

A Purposeful Walk to Death

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[0:00] May the words of my heart, mouth, and the meditation of my mouth be acceptable unto you, my Lord, my strength and redeemer. Amen.

! We have a total of 94 verses, actually I think more, that we've just read in our gospel reading this morning. So I hope you are hunkered down as we go through them in this sermon.

That was a joke. Some of you didn't realize that. I see the fright in your face. We're not going to go through all of those verses.

I just want to briefly, actually, this morning, point out two main points in this account of our Lord's passion. Mostly in chapter 26 of Matthew.

As a kind of preview for us as we enter into Holy Week. And as we continue to meditate, I love the fact that on Palm Sunday we get to walk through, and that's what we've just done.

[1:11] We've walked through the last week of our Lord's life. And the crowd, they said, to the son of David, blessed is he, they said, who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. The crowd hailed him as their king. And that's in a week later, they were yelling, let him be crucified.

And I love the fact that we, as a congregation, get to participate as if we were there, doing the crying, healing him, healing him to be as king, and then in the next moment, healing him, calling for his crucifixion.

It is proper that it should be so. Because we should not extricate ourselves from the crowd and the event that was happening on that final week of our Lord's life.

It is for our sin and our rebellion. Not just for the Jews in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. For your sin and my sin, that he was cast upon the cross.

[2:31] We should have that mindset. And it is proper to do so. And I just want to point two things out in these verses that we've read in our time this morning. I want to touch on just two points.

And I hope that these two points help set our minds on Christ and his passion. His atoning work on the cross that brought us salvation. Especially, I want us to look at Matthew 26, verse 36 to 46.

I want us to look at his agony in those verses. I think we often minimize the agony Jesus had to go through as he heads to the cross.

We forget that although he is true God from true God, as we confess. Yet for our sake he became true man. And it was as a man.

It was as a man that he suffered and died for our sins on the cross. He was true man. He had no supernatural strength to withstand the pain.

[3:35] He had nothing. He was true man. These verses show the agony our Lord underwent. Verse 37 of Matthew 26.

Verse 37 said he was sorrowful and troubled. Verse 38 says, he says himself, my soul is very sorrowful even to death.

And then in verse 39. Father, Father, if it be possible, let this cup, this cup, the cup of God's wrath over human sin that he's about to drink.

He says, let this cup pass from me. If it be possible. Nevertheless, not my will, but as you will, Jesus said.

This is the agony of our Lord. Three times he asked and prayed this prayer in those verses. At the cross, this man who is without sin will bear the full weight of God's anger over sin upon himself.

[4:58] And he alone could do it. He alone could be our mediator and redeemer. He alone, as the perfect unblemished lamb, can offer himself. And he alone, as fully God, can bear the full weight of God's wrath over our sin and rebellion.

We have no other means of escape from our predicament. As Article 31 of our 39 articles puts it. He alone can make the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the whole world.

Both original sin and actual sin. And there is no other satisfaction for sin. But the one of his death on the cross. The one his death on the cross provides.

So Jesus prayed three times to his father that he may be spared. If it be possible. From this horrible thing that is before him. Yet he surrendered himself.

Body and soul. To his father's will. And you might ask. As one of my children asked this week.

[6:14] In fact, yesterday. You might ask, as he did. Wasn't there another way? Is it not possible for Jesus to be spared as he asked his father?

And the answer to that question. Brothers and sisters in Christ. The answer to that question is, for our sake. The answer is no.

In these verses, we see the man Jesus. In abject sorrow. Alone. He was alone.

His friends. His closest friends. Were weary and sleeping. In abject sorrow.

Alone. Without human help or aid. He goes to the cross. He sets his face. Towards the cross. And in verse 46.

[7:11] We see the arrival of the betrayal. Judas. With the crowd. Of soldiers. And the mob who came to seize him. And so that's the first thing I want us to note.

In those verses 36 to 46. Is agony. And then in verse 47 to 56. Of Matthew 26. I want us to see the purposeful.

And voluntary procession. To death. Of our Lord. It was purposeful. And it was voluntary. As we read the account of his passion.

We might be. Mistaken in thinking. Events. Of overtaking Jesus. But that is not so. Judas has betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

We see that in those verses. The kiss of death. And the man who came with Jesus. And laid ends on him. To seize him. And in verse 51. We see the incident. With the sword.

