm me: "Yes I am, you've said it."

And when he was accused of the chief priest and the elders, he answered nothing (Mat 27:12).

"As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

Then said Pilate unto him, Don't you hear how many things they are witnessing against you? And he answered him never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly (Mat 27:13-14).

Surely he never had a prisoner quite like this before, an accused man quite like this, who did not say anything to defend Himself against the obvious false charges that were being made. Boy, I mean if it were us, and those charges were being made, we'll be yelling "liar", and we would surely be speaking up to defend ourselves.

Now it was the custom of the Roman government to release a prisoner, during the feast (Mat 27:15),

As a gesture of good will from Rome to the people, and sort of to just ingratiate the people to the Roman government and as a general rule, the prisoner that was released was a political prisoner. And quite often the people's favorite, one that the people admired for his courage. And his crime really wasn't a felonious type of a crime, except it was against the Roman government as a rule. And usually they were political prisoners that they would release.

Now at this time they had a very notable prisoner, [who was guilty of insurrection, and also of murder] his name was Barabbas (Mat 27:16).

Which is an interesting name. It is "son of the father". "Abba", you know is father, and "bar" in the Hebrew is son. Barjacob, son of Jacob; Barabbas the son of the father. It is thought that his name, and there are some accounts in the Syriac, the Pashida versions, they say his name was Jesus Barabbas; and that is why Pilate was saying and referring to Jesus as, Jesus which is called the Messiah, to sort of distinguish him from Jesus Barabbas. Jesus is the Hebrew name "Joshua". It was a very popular name. And so to identify which Jesus he was speaking of, they would either say, "Jesus of Nazareth", or "Jesus the Christ", which Pilate used.

Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ [or the Messiah]? For Pilate realized that it was only for envy that Jesus had been delivered (Mat 27:17-18).

The chief priests were envious of Him, because of the multitude following after Him, and actually they were jealous and also fearful. If the crowds went after Jesus completely, then they would lose their authority and their positions. So knowing that it was only for envy that they delivered Jesus, he figured for sure that the crowd would call for the release of Jesus.

Now when he was sat down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him (Mat 27:19).

There are certain apocryphal writings, which say that his wife's name was Claudia Pecula, but actually they had a little son Palatis, who was healed by Jesus, and that Claudia was actually a Christian. And there is quite a story; whether or not it is true is something, of course, we do not know. But it is quite an interesting story to say the least. And thus put a little extra drama into this whole story.

His wife sent unto him saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." She calls Him, "that just man". Again God testifying of the innocence of Jesus. "For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. And the governor said unto them, Whether of the two will that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. And Pilate saith unto them, What shall I then do with Jesus which is called the Messiah? (Mat 27:20-22)

Very interesting question, a question that is not limited to Pilate, but a question that every one of you must face. For every one of you have to make the same kind of a decision that Pilate made. You must decide what you are going to do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

You can't escape it. Jesus will not allow you any neutrality. He said, "he that is not for me is against me"(Mat 12:30). Therefore you must decide what you are going to do with Jesus: either believe, or not believe; either accept, or reject; either confess, or deny. The interesting thing about Pilate's decision is that in the final analysis, it had nothing to do with the destiny of Jesus. For what Jesus was to do He had to do, because the scriptures declare and prophesied the crucifixion. That was inevitable. It was inescapable. No matter what Pilate did, the crucifixion was inescapable. He was crucified from the foundations of the earth. According to God's predetermined council and foreknowledge, the crucifixion took place.

Therefore Pilate's decision really didn't determine the destiny of Jesus. What it determined was his own destiny; even as though you sit as judge concerning Jesus, and you judge in your own heart whether He was the Son of God, or not, whether He was a liar, a fraud, or the way, the truth and the life. And you yourself make your judgement concerning Jesus, but the judgement you make doesn't determine His destiny. What Jesus is He is, it makes no difference what you believe about it. But you determine concerning Jesus, and your judgement concerning Him, does determine your own destiny.

So though you sit as judge, ultimately you have judged yourself, by choosing to except or to reject. And thus no one can blame God for their destiny, because God has given to each man the capacity of choice. And you must determine what you are going to do with Jesus, who is called the Christ. And what you do with Him does determine your destiny.

"For as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to those who believed upon His name" (John 1:12). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have ever lasting life" (John 3:16). But if you don't believe in Him, then you will perish. But that's where you're sitting in the judgement seat is determining your destiny, as you choose to believe, or not to believe. Now, surely a person should not make a judgement concerning Jesus Christ without first of all personally, carefully examining all of the evidence. Before you reject Jesus, before you walk away as an unbeliever, it would be very wise for you to carefully examine all of the evidence. And not the testimony of His enemies, not the testimony of the people that don't know Him, not the testimony of people who have never meet Him. And yet it's unfortunate, but that's where the majority of people's determinations concerning Jesus Christ has come.

