

And Truly Repent

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27. Matthew, chapter 27. And again, if you're visiting with us, you need a Bible, a chair, in the little pocket or underneath the chair in front of you, there's a Bible there. You can pull that out and go to the back, find page 24, Matthew, chapter 27, first 10 verses of Matthew, chapter 27.

We're gonna dive in. I just wanna encourage you, we're praying for these training centers, get the privilege to be a part of that, these training centers throughout the world where men from Master's Seminary, they go out into these different countries, Croatia and India, we pray for them today. And they're training men, they're training pastors to go and shepherd our brethren, our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world. So we're taking the time to pray for them. They're really getting hit hard with this whole virus thing, so we wanna be praying for them.

[1:18] And they're praying for us too, so that's kinda cool. Next week we're gonna pray for Japan. And I might even throw in there Fali again, because Fali's in the process of starting one in Madagascar, so he's really important to us, because we're supporting him personally, like just him.

But anyways, so good times for us to be praying for those around the world. Matthew chapter 27, read the first 10 verses. And at early morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

And binding him, they led him away, and they delivered him to Pilate, the governor. Then Judas, the one who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, feeling remorse, he returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, betraying innocent blood.

But they said, what to us? See yourself. And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed.

And going away, he hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, it is not lawful to put them, into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.

[2:43] And counseling together, they bought the field of the potter with that money as a burial place for strangers. For this reason, that field has been called the field of blood to this day.

And then, the word through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying, and they took the 30 pieces of silver, the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the field of the potter as the Lord directed me.

Are we facing a post-COVID-19 suicide epidemic?

Is the pandemic, pandemic, pandemic, hello, is the pandemic putting more people at risk for suicide? Too many Ps.

Is the pandemic putting more people at risk for suicide? That was the title of the article, if I could say it. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Statistics, suicide is already the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S.

[3:52] with a 35% rise in the suicide rate from 1999 to 2018. But a new article recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Association suggests that we may be at the beginning of something far worse.

Titled, this article, that they're quoting here, Suicide, Mortality, and Coronavirus Disease 2019, A Perfect Storm. The article suggests that the unprecedented public health actions needed to contain the new pandemic along with social distancing requirements, stay-at-home orders, and stress due to job loss may well result in far more suicide in the years to come.

End quote. That's the part of this whole shutdown that nobody wants to talk about. And then you throw into the mix these lunatic, sinful, selfish rioters and looters who destroy all these businesses more reasons for people to take their own lives.

As far as they're concerned, all is lost. And they can't take it. And that's what happens with that weight.

And that's what people feel with the weight of guilt and shame. They have those same feelings of nothingness. They think life is hopeless.

[5 : 39] That's exactly how Judas felt. And yet, God is ready to forgive.

God is ready to forgive. As Matthew is calling us to bow down and worship Jesus, who is he?

The Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel. He is the judge of the world. We bow down and worship Jesus and we truly repent. And truly repent.

Truly repent. Jesus calls us to truly repent and trust him. Not just be remorseful or follow some legalistic code.

He stands ready to forgive us. It's not about feeling bad over your sin or you're supposed to follow some kind of religious code or standard.

[6 : 48] Lord, I was grateful in our first hour Stephen Lawson brought up the truth that Christianity it's personal, it's relational, it's relationship.

It's not if you know about God as if you know God. Christianity is relational. Change the direction of your life and follow Christ and he'll forgive you.

We come here to another sad section and it's just going to keep getting worse because we come soon to the death of our Lord.

Another sad section of Matthew's gospel where the council of the Sanhedrin officially condemned Jesus and Judas commits suicide and yet even in the midst of these terrible horrific events you still see God's purposes will stand.

You still see it because Matthew brings it out for us. God is sovereign over people's responses to him. So bow down and worship Jesus and truly repent.

[8 : 13] Repent? Why? Because of Jesus' condemnation. Notice the first two verses. Early morning the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

Just as Jesus had predicted Matthew chapter 20 the Sanhedrin met together early in the morning and they officially decided to condemn Jesus. Verse 2 binding him they led him away and they delivered him to Pilate the governor they would hand him over to the Gentiles aka Romans to carry it out since they didn't have the power to actually kill him.

