

For You...For Him

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Preacher: Ray Sweet

[0 : 00] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. And as always, if you'd like to learn a little more about us, you can go to FCCgreensburg.com or you can check out the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But hey, I want to invite you to something really special that is happening on Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday. That is April the 5th this year. And we are not going to be at our normal church building, our normal church property at 425 North Broadway Street.

We are going to be at North Decatur High School in the main gym for one service. And we are so excited as a church to all worship together one service at 930 a.m. on Easter Sunday at North Decatur High School.

We would love to invite you to come and be a part of that. Also, I'm excited at this time just to jump into the Word of God and let that Word truly come into our hearts and change us from the inside out.

Now, the title of today's message is For You, For Him. We're in a series called Good News, the 10th week of it. And you can turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 22, and we'll start in verse 39.

[1 : 19] Now, have you ever had someone come up who was so generous and kind to you personally that you couldn't just help but want to honor them?

Maybe you have a face that comes in your mind right now. I have a few, honestly. But I'll never forget when we moved from Rushville to Tennessee to pastor a church 330 miles away from home. I didn't know anyone as we were simply trying to follow the Lord's leading. Yeah, we were nervous. We were out of our element for sure. And yet this ministry became one of the greatest blessings for my family as the Lord was in it.

Met some amazing followers of Jesus who loved me more than I deserved. And I'll never forget one guy in particular who didn't know me from Adam other than the interview process.

But he still decided that he wanted to bless our family. See, he wanted us to have a nice home and even have the down payment that it takes to secure one.

[2 : 23] So knowing that we were young and we didn't have a lot of cash saved up, he gave us \$20,000 and said, Hey, when you sell your home, just pay me back \$10,000.

And we were able to get a little nicer of a home in a great neighborhood as we were in shock that someone would do this. He was also very handy and he loved to bless others.

So one day I needed to have some mechanical work done on my old lawnmower. And if you know me, I'm the least mechanically inclined person ever. So I asked him if he'd help me change the oil and give it a tune up.

This baby really was on its last leg. And the next thing I knew, he was there in my driveway to pick it up. But the odd thing was when my 1990s model John Deere lawnmower came back, it had transformed into a brand new yellow cub cadet riding lawnmower.

And he just wasn't sure what happened as he blessed us again and wouldn't even have a conversation about us paying him back. So when we ended up leaving that ministry to come back home, to come back here to FCC, that was a tough conversation to have because he had been so kind and so generous.

[3 : 41] We really just wanted to do a good job of showing our deep appreciation, even though we were being led elsewhere. And as much as that man's kindness will always mean the world to us, I want to show you again how our Savior's love should prompt us to live for him.

So today we're going to look at some things that Christ did for us. We're going to fly a little high above this, so we're not going to go super deep. We're going to cover a lot of ground, though. And we're just going to see how he calls us to live for him.

So we've been walking through the big picture of the Gospel of Luke since early January. Our series is called Good News. And now we come to the last 18-ish hours before Jesus went to the cross, showing the ultimate act of love.

So starting with me here in Luke chapter 22, verse 39, and we're going to begin this journey to the cross that Pastor Steve will bring home next week in our 8 o'clock and 9.30 services, while our 11 o'clock service will have a fantastic kids' Easter program.

But as you're turning to Luke chapter 22, verse 39, let's replay what happened that Thursday as Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal.

[5 : 01] After sunset, he washes his disciples' feet, showing us that greatness starts by picking up a towel to serve. He shares in a meal with his disciples, even exposes his betrayer.

He picks up the bread and the wine and initiates the Lord's Supper, even predicts that Peter's words will fall flat, and he'll deny Jesus three times before the rooster crows.

Then he gives them the command to love one another. So when you hear people say this phrase, Maundy Thursday, it's referring to Maundy means mandate or command to love one another.

And now that you kind of have the context of this day, let's look at our first scene in Luke 22. Let's start in verse 39. It says, An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

[6 : 30] Why are you sleeping? he asked them. Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. Now guys, this is the famous Garden of Gethsemane scene where Jesus comes before the Father in prayer and deep agony.

But this is also where our finite minds have trouble wrapping around this idea that Jesus is 100% man and 100% God all at the same time.

And as the sins of the world and the Father's wrath start to descend upon him, he's agonizing to the point that he has what many believe to be this rare medical condition called hematidrosis.

This is where the body is under such mental and emotional strain that the capillaries dilate and burst, releasing blood to mingle with sweat and flow from the skin.

He was basically sweating blood as he was preparing to shoulder the sins of the world, and that includes yours and mine. And how easy is it for us just to quickly pass by verse 43 as we're told that an angel from heaven appears and strengthens him.