In a college classroom, or in a high-school classroom, when the teacher is a professor is making some slanderous remarks about Jesus and ridicule and making fun of it, and saying Jesus said this, or that, and makes a joke out of it. "And if He were really the Son of God then this would have been--" Oh, yeah, professor is always smart. And this person is gullible. And they take the word of some professor, rather than examining for themselves the evidence. It's tragic, because the professor doesn't know Him. He has never met Him. If you really want to know about Jesus Christ, if you really want to make a reasoned judgement, then you must examine all of the evidence fully. And I am convinced if you will honestly, with an open heart, examine all of the evidence; there will be no problem. You'll immediately accept Jesus. It's the most reasonable thing anybody can do. But what have you got to lose? But think of what you got to gain.

Pilate was in a difficult position. He was under tremendous pressure, inward pressure. He knew what was right. He knew that Jesus was innocent. He knew what he should do as a righteous judge, but there was this outside pressure of the crowd, forcing him to a decision that he knew was wrong. Unfortunately, many times we are under that kind of pressure too. The crowd forcing us to a decision or to an action that we know to be wrong. I feel sorry for a person in that condition. In your heart you know it's right; you're going against your own conscience, your own heart what you know to be right and true. And going against it is always a difficult thing and you suffer many times for years for something like that.

Awhile back I did something that I knew was wrong, and it still bothers me. It still bothers me, cause I knew it was wrong but I was pressured, and I went ahead and did it. And it bothers me still that I would go against what I know to be right just because of pressure that is being put on you.

The crowd said, Let him be crucified. The governor said, Why, what evil has he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified (Mat 27:22-23).

Now when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, and notice there was no rational, just louder cries. There is never any rational with a mob. But it seems that so often it's just the loudest voice that prevails. Such was the case here. No justice, really. Just the loudest voice is prevailed.

Then Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but rather only a [ruckus] tumult was being created, he took water, and he washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see you to it (Mat 27:24).

Now under the Old Testament law if a man was found dead in a field, there were no witnesses, just a dead body found in the field, they would measure from that body to the villages around. And the closest village to where the dead body was found, the elders would have to offer a sacrifice, and then they would have to wash their hands, declaring, "we are innocent, we don't know how this man was killed."

So Pilate is picking up a traditional Jewish law, and saying, "Look, I am innocent. You want to murder the man, but I am innocent, see you to it."

And the people answered, His blood be on us, and on our children (Mat 27:25).

I wonder if they really knew what they were saying.

You read in Josephus of the Holocaust, when Titus came with the Roman legions and destroyed Jerusalem, that horrible carnage. You begin to get a little of the implication of what these men were saying, when they said, "His blood be upon us, and on our children." However, the Lord said, that the children will not suffer or be punished for the parents' sin, nor the parents for the children, but each man for himself.

Now indirectly our children often suffer for our sins. God help us. There are a lot of children today suffering for their parents' sins. If their parents were using drugs, or their parents are alcoholics, or if their parents are child abusers, the child is suffering for their parents' sins. For when that child comes to stand before God, he will not be responsible for what his parents did, but will only be responsible for what he did. Many parents have the heartbreak of seeing their children go out and do horrible things, but when they stand before God, and the parents suffer, and the parent is hurt by the consequences that have fallen upon the children for the deeds that they have done. But when they stand before God, every man stands for himself. I do not have to answer for anybody but me. You have to answer for yourself when we stand before God.

Then he released Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified (Mat 27:26).

Now scourging before crucifixion was a common Roman practice. The prisoner would be tied to a post in such a way, in such a position, that his back would be bent over. And then the Roman guard would take a leather whip and in which there were bits of bone, and pieces of lead imbedded. And over the stretched back, the prisoner of course was stripped naked, and over his back, he would lay this whip, which as he would pull it back would pick up pieces of flesh with it, with these little bits of lead and bone imbedded in the whip. The prisoners oftentimes died at the whipping post. Most generally they fainted two or three times during the beating.

The purpose of the scourging was to solve the unsolved crimes in the community. The idea being that if the prisoner would confess to a crime, that the executioner applying the whip would make it a little easier each time. But if he was stubborn and refused to confess some crime against Rome, then he lay it on harder, and harder, and harder, until the prisoner, because of the excruciating pain, was forced to cry out his crimes against Rome. They always had a man standing by, a scribe, ready to write down the things that the prisoner confessed. And thus the Roman government was able to solve many of the crimes in the community by this method of torture. Again, "and as a sheep before her shearers is done, so He opened not His mouth." He had absolutely nothing to confess. The sentence was forty stripes. For forty is the number of judgement in the scriptures. However, there would only be thirty-nine stripes laid upon the prisoner. Thirty-nine being the number of mercy, not much mercy. But to show mercy, the Roman government would only lay on thirty-nine, though forty was always the sentence. Many times the prisoners bled to death, having received the scourging, they would be physically weakened, their backs torn to shreds, looking like hamburger.

And then they were taken out and placed on the cross with their hands nailed, and their feet were usually tied rather than nailed. But with their hands nailed, there was no way that they could shoo away the flies, and the bugs, that began to just cover their bodies.