[8:11] A man who was with Jesus. Drew his sword. And sliced up the ear. Of one of the temple guards. Matthew doesn't name who this man is.

But we know who he is. John tells us. It was Peter. It was Apostle Peter. And I doubt. Peter was Hamean. For the man's ear. The fact that he only managed to cut off.

And here. Might have suggests to us. That. He was ill-equipped. Really. To defend Jesus. And to protect Jesus. They were outnumbered.

They were overpowered. And his action. Peter's action that is. Is futile at this point. And it was even unwanted. And unneeded.

Futile and unwanted. Because. Jesus says it. All will take the sword. Will perish by the sword. Jesus has not come.

[9:09] To establish a kingdom. By military force. His kingdom is not. A territorial caliphate. He does not call us.

As his disciples. To be a crusader. Or jihadist. He established. His kingdom. By humbly.

Surrendering himself. To his father's will. Setting down for us. The pattern. By which his kingdom. Expands. In the world.

And so we see this incident. With the sword. In verse 53. This astounding sentence. From our Lord. Do you think. I cannot appeal. To my father.

And he will at once. Send me. More than 12 legions. Of angels. Jesus said to his disciples. Peter.

[10:05] Put up your sword. Before you die. A needless debt. But then he let. Them know. He wasn't defenseless.

Our Lord. Was not overpowered here. He was not outnumbered. He was not outnumbered. Here. He was the one. Fully in control. He had.

All his power. At his. Beck and call. I want us to go back. To our previous question. Perhaps. We should ask it. Another way. Could Jesus have been.

Have prevented himself. From being killed. On the cross. Could Jesus have prevented himself. For being killed. On the cross. We said. For our sake. The answer.

Was no. Because that was the only means. By which we can be saved. But for Jesus' sake. In his stead. Could he have prevented himself. The answer is a resounding.

[11:04] Yes. You need not go. To the cross. There it is. In verse 53. Jesus had at his core. Twelve legions of angels.

He had but to say the word. Now a legion. In the Roman army. Is about 6,000 soldiers. Mixed up a legion. So you can do the math.

Twelve legions. It says more than twelve legions. So that's more than 72,000. Angelic hosts. Had his beck and call. Jesus had.

Only to speak the word. And a mighty heavenly host. Would appear. To rescue him. To defend him. A force. That no human army. Can stand against. The point I'm making for us.

[12:04] I want us to see here. Is that Jesus had this overwhelming. A force. At his command. And he refused. To deploy it. Do you see it?

He refused to deploy. It. Rather in humility. This majestic. King of glory. Humbly surrendered himself.

To the will. Of his father. Why? So that you may be forgiven. At the cross. That is why he came. That is the purpose. For which he came. That is the will. Of his father. That was the plan. Of salvation. From the beginning.

And as Paul wrote. In our epistle reading. In Philippians 2. Jesus. Though he was in the form of God. That is truly God.

[13:06] Did not grasp. Unto the prerogative. Of his divine privilege. Which he could have. At this point. He did not. He did the opposite.

He emptied himself. He emptied himself. He became human. Creaturally. With all the limitations. That that affords.

That that means. Implies. And he walked. The way of humiliation. All the way to the cross. He was obedient. To the point of death.

Such is the love of Christ. Such is the love of the father. For you and I. I hope. You will think. On these two points.

As we enter into holy week. I hope you will meditate on them. And as you continue to read. The rest of the passion. I hope you will see. This is the king of glory.

[14:04] Who willingly. Willingly. Purposefully. Went to the cross. For you and I. Gave himself.

To be betrayed. To be killed. So that you may be saved. Jesus was always in control. He had the path to escape. The fate of the cross.

He would have been spared. If he wanted to be. But if he had been spared. We would not have been spared. I wonder. If those 72,000.

Angels. If Jesus had called them down. What would have happened? Not only would he have been rescued. It would have meant. Our destruction.

I wonder. I wonder. If that would have been. The annihilation force. For the world. If Jesus had called it down. Because there is no. That the only plan of salvation.

[15:02] Would not have happened. But don't think that it was ever in doubt. Jesus was always going to go to the cross. He was always going to fulfill his father's will.

For love. For our salvation. For our sake. He humbled himself. For the great salvation. For the great and marvelous savior. Amen. Amen.