[7 : 40] Twice an angel appears in his life. It is temptation from Satan as he started his earthly ministry, and now in the Garden of Gethsemane as he prepares for the greatest triumph over evil.

Both times Satan's not happy about God's plans, and both times he's ministered to by an angel. And if there's one word that describes this scene, it's the word agony.

Agony. So fill this in on your outline, or you can even go to the Church Center app. But agony for you. He gave agony on your behalf for you, so we give submission to him.

I think most of us have dealt with the consequences of stress, whether that leads to physical issues in my body or my mind, or even in my moods and my emotions.

Stress can manifest itself in different ways depending on the person. It absolutely can wear us down. But none of us understand the agony Jesus faced that made him sweat blood.

[8 : 45] And yet in verse 42, he prayed, Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. Yet not my will, but yours be done. Jesus can see what's coming.

He knows the betrayal of Judas, the scattering of his disciples, the denial of Peter, the sham trial, the lies, the beating, the mocking, and ultimately the nails. Of course the human side doesn't want this, would you?

And yet he sincerely cries out in prayer, Not my will, Father, but yours be done. See, when I let that sink in, it calls me to have the same mindset as Jesus, no matter what I walk through in this life.

Because trust me, even though we sometimes think we're carrying the weight of the world, what we face will never compare to the agony he faced for us as he carried the sins of the world.

So whether it's the flesh rearing its ugly head, tempted me to go down a path I know doesn't lead to life, a path that I've probably traveled and don't want to travel again, or even my own selfishness demanding its own way.

[9 : 50] Not my will, Father. Not my will. But I want yours to be done. Or in the words of the 19th century evangelist D.L. Moody, Let God have your life.

He can do more with it than you can. Because listen, Jesus was willing to take the agony for me. And because he was, I am called to a life of submission to him. My will, my ways, my wants. No more. Jesus, my life is yours. Okay, let's go to scene number two. So we're going to flow from Jesus praying in agony, focused on his mission that will lead to the cross. Meanwhile, the disciples, worn out by it all, are sleeping instead of praying. So here's another key word for you. Betrayal. Betrayal for you, which means humility we show for him.

[10:50] Let's pick up where all the evil plotting has led here in Luke chapter 22, verse 47. God's word says, While he was still speaking, a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them.

He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, Lord, should we strike with our swords?

And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, no more of this. And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

Wow. It's insane all that happens in these five verses. But that includes the emotions that Jesus would have felt. Can you imagine pouring into someone for three years, being together almost 24 hours a day?

I know this wasn't a surprise. He knew it was coming. But still, that ultimate act of betrayal with a greeting of affection in their culture, with a kiss. Shakespeare, years later, would depict something similar in his play, Julius Caesar, where Caesar's betrayal by one of his dearest friends, his dearest friends, one of them helped to assassinate him.

[12:09] And that's when Caesar looks at him and says this famous line, et tu, Brute? Even you and you, Brutus? Judas had seen the compassion, the sincerity, the joy, the peace, the hope that came from Jesus.

He had heard truth taught from the truth, witnessed miracles, watched as Jesus walked on water, and then empowered Peter to do the same, seeing him calm the wind and the waves, heal a leopard, take mud, and make the most complex part of a human body an eyeball.

And listen, it worked, probably 20-20 vision too. Empowered by Jesus to perform miracles himself when Jesus sent them out two by two. And yet, it just goes to show that we get to choose whether we'll follow him or not.

And things like greed and pride can so easily cause us to reject the only one who gives us life. So, as they find their man and they start the process of this illegal arrest, the disciples were some red-blooded Jewish guys who probably prepared themselves for a battle.

For sure, one of them had, and yet the battle Jesus called them to wasn't bashing people's skulls in or even the bad aim cutting off their ear. And while Luke doesn't say who, John just comes out and tells us it was Simon Peter who did it.

[13:32] Shocker, right? And the victim was the high priest's servant named Malchus. And as he's being betrayed, as Jesus is being betrayed and falsely accused, he puts a stop to his disciples' revolt, takes Malchus' right ear, and miraculously puts it back as if it never happened.

Who does that? Especially if someone is falsely and maliciously arresting you. Now, if it's me on the wrong side of this, I would hope this would stop me in my tracks and I'd be like, never mind, I think we had the wrong Jesus here.

But listen, it just goes to show that it doesn't matter what happens. When we choose to reject God's perfect ways, according to his word, letting our pride win, we'll find excuses all day to proceed in our sin.

I don't know if you've looked around, but we have churches all around us celebrating things that God calls an abomination. And going back to our story, let's just be honest here, this is hard.