Once again the truth of Jesus Jesus who was the prophet the ultimate prophet of God is proven true. a word if you will about Pilate since he will take up center stage next week as the Roman governor only he had the power to execute those convicted by the Sanhedrin and of course they would have to convince him of doing that.

Pilate was in power from 26 to 36 AD he was very insecure as a governor he was insensitive to the Jews he was harsh in administrating justice says one writer at times he would even be ruthless with the Jews and he was at times so ruthless and proven in times to be so ruthless and just basically in our vernacular was such a jerk that he was removed from power in 36 AD but the point is this so you look at this these two verses repent why Jesus was condemned repent because Jesus was condemned for you he was sentenced to die for you he would take the punishment for you repent just talking with somebody on Friday about this concept of penal vicarious substitutionary atonement penal penal it's legal vicarious it's in the place of substitution as our substitute he atoned for our sins person said

I have a hard time understanding that how could that be possible I said because what you deserved it was all put on Jesus so you could get the grace and the mercy of God repent respond because Jesus was condemned truly repent not just feel remorse not just feel remorse or not just be remorseful look at verses 3 through 5 then Judas the one who betrayed him seeing that he had been condemned feeling remorse he returned a 30 piece of silver to the chief priest and elder saying I have sinned betraying innocent blood so now it says seeing he was condemned Jesus was condemned now it's hard to determine the chronology of this action when did he see this maybe it was at

[11 : 47] Pilate's decision which happened later maybe it was in the courtyard of the high priest and he was still there and he saw that they made that condemnation which I think that's what has happened but in any event Judas felt remorse which is striking what else did he expect but yet this is the reason why some people believe some people believe was really an act of trying to get Jesus to act politically some people believe that Judas actually did this on purpose he actually betrayed Jesus to try and get Jesus to do something again we don't know that because nobody was thinking

but the word used here feeling remorse is an imparcible phrase is not the

Greek word for repentance which is used to describe genuine repentance according to context notice he returned the 30 pieces of silver and he confessed his sin you see that I have sinned how betraying isn't blood he confessed being broken over it so Judas seemed to have been in major despair and wanted some kind of spiritual help or guidance he regretted what had happened and so where do you go well you go to the ones who should be ready to help right you go to the leaders of the religion of Israel right they're the shepherds right so he went to them he realized the ginormous evil he had committed what have I done

I have sinned betraying notice what he says innocent blood innocent what what changed his mind well Jesus being condemned okay I guess that's obvious but but now his his words were very clear he believed Jesus was innocent his actions were wrong he regrets it so did he now think Jesus was guilty well why we just don't know we'll never know what he was thinking but again he was feeling this so he goes to the ones who would be there to help him but they said to him end of verse 4 but they said what is that to us literally what to us see yourself it's not our problem buddy one writer says they quote coldly rebuffed him end quote your sin is your own problem pal not ours what what striking irony the religious leaders who are supposed to be the shepherds of Israel were nothing but charlatans these religious leaders didn't care about him all they did was use him to get what they wanted kill

Jesus they used him you see the same principle in movies and books you see the same thing supposed to be bad guys they come to help but in the end they betray the good guys to get what they want that's exactly what happens here as far as they were concerned Jesus is nothing more than one writer put like this quote a tool that had served its purpose and could be discarded end quote and then four gruesome horrific scary verbs in verse five through departed went away hanged

Judas throwing the money displayed his regret for his actions maybe anger but it was too late to help Jesus and these so-called leaders they would give him no peace of mind to deal with his guilt with his shame with his hopelessness and with that not able to gain peace of mind and not able to get help from the ones who should be there to help Judas dealt with his guilt by hanging himself he couldn't bear the shame anymore and he knew just like you wanted to say to Judas you went to the wrong people you should have gone to the one you betrayed you should have sought out Jesus it's like you want to go back in time and tell him just go to Jesus he would have forgiven you right he would restore you but Judas was lost and Judas was lost not because he committed suicide that's Roman

[19:04] Catholic teaching which is from the pit of hell that's not what the Bible teaches you don't go to hell because you commit suicide okay is that clear people don't go to hell because they commit suicide that's not the unforgivable sin it's sin you shouldn't take your life but Judas was lost because he did not repent and come to Jesus to find forgiveness for his sins for his guilt for his shame and this is for you are you here and do you need to come to Jesus for forgiveness Jesus is ready to forgive that's why I wanted to read that in Psalm 86 God is ready to forgive he's not ready to judge you he is ready to forgive you people think this right they think