Death by crucifixion was a very inhuman act. And yet Jesus, because He loves you so much, knowingly went to the cross, endured the suffering, despising the shame, in order that He might have that joy of being able to say to you, "You are forgiven, every sin you have committed. Enter into my kingdom". Oh such love. Hard for us to fully comprehend; I am sure we don't.

So when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and they gathered unto them the whole band of soldiers. And there they stripped him, and they put on this scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and they put a reed in his right hand: and they bowed their knees before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! (Mat 27:27-29)

A Historian records how that this similar scene happened once before. Where there was an idiot who was proclaiming himself as king, and so the Roman soldiers just for sport took a piece of cloth and sort of wove it around, and put it on his head for a crown. And they took a stick that was nearby and put it in his hand, and they began to say, "hail king". And they began to bow down, and pretend like he was the king and were making fun of this idiot. That is the kind of mockery they subjected Jesus to, the mockery that they had subjected the idiot to.

However, they made for him a crown of thorns. Here He is, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, wearing a crown of thorns, that has been pressed into his skull. But really how fitting. Where did thorns come from? When Adam sinned God said, "cursed be the earth, thorns shall it bring forth"(Genesis 3:17-18). The thorns came as a result of God's curse against men's sin. And how appropriate that His Son, who was coming to bear the curse of sin, should wear the crown of thorns.

And then they began to take the reed, and with it they began to smite him on the face, and they began to spit on him (Mat 27:30).

Now already He had been buffeted earlier in the high priest's precinct, where they covered His head and began to hit Him. So already no doubt His face was marred, swollen, bruised, eyes probably swollen shut.

Isaiah said, "His visage, or His face was so marred, you could not recognize Him as a human being" (Isaiah 52:14). Have you ever seen a person really beaten up, huge welts, bruises; face distorted? That's what Jesus looked like when they were finished with Him. You couldn't even tell that He was a human being.

And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put on his own raiment, and led him away to crucify him (Mat 27:31). Usually the prisoner had to carry the cross arm. The post was already implanted in the ground. As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: and they compelled him to bear his cross (Mat 27:32).

Simon probably was a Jew who had come for the Passover, maybe saved up his money up for years to come to Jerusalem. If a Roman soldier put his sword on your shoulder, he just says do this, do that; and you had to do it. They could compel you to do whatever they wanted. All they had to do is take out their sword, and lay it on your shoulder, and that was the badge of authority. And they could compel you to carry their gear for a mile. And Jesus made reference to that earlier. He said, "look, if they compel you to carry it a mile, take it two" (Matthew 5:41). When they say, "Hey, what's the matter? How come you are taking it two, not just one?" Gives you a chance to witness. So they compelled this Simon to carry His cross. Now we are told that he is the father of Alexandrian and Ruffus, in another gospel (Mark 15:21). So that there are some interesting stories concerning Simon and his sons and the commitment that they made to Jesus Christ. When they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, the place of the skull (Mat 27:33),

And of course just outside of the Damascus gate there is this face of the cliff that has the caves that give the appearance of a skull, as the result of the coring of the stone from that area. So that is where Jesus was crucified outside of the walls of the city of Jerusalem, outside the gate. And interestingly enough, over in Jerusalem now they have excavated the Damascus gate, which is below the modern day Damascus gate, but this gate that has been excavated is the very gate of the Roman period, the gate through which Jesus walked on His road to Golgotha. We got to go into it for the very first time this last year. One of the most exciting experiences as you stand in that gate, and as you walk out and realize, this is the very Roman gate of the Herodian period that Jesus went out going to the cross. Heavy, heavy. And they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall (Mat 27:34):

Now the wealthy women of Jerusalem made up this concoction of wine, sour wine mixed with frankincense, which was an anesthesia, it was a drug, and it sort of put you out so that you didn't feel the pain and the suffering of the cross so much. It was sort of a gesture of kindness, because dying on the cross was such a painful experience. You hang there until your muscles finally give way. And then as your muscles give way, your body begins to fall out of joint. And I don't know if you ever had a knee go out, or whatever, sometimes it's excruciatingly painful.

And so this was sort of a kind gesture to give a little bit of anesthesia, or drug, to the prisoner, so that he could endure more easily the horrible pain of crucifixion. Significant that Jesus did not take it. Later on when He cried, "I thirst", and they gave Him the mixture again, then He did take it. But he wanted to taste for every man the cup of God's indignation against sin. And He suffered completely for you and for me. He had tasted of it, he did not drink (Mat 27:34). He knew what it was.

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots [Psalm 22:18]. And sitting down they watched Him there; And they set up over His head the accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS (Mat 27:35-37).