Choosing not to fight back when the world comes against me, trusting that God's got this under control, that's called humility. Now, while I may not name a child Polycarp, I can only pray that my kids will live their days for Christ like this famous church leader from a biblical town called Smyrna that sits in present-day Turkey.

[14:57] See, born in AD 69, this man was influenced by the letters from Paul. He would have known the Apostle John personally. The story goes that he was adopted by a godly woman who taught him to memorize the word as he gave his life to Christ, being baptized into him.

Polycarp went on to preach and lead the church of Jesus Christ for many decades, dying at 86 years old. And not from old age either, but what we call martyrdom, giving his life for the cause of Christ.

See, as Christians were being persecuted by the Roman Empire for not worshiping Caesar, for worshiping Jesus, Polycarp was a targeted leader because of the influence he carried.

And as his time was drawing near, he knew they were coming for him. So legend goes that when the Roman soldiers arrived at his home, he greeted them warmly, made them a meal, sharing the hope of Jesus with them.

He even asked if he could have some time to pray before they took him in. Because of this kindness, they probably had never experienced from someone that they were arresting. Of course not.

[16:07] They allowed him to pray. And listen, for two hours, he kneeled by himself before his God who had been faithful during his life and now his God who would be faithful in his death.

See, he'd already had a vision of what would happen and he was at peace. And as he entered the stadium on a donkey, just like Jesus entered Jerusalem, and now as he comes into this stadium with this bloodthirsty crowd looking on, he was asked to recant his faith, to basically deny Jesus or we're going to burn you at the stake.

And I love how he once again treated the authorities with respect, gently saying these words, For 86 years I have served my Lord and he has done me no wrong.

How can I then blaspheme my King and my Savior? And as they prepared him for his death, he looked up to heaven and he prayed this powerful, sincere prayer.

He said, O mighty and holy God, Father of our Savior Jesus and Lord over all the angels, you who created all things out of nothing and called them good, I thank you that you have counted me worthy to die this day for the sake of your Son and your gospel.

[17:19] Now let me share in the cup of your Messiah and so share as well in his glorious resurrection from the dead. May I be to you a sacrifice rich and acceptable and so rise in body and soul by the power of the Holy Spirit to dwell in paradise along with the other holy martyrs whom you've counted worthy to share in the passion of the Christ.

All praise be to you, God on high, together with your Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Woo!

What a prayer! And with faithfulness to the end, he was humbly burned at the stake, entering his Savior's presence. And while there are so many more details to his story, even God's miraculous power at his death, my prayer for those of us who don't even understand this kind of persecution is that we can be so devoted to Christ right now that our humility in him could stand up just the same to persecution and we could treat our enemies with the same kind of love.

Which begs the question, how do I treat those who come against me now? And if you're like me, I'm not always proud of how I do, how I treat them. See, Jesus understood betrayal like we never will. And yet he humbly submitted to God's perfect will, taking the betrayal for you, for me, so that we can choose humility in him, kindness, gentleness, love, while also acting in courage and boldness all for his glory.

[18:50] See, Philippians 2 verses 3 and 4 says this well, as Jesus is the perfect example. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interest, but each of you to the interest of others.

Now here's scene number three. Denial for you, repentance for him. One of my favorite things about reading the pages of scripture is that it's full of regular people like me who messed up in big ways and yet were still redeemed by an even greater God.

One of my favorite characters, and he was a character, is Simon Peter. And I think it's because I can relate to him pretty good. I have this very special talent that he had where I can also fit my whole foot in my mouth.

They call it foot and mouth syndrome. But as we're gonna see, Peter failed miserably on that Friday. And yet God wasn't done with him yet. Look at Luke 22.

Let's look at the last part of this passage, starting in verse 54. Then seizing Jesus, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest.

[20:03] Peter followed at a distance. And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight.

She looked closely at him and said, this man was with him, but he denied it. Woman, I don't know him, he said. A little later, someone else saw him and said, you're also one of them. Man, I am not, Peter replied. About an hour later, another asserted, certainly this fellow was with him for he is a Galilean. Peter replied, man, I don't know what you're talking about. Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. Now I can relate. Can you? How many times has the Lord whispered into my heart to do something for him outside of my comfort zone and I didn't do it? How many times have I given in to temptation, committing that same sin against the Lord again? How many times have I mistreated or spoken against someone made in his image because of my own pride and insecurity?

[21 : 05] And here Peter is after drawing his sword and cutting off an ear, he's now sort of on the run. He don't know what's going to happen. His world has been turned upside down, chaos all around him, and he's scared.

And three times he's asked if he's one of the guys with Jesus. And thrice he denies it. Even rejects knowing him. And verse 61 and 62 truly pull at my heartstrings here.

