

The Serene, Submissive Son of God

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[0 : 0 0] Let's get to the last, or the latter part of Matthew 26 that we read from verse 47 to 56. 56 was really the intended feasting of the reading.

I want to look at that section from 37 to 56, the section that tells us of the actual betrayal and arrest of Jesus. Because over the past few weeks we've actually been considering what we might call the great biblical paradox of Jesus alone, yet not alone.

And particularly as we look at the hours leading up to Jesus' death, you see that truth, Jesus alone, yet not alone, you see that so clearly.

I mean, as we've noticed, Jesus has already informed his disciples that very evening, the evening of his arrest. But they're going to fall away from him.

They're going to desert him. They're going to do that in fulfillment of Scripture. You read in the Old Testament, the book of Zechariah, chapter 13, Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

[1 : 1 0] These words referring to the Lord Jesus in his arrest and the sheep of his flock, the disciples, scattering, running away. And then after Peter claims that he's never going to deny and disown Jesus, Jesus tells him that before morning comes, in other words, before the rooster crows, before the rooster crows at the break of day, Peter's going to deny Jesus three times.

And then as Matthew continues his narrative here, the narrative of Jesus last two hours before his death, Matthew records the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples there in Gethsemane.

And there's Jesus in agony of soul. The prospect of the cross is looming nearer and nearer. And Jesus calls for prayer support from his closest disciples, the three closest disciples.

But then they fall asleep. They can't keep watch with Jesus in that crucial hour when Jesus' soul is in torment as he faces the prospect of his sin bearing on the cross.

Those whom Jesus had chosen to be with him in his earthly ministry, they don't stay the pace. Even there before his arrest.

[2 : 3 2] And we'll see, of course, in the ordeal of Jesus' arrest. But while Jesus is alone in the human sense, of course, he's not alone in relation to his heavenly Father.

And it's that aspect of the Son, Jesus, the Son of God, his relationship with God the Father. It's that relationship that I want to focus on, especially this morning.

Because we're going to look at the divine relationship between God the Son and God the Father. Particularly in that hour of Jesus' preparation before his crucifixion.

And we'll see how that relationship between Jesus, the Son of God, and God the Father. See how that relationship is shown in all its strength.

As we see Jesus, how he speaks to his enemies, how he speaks to his disciples. And as we're considering these matters relating to the Lord Jesus.

- [3 : 30] As we look at Jesus in these moments before his crucifixion, his trial, of course, and crucifixion. Then surely for you and I, to the more see the love of God for sinners in the work of God and sending the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God for us.
- And you know, as we see this interaction between God the Father and God the Son in these crucial moments before Jesus' death. Then surely it's for you and it's for me to revel in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- And to grasp, again, the love of God the Father. That love given, seen in his sending, is one and only Son for us. And as we grasp that love, as we revel in the grace of the Lord Jesus, that we do so, of course, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
- So knowing God, knowing God, knowing God in our salvation, that the more we'll seek to live for him. The more we'll seek to show you who know him as Lord and God, to show your relationship with God in your being united with Christ.
- Knowing that that unity in Christ is only possible, was only possible, is only possible because of the willingness of the Lord Jesus to do his Father's will, to submit to that will in serene obedience for the sake of the salvation of sinners.
- [5 : 05] So, let's look more closely then at this passage and we'll see firstly the serene Jesus, verses 47 to 50. But to grasp the serene Jesus at this point, then you need to go back a wee bit, again, to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- So that we appreciate the more Jesus' attitude, his character when he's being arrested that very night. So that's why we read verse 37 to 38, we saw there the sorrow, the intense sorrow of Jesus' soul.
- His soul's troubled. He's intensely sorrowful at the prospect of death that he's about to endure. And of course, this is no ordinary sorrow. This is sorrow that only the sinless, divine Son of God could experience in the face of his death for sinners.
- This is Jesus, the author of life. The Jesus who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. This is the one who knew no sin. This is the one who's about to face the curse of God.
- He's about to pay the penalty for sin. He's about to give his life and death. And he's facing that curse of God. He'll become sin. He'll bear sin in order to achieve salvation for sinners.
- [6 : 32] Sinners so that I will not face that penalty that we deserve. So there's Jesus facing that prospect of not just death, but the kind of death that he's going to experience.
- And he's crying out to his Father in prayer, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. But then in the serenity of his Spirit, he prays. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.
- And then there's a confirmation of that full and complete willingness to do his Father's will. When two subsequent prayers, two subsequent instances of his prayers, he prays.
- My Father, this cannot pass unless I drink it. Your will be done. You notice each time Jesus prays, he prays with the words, beginning with the words, my Father.
- You're seeing that deep intimacy of the Son with the Father. The Divine Son with the Divine Father. And here we're seeing that God truly is at work in the salvation of sinners.
- [7 : 38] That work that we might say is the intimate work of the Godhead for us. So let's marvel at that work of salvation. That work of salvation.
- There's Jesus there willing to do his Father's will. And Jesus will go to the cross. And he'll go fully, fully obedient to his Father's will. He'll fulfill Scripture fully and utterly.
- And he'll do it for the sake of sinners for whom he came to give his life. And that serenity of submission, submission to his Father's will, is going to be carried forward to the next dramatic episode in these moments before Jesus' crucifixion.
- Because now you notice from verse 47, you notice there's no mention anymore of Jesus' troubled soul or of his sorrow. There's nothing saying he's sorrowful to the point of death.