Now they would carry -- actually, that when the prisoner was going to the cross there would be a square of Roman soldiers around him. And the sergeant over the group would carry a little sign, and on the sign was the accusation against the prisoner. And they usually did not take them directly to the cross, but took them through the streets of the city, so that all of the people would be terrified by the power of the Roman government. And the fellow would hold up the accusation as they were walking through the streets, and all of the people would see this guy on the way to the cross, and they would see the accusation that was made against him. And so then when they came to the cross, they would nail the accusation on the post going up on the top of it, so that the people would know this man was being crucified, because -- and of course, with Jesus He claimed to be, according to the accusation, the King of the Jews. He is actually the King of the Universe.

Then there were two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, the other on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, as they were wagging their heads (Mat 27:38-39),

Now the wagging of their heads was cultural, and sometimes they still do that today. There is a shrill cry that they'll give, they'll wag their heads, they will wave their hands and all. And so they that passed by were reviling Him, as they wagged their heads, and they said,

You that destroyed the temple [or you that said you could destroy the temple], and build it in three days, save thyself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and the elders, said, he saved others; himself he cannot save (Mat 27:40-42).

What an interesting statement and how true it is. He saved others. In fact the priest said two things about Him. First of all in verse forty-two, He saved others, and in verse forty-three, He trusted in God. What a testimony concerning Jesus. He saved others and He trusted in God. With that testimony that the high priest made against Jesus, he was really condemning himself. We are condemning a man who saved others and trusted in God. He saved others. Himself He cannot save. How true that is. If He saved Himself, He could not save others. It was only by not saving Himself that He was able to save you.

When Peter pulled the sword and began to flail there in the garden, Jesus said, "Put it away Peter. They that take up the sword will die by the sword. Don't you realize, Peter, I am in control. At this moment I could call for ten legions of angels to deliver me out of their hands, but then how could the scriptures be fulfilled? How could I save man? How could I redeem mankind, if I would deliver myself from this?"

He saved others; Himself He cannot save. True, if He is to save others, He cannot save Himself. He's got to go through with it, if He is going to save others. Interesting statement; I am sure made by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, only because the man was the high priest, and that happened many times in the history of Israel. The high priest wasn't such a godly man, but because he was the high priest, there was that certain anointing with the office, and he would speak prophetically just because he was in the office of the high priest.

He said, If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. [Now] the thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth (Mat 27:42-44). Until later on when one of them repented and asked forgiveness, and we get that when we get to Luke's gospel. Now from the sixth hour [that is noon] (Mat 27:45) The clock began with morning, sunrise, six o'clock in the morning, third hour be ninth, so that's when Jesus was put on the cross, the ninth hour, early in the morning. Now three hours later, having been hanging there for three hours, when the sixth hour noon, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour [three in the afternoon] (Mat 27:45). Impossible that it could have been an eclipse, because this was the Passover season and the Passover is full moon. And you can't have an eclipse during full moon, because the moon is on the opposite side of the sun. So this is just some phenomena that God created. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice [about three in the afternoon] saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mat 27:46) Now with this He immediately calls their attention to Psalm twenty-two, because Psalm twenty-two opens with that statement. Perhaps it was just to His disciples standing by that He gave this first verse and sort of saying, "go home and look it up, and read it, and you'll know what's going on." For as they would read through Psalm twenty-two, they would realize that God had prophesied this whole thing. They would understand so much of what was happening. It is there in Psalm twenty-two, that He speaks about "I cried in the daytime, and thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent" (Psalms 22:2), spoke about the darkness that would come.

In Psalm twenty-two it speaks about them casting lots for His vesture (Psalms 22:18) In Psalm twenty-two it talks about His tongue cleaving to the roof of His jaw (Psalms 22:15). That tremendous thirst that they get as their body dehydrates, because of the lost of blood and all.

In Psalm twenty-two it describes, "my bones are all out of joint" (Psalms 22:14), that's slipping out of joint, that happened to a person who was crucified. And so by crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalms 22:1) He has given them a reference point to look up, in order that they might have a more full understanding of just what's going on.

But also as we hear this cry we begin to understand the agony in the garden the night before, when He began to sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, as He was pleading with the Father, if it was possible let the cup pass. This is the bitterness of the cup that He had to drink, that effect that sin has of separating a man from God. Through the eternity past, He had always been one with the Father, never separated. But when God laid on Him the iniquities of us all, because God cannot look in agreement upon sin, there came that separation, as He tasted for a moment that separation from God, in order that you would not have to be separated from God eternally. God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. And when the sins of the world were laid on Jesus, He was forsaken of God.

And thus, that cry that rang out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?". I am certain that none of us have ever experienced quite like He did, that awesomeness of being forsaken of God. Because God has never forsaken any of us, even though we rebel. God has always been there.

Some of them that stood by, when they heard him [say, Eli, Eli. They thought He was calling for Elijah.] they said, Listen he is calling for Elijah. And immediately one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, to give him to drink (Mat 27:47-48).

They thought He was delirious from the pain; that's actually what it was. And so a fellow ran to get the anesthesia to sort of put Him out of His head.