God is out to get them right that is further from the truth than God's word what is God doing God is holding back his judgment said all his people can come in and repent no instead he's ready to forgive he's like this come you who are weary and heavy laden I will give you rest he says come that same person I was talking to on Friday that's exactly what I told that person that God is ready to forgive he's not ready to judge he's ready to forgive unfortunately Judas' remorse was not followed up by actions that displayed your repentance and there's some lessons for us to learn here friends about repentance and what that means and about conviction and remorse over sin just because a person feels bad about their sin and even confesses it it doesn't mean that the spirit of God has done the work of regeneration in their heart it doesn't mean that do I have it on this next screen or down here oh good the possible work of conviction does not guarantee the work of regeneration

I say possible because just because a person is feeling bad it doesn't necessarily mean that God is doing the work of conviction there's a work of conviction by the spirit of God and then there's work of regeneration by the spirit of God but the work of conviction does not guarantee there's going to be a work of regeneration the spirit convicts the world of sin righteousness and judgment Jesus said that in John's gospel but that doesn't mean he's done a heart change so that the person has truly

trusted Christ in short feelings do not equal salvation just because someone feels bad about their sin doesn't mean they're now a follower of Christ it doesn't mean they're even truly repenting people feel bad all the time about doing things wrong most of the time because they get caught they feel bad because they got caught oh I shouldn't have done that just because a person feels bad about their sin doesn't mean it's the spirit's work of conviction in the heart it doesn't mean it doesn't even mean God is the one who's convicting them at all it could be their conscience and of course God's working that out in his providence providentially working that out in their hearts yeah I understand that God works all things big and little to bring his people to himself just at the right perfect time he's doing that I understand that all that to say it's almost like we we get a bit excited to see Judas's remorse over his sin only to have our hearts drop and sink into sorrow when we see his actions did not at all line up to true real repentance Judas's suicide displays one writer puts it like this quote hopeless despair true true real genuine repentance is displayed by fruit by works repentance itself is not a work by the way on the contrary it is a gift from God

Acts chapter 11 verse 18 so true repentance will show itself in good works display it and you know as a side note it's remarkable to see the contrast between what we just saw last week with Peter's denials and then Judas's regret and suicide I mean both actions were horrible right but we see how Peter returns to following Jesus and yet so sad for Judas because there's not true repentance so truly repent not just feel remorse but something else truly repent not a legalistic code or not following a legalistic code notice verse 6 through 8 the chief priest took the piece of silver said it's not lawful to put him back into the temple treasury it's the price of blood counseling together they bought the field of the potter with that money as a burial place for strangers for this reason that field has been called the field of blood to this day not a legalistic code it's not about cleaning up your life in order to follow

[25 : 44] Jesus you don't clean up your life to follow Jesus no it's personal it's relational change the direction of your life repent it's not cleaning up your life and then follow Jesus so why did they buy this field apparently when Judas hung himself either his corpse rotted and fell or more likely the rope broke and he fell and he fell his insides ruptured and gushed out that's a pretty picture according to Acts chapter 1 Peter actually tells us this in the book of Acts horrible painful agonizing death for him if he wasn't dead by hanging himself and the rope broke and then he fell that would have been a horrible way to die so they used that money to buy that field with the price of blood and it was called the field of blood probably it was used for

Jews who died in Jerusalem while attending religious festivals but do you notice something here in verse 6 and the chief priest took the piece of silver and they said it is not lawful lawful since when did they become concerned about what's lawful especially what they just did to Jesus not to mention their indifference to Judas' anguish I mean their their scruples are striking they're concerned about ritual purity all the while they were having a dirty trial you see that hypocrisy they paid the price with that money to secure

Jesus death so they knew it would be the death of an innocent man they knew that plus it means they took that money out of the temple treasury to pay Judas to have Jesus convicted oh but their consciousness wouldn't put it back into the temple treasury do you see the duplicity here since when are they so concerned about what's lawful friends this is this is so vital it's a huge lesson for us about the gospel following Jesus is not about following some religious code standard or system it's relationship with Jesus and with the father through the Lord Jesus we got to understand that it's a relationship it's relational