So I lied to you a second ago. This is the last passage we're going to look at. Verses 61 and 62 of Luke 22. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.

So as soon as he denied him, the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him. Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.

And he went outside and wept bitterly. While we don't quite have the exact details of where Jesus was located at in the high priest's home, it was likely he might have been being moved through the high priest's open courtyard, or maybe even positioned at a window that would have kind of looked over, kind of oversaw the courtyard a little bit.

[22 : 17] But after Peter denied Jesus for the third time, it says they looked eyes. Can you imagine that for Peter? How gut-wrenching that moment would have been as he looked into the eyes of the one who had said those life-changing words to him, come, follow me.

The one who believed in him when no one else did. The one who allowed him to walk on water and now he denies him three times? Guys, I remember in seventh grade at North Decatur getting caught up with some other kids that were constantly in trouble.

And I just made a really bad decision and I ended up in Mr. Stanley's office. He knew I wasn't like the others and he made the wise judgment to teach me a lesson. He came down hard on me as I got kicked out of school for a day.

But the worst part was facing my parents when I had been taught right from wrong knowing that my integrity had been compromised, that I had failed miserably.

And that was hard. But I can promise you I learned my lesson as I also wept bitterly over my failure knowing that that did not represent who I was. Here in this story, it says Peter also went outside and wept bitterly.

[23 : 32] It also appears that he was convinced his failure had cost him the chance to be able to serve Jesus. Maybe he had even gone back to life as a fisherman instead of realizing he was called to be a fisher of men.

And yet after Jesus had risen from the grave at a campfire over a fish breakfast, Jesus calls him back to ministry, calls him to feed his sheep.

He wasn't done with him yet as Simon Peter would now go on to be one of the greatest leaders the church has ever known. And listen, maybe a rooster didn't crow in your story, but we've all denied him in different ways, by our words, with our actions, through our motives, even ignoring his call on your life possibly.

And just like Peter, he can come back into his arms. We can come back into his arms of grace with a changed heart of repentance. And so today, we didn't go super deep in any of these three scenes.

Like I said, we kind of took a helicopter view of it all so you could see the big picture. And yet, I wanted you to see what Jesus did for you. Just a piece of it.

[24 : 43] Because next week, Pastor Steve's going to take us even further as we experience what Jesus did on the cross. So three words today. Agony, betrayal, denial.

All Jesus did for you and for me. And those words lead us to a life of submission to Christ. They lead us to humility and how we love others.

And they lead us to a lifestyle of repentance where when we fail, we reach back out to Jesus. We cry back out to him and we let him place us on his solid rock.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we learn and we grow and we become more and more into the image of Christ. You know, guys, I started off today talking about a man whose kindness and generosity blessed my family and just taught me what it looks like to be generous to others.

But no one compares to Jesus and what he's done for us. Amen? All right, let's pray together.

Father, thank you so much just for the hope that you give us in Christ.

[25 : 49] And I thank you for what Jesus did as he dealt with agony in the garden and throughout the process, as he dealt with betrayal from someone close to him, as he was denied three times and how we sometimes deny you by our own actions and words and motives.

Father, thank you that you're a God of grace and that Jesus has satisfied your wrath and that Jesus has paid the price for our sins that when we come by faith, we can walk in your hope and your strength for the rest of our days.

And even better, we can walk into eternity as we are ushered into your presence, Jesus. And as we hear those words, well done, good and faithful servant.

Not because I did everything faithfully, but because I was covered by the blood of Jesus, washed as white as snow. So thank you, Jesus. Thank you for the hope, the joy, the peace, and the power that you give.

And I just pray that you will help us as we just kind of stand in awe of these last hours before the cross. Help us to see what you did for us and help us to live completely for you.

[27 : 12] We pray this in Jesus' holy and precious name. In the name of Jesus, amen and amen. Hey, thank you so much for tuning in today.

If you missed the first part of this broadcast, just want you to know that we're going to be having an Easter service. We're not going to be meeting at our normal location, 425 North Broadway Street. We're actually ditching the church building for a week, and we're going to be at North Decatur High School on April the 5th, Easter Resurrection Sunday. One service at North Decatur High School in the main gym at 9.30 a.m.

We would love for you to join us on Easter Sunday. And let me give you just this quick invitation. If you've been listening to this message and what Jesus has done for you has impacted you, and you want to talk about giving your life to Him, you want to talk about faith questions, you want to talk about the church, please, you can start that conversation by reaching out in these ways.

You can call us at 812-663-8488. That's 812-663-8488. Or you can email me at ray at FCCGreensburg.com.

[28 : 23] Hey, thank you so much for tuning in today. God bless you, and I pray that you have a fantastic week as you live for Him.