And the others said, No, no, wait a minute, wait let's see if Elijah will come. [Now] Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the spirit (Mat 27:49-50).

He said, "no man takes my life from me, I give my life." They didn't take His life. He dismissed His spirit. He said, "I have the power to lay down my life, and I have the power to take it up again, no man takes my life." He had the power to say to His spirit, "All right you may leave the body now." And He dismissed His spirit. But the cry that He made, that other loud cry was the cry of victory. It is finished. The redemption of man is complete.

And having made that cry, He said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit"(Luke 23:46). And He dismissed His spirit.

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Mat 27:51);

Not from the bottom to the top. God was the one that ripped that thing. From the top to the bottom. The veil of the temple had always shown to the people the difficulty of the approach to God by sinful man. The only way a sinful man could approach God was through the high priest. And that only once a year on the day of atonement or one day a year, in which he would come in actually twice, but only the one day of the year he approached to God, and that only after many sacrifices. And he would have to enter in through the veil of the temple. But that heavy veil hanging there. And there are some records that say that it was eighteen inches thick. That heavy veil hanging there was to man a prohibition. God cannot be approached by sinful man, don't attempt it, lest you be destroyed.

But having established now the new covenant in His blood, the door is open for all men to come to God. And that of course is the significance of the veil being rent in two. God is declaring "come on in." The provision has now been made for your sins, for you to be forgiven, and now you can have access to God through Jesus Christ, who has entered through the veil for us, in order that He might make access for each of us to come to God.

Paul the apostle, as he is talking to the Ephesians in chapter one, concerning the tremendous spiritual blessings that we have in Christ; as he is listing these spiritual blessings, he says, "by whom also we have access through His blood". So the veil of the temple has been rent through Jesus Christ. Any of you can now come to God. The door is open, and the invitation has been given, "come, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden". He'll give you rest.

Along with the veil being torn,

the earth did quake, and the rocks were torn (Mat 27:51);

You remember Jesus had said, "these very rocks would cry out". Now these rocks are being torn at this convulsion of nature against the horror of man's sin.

The first recorded sin of man was fratricide or suicide, actually if you go back one. When Adam ate, he committed suicide. God said, "the day you eat thereof, you're going to die." And when he ate of the forbidden fruit he committed suicide. The second sin was fratricide when Cain killed his brother Abel. But surely the worse sin recorded against men was deicide, when man attempted to kill God, hung Him on the cross. All nature was repelled by it.

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection (Mat 27:52-53),

Now Matthew is inserting this a little early in the record. But it took place after His resurrection. "The graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose."

And they went into the holy city, and appeared unto many (Mat 27:53). Now Paul tells us in Ephesians four, eight through eleven, "He who has ascended is the one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth". And when He ascended He led the captives from their captivity, and He gave gifts unto many.

Jesus tells us in Luke sixteen, and we'll be getting to that, that there were two compartments in Hades. Abraham was in charge of one, as he was comforting those righteous who died. Peter tells us that Jesus went and preached to those souls who were in prison, and of course opened the doors of hell, to set at liberty those that were bound. And that of course is part of the prophecy of Isaiah; to set at liberty those that were bound, to open the prison doors to the captives. You see, it was impossible that those Old Testament saints could be made perfect apart from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ because it was impossible that the blood of goats and bulls could put away sin. All it could do was cover it. It took the blood of Jesus Christ to put away sin. So they could not come into that perfected

state, until the perfect sacrifice had been made. And once it had been made, then they could come into the perfected state.

Now when the centurion, and those that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: And among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children (Mat 27:54-56). The women stuck by Him. And when the evening was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: and he went to Pilate, and he begged for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and he laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out of the rock: And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre (Mat 27:57-61). The women were still there faithful, hanging on, sitting by the door of the sepulchre. Now the next day, that followed [This would have been the Sabbath day, the day that followed] the day of preparation, [the next day that followed, the day of preparation] the chief priests and the Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, that after three days he was going to rise again (Mat 27:62-63). Now the disciples had forgotten that. They were totally devastated at this point, but yet the enemies remembered it. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest the disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead: so that the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, You have a guard: go your way, make it as sure as you can (Mat 27:64-65). I like that. Hey, just make it as sure as you can. You think you can keep Him in there; go ahead, try. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting the watch (Mat 27:66).



#### Matthew 28:1-20 (AMP)

1 NOW AFTER the Sabbath, near dawn of the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to take a look at the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled the boulder back and sat upon it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his garments as white as snow. 4 And those keeping guard were so frightened at the sight of him that they were agitated and they trembled and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, Do not be alarmed and frightened, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, Who was crucified. 6 He is not here; He has risen, as He said [He would do]. Come, see the place where He lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell His disciples, He has risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you. 8 So they left the tomb hastily with fear and great joy and ran to tell the disciples. 9 And as they went, behold, Jesus met them and said, Hail (greetings)! And they went up to Him and clasped His feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, Do not be alarmed and afraid; go and tell My brethren to go into Galilee, and there they will see Me. 11 While they were on their way, behold, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had occurred. 12 And when they [the chief priests] had gathered with the elders and had consulted together, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers, 13 And said, Tell people, His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we were sleeping. 14 And if the governor hears of it, we will appease him and make you safe and free from trouble and care. 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this story has been current among the Jews to the present day. 16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed and made appointment with them. 17 And when they saw Him, they fell down and worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 Jesus approached and, breaking the silence, said to them, All authority (all power of rule) in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19 Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all the days (perpetually, uniformly, and on every occasion), to the [very] close and consummation of the age. Amen (so let it be).