Christianity is personal it's not just be a good person it's not just do the right thing this is an important aspect of the gospel we repent we change the direction of our lives and we trust Christ Jesus I change the direction of my life and I put my trust in you you die for my sins and if I were to die the only thing that would save me from facing God's wrath is you on anything that I will ever do that's true repentance it's not feeling remorse it's not following some legalistic code the leaders are concerned about law no no no no no we're called to be concerned about Christ right and then Matthew does something for us here in the midst of this sadness and just the weight of this he gives us hope even more hope here in verses 9 and 10 which

I pulled this point and described it this way remember God is sovereign over all responses look at this verse 9 then then the word through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled saying they took the 30 piece of silver the price of one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel verse 10 they gave them for the field of the potter as the Lord directed me Matthew pulls together two different

passages links it with first Jeremiah but he actually uses Jeremiah chapter 19 verses 1 through 13 and he also pulls in Zechariah chapter 11 verses 12 through 13 coupling those together once again he shows us as his readers that these actions Judas' suicide and the purchase of the field were a fulfillment of God's word the New Testament writers help us to see biblical patterns and predictions in the Old

[31 : 20] Testament of Jesus passion and how people would respond Matthew is continuing to help us as his readers understand something that everything happening to Jesus was part of God's plan and purpose for him God was sovereign even over Judas' sad suicide and even over the leader's sinful hypocrite response to Jesus and to Judas God was sovereign God's going to fulfill his word God's purposes always stand look what we mean for evil God means for good to the praise of his glorious grace so he gets the glory and we get the grace God's purposes can never be overthrown by the will of man and Matthew continues to remind us of this

God's in control God's in control God is sovereign God is sovereign over the evil happening events in our world taking place in our world right now he's sovereign God knows what he's doing and guess what I don't I don't know what I'm doing and guess what you don't know what you're doing we don't know what we're doing God knows what he's doing and this is encouraging because God he's sovereign over people's responses to him so we we can freely give people the gospel with passion and with fervency and guess what God's going to do the rest God's sovereign over these responses you just give them the gospel you just tell them repent they need to hear the truth let God take care of the rest so Jesus calls us to truly repent and trust him not just be remorseful not follow some religious code and he stands ready to forgive

Christian this is so important for you to understand well there's a message just for non-Christians no it's not we need the gospel even more than non-Christians you want to know why because we will allow the evil one to throw that guilt shame and sadness upon us for every single sin that we do same person on Friday it's on this person you know what it's Jesus who intercedes for his people all the time and the evil one the accuser he comes to the father says look at this person they're so horrible they're so evil why in the world do you even waste your time with them and Jesus says I died for them he intercedes for us Christian God is always ready to forgive it's not about just feeling bad over your sin it's not about following some religious code or standard remember Christianity it's personal Christianity is relational change the direction of your life and follow

Christ he'll forgive you admit confess repent I turn from that and Jesus I put my trust in you again you died for that sin that I just that stupid thing that I just did you died for that I put my trust in you I'm going to keep moving forward with that with the gospel so vital for us to remember that truly repent let's pray together let's remind ourselves of this we thank you so much for giving father that father you're ready to forgive we thank you Jesus for your work and because of your work you love us just as much as you love your father father you love us just as much as you love your son because we are united to your son because we follow your son oh yes forgive us and we know you do for the times where we do fall short and yet that's why

Jesus you had to die don't let us listen to the lies of the evil one the doubts that he brings but to remember your promises we don't deserve anything but in Jesus who is the ultimate display of your steadfast faithful covenant keeping love all your justice is poured out on him so all your grace can be poured out on us so you're ready to forgive so we repent and we put our trust in you and we pray for those that are here that have not responded to this gospel truth they will come to the altar and know that forgiveness comes by the blood of

[37 : 00] Christ if you would please take this time a few moments to let the truth that we've looked at this morning sink into your heart we'll have a few moments of silence for you to allow your mind to ponder the truth of God's word and then we'll sing a couple songs as a response let this time between you and the Lord be a meaningful time remind yourself of this gospel truth and maybe you need to repent admit I did that I turned from that and I put my trust in Jesus my trust is in him alone just take these few moments to do that please don'tate thanks

Thank you.