#### Chapter 28

In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. And his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment was as white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not: for know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, and see the place where the Lord lay. And then go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goes before you into Galilee; and there shall you see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them [that is His disciples], saying, All hail. And they came and they held him by the feet, and worshipped him (Mat 28:1-9). Boy I imagine the excitement. Imagine the joy of this morning. Now how is it that they held him by the feet and worshipped Him, when early He said to Mary, "don't touch me, I've not yet ascended to my Father"? It lies in the Greek, where Jesus said, "don't touch me", or is translated "don't touch me", literal from the Greek it is, "don't cling to me". Mary, no doubt, got a death grip around His neck, like a person who is drowning. You got away from me once; you'll never get away from me again. And so He said "Mary, don't cling to me. You've got a job to do; go tell the disciples I am risen." But here they come and they are clinging, they are holding Him by the feet, as they worship Him. Then Jesus said unto them, Be not afraid: go and tell my brothers that they go into Galilee, and there they will see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city, and they showed the chief priests all of the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, they had taken counsel, and they gave them large sums of money, saying, You say that his disciples came by night, and stole him while we slept. And if the word of this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and take care of you. So they took the money, and they did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then when the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And

take care of you. So they took the money, and they did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then when the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. An when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Mat 28:10-18).

Can you imagine how much power that must be? "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Go therefore (Mat 28:19),

Interesting, He said, "all power is given to me, you go". But then He said I will be with you as you go to proclaim God's love to a needy world. The Lord is with you, and backing you up with all of the power that exists in the universe. Oh, what power is ours, as we go out to proclaim the risen Savior to the lost world.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore",

and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost (Mat 28:19):

Not in the name. There is a group called, "Jesus only". And they say, "In the name", and the name is Jesus. So you should only baptize in Jesus name only. But in the Greek it is, "unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". So it sort of blows their little theory.

Teaching them (Mat 28:20),

Notice the command is to "go and to teach". The real ministry of the church should be that of teaching God's truth to man.

Teaching them to observe all of the things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of this age (Mat 28:20).

Not, you know, if you go to Africa or you go to the South Pole, but even to the end of the age, to the consummation of the age, or down to our present time. As you go He is with you, even to the end of this age.

Now some of the early church fathers, Usiphias, Iranias, and Justin Myrder, declared that Pilate wrote an account to the Roman government concerning the crucifixion of Jesus, and those things that happened around the crucifixion. There is a document that was found in the Vatican library, that purported to be the letter that Pilate sent to Caesar, as he explained to him his part and the place of Rome in the crucifixion of Jesus. The letter is called the "Actipalate", and it is an interesting letter. However, the authenticity is something that cannot be fully attested to, but it does make very interesting reading. I have a book called the Archaeological and Historic Writings of the Sanhedrin, and Talmud of the Jews, and in this book there is a copy of the Actipalate. I like to just read a couple of those segments out of it to you.

"To Tiberas Caesar the emperor of Rome, noble sovereign greeting,

"The events of the last few days in my province have been of such character, that I will give the details in full as they have occurred, as I should not be surprised if in the course of time they may change the destiny of our nation. For it seems oblate that all the gods have ceased to be populous. I am almost ready to say, 'Cursed be the day that I succeeded Dalarias Fascias, in the government of Judea', for since then my life has been one of continual uneasiness and distress".

And he goes on and tells of some of the problems that he had as he took over as the governor there in Israel. He said:

"I granted unto Jesus unlimited freedom. It was true that Jesus was severe on the rich and the powerful. And this was a political reason, in my opinion, for not restraining the liberty of the Nazarene. The scribes and the Pharisees, He would say to them, 'You are a race of vipers. You resemble painted sepulchres. You appear well unto men, but you have death within you.'

"At other times He would sneer at the alms of the rich and the proud, telling them that the mite of a poor was more precious in the sight of God. And new complaints were daily made at the praetorium against the insolence of Jesus. I was even informed that some misfortune would befall Him, and that it would not be the first time that Jerusalem had stoned those that called themselves prophets. And if the praetorium refuse justice an appeal would be made to Caesar.

"However my conduct was approved by the senate, and I was promised reinforcement after the termination of the Partian War. Being too weak to suppress the sedition, I resolved on adopting a measure that promised to establish the tranquility of the city, without subjecting the praetorium to the humiliating concession. I wrote to Jesus requesting an interview with Him at the praetorium. He came. You know that in my veins there flows Spanish, mixed with Roman blood is incapable of fear; it is a peril emotion.

"But when the Nazarene made His appearance, I was walking in my baselic, and my feet seemed fastened with an iron hand to the marble pavement, and I trembled in every limb as a guilty colberet, for He was calm. The Nazarene was as calm as innocence itself. When He came up to me, He stooped, and by a signal sign He seemed to say to me, 'I am here', though He spoke not a word. For some time I contemplated with admiration and awe. This extraordinary type of man, a type of man unknown to our numerous painters, who have given form and figures to all the gods and the heroes. There was nothing about Him that was repelling in His character, yet I felt odd and tremulous to approach Him.

"Jesus" said I unto Him at last, and my tongue faltered. "Jesus of Nazareth I have granted you for the last three years ample freedom of speech, nor do I regret it. Your words are those of a sage. I know not whether you have read Socrates or Plato, but this I know there is in your discourses a majestic simplicity that elevates you far above these philosophers. The Emperor is informed of it and I as his humble representative in his country, I am glad of having allowed you that liberty of which you are so worthy.

"However, I must not conceal from you that your discourses have raised up against you powerful enemies, and neither is this surprising. Socrates had his enemies, and he fell victim to their hatred. Yours are doubly incensed against you, on account of your discourses being so severe against their conduct, against me, on account of the liberty I have afforded you. They even accused me of being indirectly leagued with you, for the purpose of depriving the Hebrews of the little civil power the Rome has left them. My request, and I do not say, 'my order', is that you be more circumspect and moderate in your discourses in the future, and more tender toward them, lest you arouse the pride of your enemies and they rise against you, this stupid populous, and compel me to employ the instruments of law.'

"The Nazarene commonly replied, 'Prince of the earth, your words proceed not from true wisdom. Say to the torrent, stop in the midst of the mountain gorge, it will uproot the trees of the valley. The torrent will answer you that it obeys the laws of nature, and the Creator, God, alone knows whither flows the water of the torrent.

"Verily I say unto you, before the rose of Sharon blossoms, the blood of the just shall be spilt.'

"Your blood will not be spilt,' said I with deep emotions. 'You are more precious in my estimation, on account of your wisdom, than all of the turbulent and proud Pharisees who abused the freedom granted them by the Romans. They conspire against Caesar and convert his bounty into fear and pressing the unlearned, that Caesar is a tyrant, and seeks their ruin. Insolent wretches they are not aware that the wolf of the tiger sometimes clothes themselves with the skin of sheep to accomplish the wicked ends''.

And he goes on with his conversation there. And then the interesting part I feel is concerning the resurrection. Talking of the crucifixion he said, "I returned to the praetorium, was pensive on ascending the stair, the steps of which was still stained with the blood of the Nazarene. I perceived an old man in a sibilant posture, and behind him several Romans in tears. He threw himself at my feet and he wept most bitterly. It is painful to see an old man weep.

"And my heart already overcharged with grief, wept, though strangers, mutually wept together. And in truth it seemed that the tears lay very shallow that day on many whom I perceived out of the vast concourse of people. I never saw such a complete division of feeling. Both on the extreme, those that betrayed and sold Him, those that testified against Him. Those that said, 'crucify Him; we will have His blood'. All slunk off like cowardly cures, and washed their teeth with vinegar. As I am told that Jesus taught a resurrection and separation after death, if such should be the fact I am sure it commenced in this vast crowd.

"Father', I said to him, after gaining control of my feelings, 'who are you, and what is your request?' 'I am Joseph of Arimathaea', he replied, 'and I have come to beg of you upon my knees the permission to bury Jesus of Nazareth'.

"Your prayer is granted', I said to him. And at the same time ordered Manleous to take some soldiers with him to superintend the Interment, lest it should be profaned. A few days after the sepulchre was found empty, His disciples published all over the country that Jesus had risen from the dead, as He had foretold. This last report created more excitement than the first. As to its truth I cannot say for certain, but I have made some investigation in the matter. So you can examine it for yourself and see if I am at fault as Herod represents me.

"Joseph buried Jesus in his own tomb. Whether he contemplated the resurrection, or calculated to cut himself another, I cannot tell. The next day after He was buried, one of the priests came to the praetorium and said that they were apprehensive that the disciples intended to steal the body of Jesus and hide it, and then to make it appear that He had risen from the dead, as He had foretold, in which they were perfectly convinced.

"I sent him to the captain of the royal guard, Malcus, to take Him, the Jewish soldiers, and placed as many around the sepulchre as were needed. And then if anything should happen, they would blame themselves, and not the Romans. And when the great excitement arose about the sepulchre being found empty, I felt deeper solicitude than ever. I sent for Malcus who told me, he had placed his Lieutenant Benishim with one hundred soldiers around the sepulchre. He told me Benishim and the soldiers were very much alarmed at what had occurred there that morning.

"I sent for this man Benishim, who related to me as near as I can remember the following circumstances. He said that about the beginning of the fourth watch, they saw His soft and beautiful light over the sepulchre. He had first thought that the women had come to embalm the body of Jesus, as was their custom. They could not see how they gotten through the guards. And while these reflections were passing through his mind, behold the whole place lighted up, and there seemed to be crowds of the dead in their grave clothes. All seemed to be shouting and filled with ecstasy, while all around and above was the most beautiful music he had ever heard. And the whole air seemed to be filled with voices praising God.

"And at this time there seemed to be a reeling and a swimming of the earth, that he turned so sick and faint, that he could not stand on his feet. And he said, 'the earth seemed to swim from under him and his senses left him', so he did not know what did occur. I asked him in what condition he was when he came to himself. He said he was lying on the ground with his face down. I asked him if he could not have been mistaken as to the light. Was it not maybe the day coming in the east? He said at first he thought of that, but only as stones cast away, it was exceedingly dark, and then he remembered it was too early for day.

"I asked him if his dizziness might not have come from being awakened, and getting up to suddenly. For sometimes it has that effect. He said he was not, and had he had not been asleep all night, as the penalty was death for him to sleep on duty. He said he had let some of the soldiers sleep at the time, and some were asleep then. I asked him how long the scene lasted. He said he did not know, but he thought nearly an hour. He said it was hide by the light of day. And I asked him if he went to the sepulchre after he had come to himself. He said 'no', because he was afraid, that just as soon as relief came, they all went to their quarters.

"I asked him if he had been interrogated by the priest. He said he had, they wanted him to say that it was an earthquake, and to say that they were asleep, and offered him money to tell that the disciples had come and stolen the body. But he saw no disciples. He did not know that the body was gone until he was told so. I asked him what was his private opinion of the priest that conversed with him. He said some of them thought that Jesus was no man, that He was not a human being, that He was not the son of Mary, that He was not the same that was born of the virgin in Bethlehem. That the same person had been on earth before, with Abraham and Lot, and at many times and places.

"It seems to me if the Jewish theory be true, these conclusions would be correct. For to sum up His life, it would be in accord with this man's life, as is known and testified by both friends and foes. For the elements were no more in His hands than clay in the hands of a potter. He could convert water into wine. He could change death into life, diseases into health. He could calm the seas. Still the storms. Call up fish with a silver coin in its mouth. Now I say if He could do all these things which He did, and many more as the Jews all testified, and it was doing these things that created this enmity against Him. He was not charged with criminal offenses, nor was He charged with violating any law, nor of wronging any individual in person. All of the facts are known to thousands, as well as by His foes and His friends. So I am almost ready to say, as did Manilas at the cross, truly this was the Son of God."

So that is the Actepolati. There are sources in here that try to attest to its authenticity. We do not know. As I say, the early church fathers did say that Pilate wrote this letter to the Roman government to explain the circumstances. Iranias refers to it, they said, and Justin Marter, and the early church historian Usiveus.

So interesting to say the least. And whether or not that is true, I do know that the story that we read out of Matthew is true. That Jesus indeed is risen from the dead, has ascended into heaven, and is coming again to receive us unto Himself, and to establish His kingdom, and His reign over the earth. And whether or not you are a part of His kingdom depends upon your decision of what you will do with Jesus. Will you crown Him as the King and the Lord of your life? If so, then you've become a citizen of His eternal kingdom and you will share in the glory of that kingdom. For surely the Father will answer that prayer. "Father, I would that these that have been with me, should see me in the glory that I have with you, before the world ever existed." And God affirmed it and said, "I have glorified thee, and will glorify thee again."

Oh glorious day. And as I look around the world today and I see the misery and the suffering, and the strife, and the problems, as they seem to be mounting and multiplying, with John at the end of the book of Revelation when Jesus said, "behold I come quickly." He responded, "even so, come quickly Lord Jesus".

So we come to the end of Matthew's gospel and next week we begin another account. These are known as the synoptic gospels, and that they all of them cover pretty much the same period of the history of the life of Jesus; Matthew, Mark and Luke. When we get into John's gospel, John concentrates mainly in the latter part of the ministry of Christ, and does not follow the same accounts or record all of the same events as do Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Shall we pray?

Father, we thank you for Your Word. We thank you for the death of Jesus Christ, the suffering that He endured that we might be redeemed from all of our sins. Father, we pray that tonight Thy Holy Spirit will make the things of Jesus Christ very real to us. And as we stand in the place of Pilate, and as we make our own determination concerning Jesus, help us Lord not to give into the pressures of the world around us; but may we yield to that still small voice of Thy spirit within as we obey our own conscious, our own heart as you bear witness to what is right and what is true.

And may we then Lord just surrender our lives wholly, completely, unreservedly to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In His name we pray, Amen. (Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

The Lord bless you and watch, guard, and keep you;

The Lord make His face to shine upon and enlighten you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His {approving} countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Numbers 6:24-26

( Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 1399-1402)

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