Instead, you're seeing that serene submission to the Father's will. And you see that in the various responses that Jesus gives in this unfolding drama, the horror of Jesus' arrest even in that night time hour.

[8 : 49] What do we see? Well, we read from verse 47 to 50 of Jesus' response to all that's happening. Look at the detail. I mean, why we read these little portions beforehand.

Jesus has already mentioned at that supper that one of the disciples is going to betray him. Jesus knew that his betrayer was sitting at that very table, or we might say reclining at that very table.

The very one who's about to betray him sharing in that meal with Jesus and the other disciples. So Jesus is fully aware of the events that will happen that evening. And you see from the passage there from verse 47, Jesus doesn't run away.

He doesn't quake with fear as Judas Iscariot and the temple guards, and as they come to him armed to the teeth. Jesus is fully in control.

He knows exactly what is happening. He's fully in control of the situation. He's not going to be diverted from his mission. He's going to face his betrayer. He's going to face his enemies. He's going to face death itself.

[9 : 58] And he'll do so with that grace that knows that he's fully within his Father's love and fully within his Father's will. Now that's the attitude of heart from Jesus, who is about to face the horror of sin bearing.

If Jesus showed serene submission to his Father, knowing that his Father's love for him was complete, full and complete, then when you, when I, face trouble, strife, difficulty, hardship, sorrow, suffering, when you come up against, as the old people used to say, the mountains of provocation, I pray that you will know the peace of God in your heart, that you'll know that the Father's love for you is full and complete, that you'll know that you are within his love, and you'll know that he never lets you go.

I pray that, you know, as we see Jesus, you might see a stance here before his enemies, that you'll take encouragement yourself from that. In other words, if Jesus could face those who are about to arrest him, if he could face even his betrayal with that serene grace and full submission to his Father's will, knowing that what must happen, must happen for the glory of God and the good of his people.

And it's for you, it's for me, to submit to all things that the God of grace will put before us, so that I will cry out, your will be done.

I submit to your sovereign purpose in my life, even though that purpose might bring me suffering. But you can still cry out to God, your will be done, be glorified, even in my suffering.

[11 : 56] We'll see there that serene submission of Jesus, as Judas comes to identify Jesus, as one whom the religious leaders want to arrest and condemn.

What do we notice? Judas comes up to Jesus. He gives them the customary greeting of the time, the kiss. That's very, very common in that culture, and even many cultures still today.

Look at the response of Jesus. Jesus doesn't strike out at Judas. He receives the kiss. He addresses them in that dignity that reveals Jesus' full submission to his Father's will.

Friend, do what you came to do. Jesus knows that Judas has come to betray him. He knows that he's going to be taken to the religious authorities to be put in trial.

And with that knowledge of what Judas is going to do, Jesus tells him, do it. Do what you've come to do. To identify Jesus. To have Jesus arrested, handed over to the religious authorities to do what they intended to do.

[13 : 05] Just as we read there in verse 4, to kill Jesus. So Jesus isn't going to impede that process. Even though he's addressed Judas as friend.

Because of course for three years, Jesus had taken in Judas as a friend. Jesus had spoken to Judas as a friend. He confided in Judas, as well as the other disciples, as a friend.

And yet that friendship's now been scorned and rejected by Judas Iscariot. And that rejection is going to lead to Jesus being seized, taken, arrested, as a common criminal.

And just, you know, just see Jesus there. Marvel. Marvel at Jesus in that moment of his arrest. Jesus says nothing in retaliation. He's not going to resist that arrest.

Why? Well, remember what Jesus said when he was age 12 in the temple. Jesus said, I must be about my father's business. Well, Jesus must be about his father's business.

[14 : 08] He must go to the cross. He must do the will of God the Father. He must do what God has sent him to do. To die on the cross for sinners.

So there's Jesus in his serenity. But then it's really following on Jesus in his submission, as you see there in verses 51 to 53.

These verses that really still have resonance today. I mean, there's Jesus now fully within the flow of events that must lead to the cross.

And Jesus, he'll remain in that flow of events because he must be the sinner's substitute. He must take the penalty for sin. He must die.

And in that flow of events that the gospel writers give us in each of the gospels, we see an incident that each one of the gospel writers mentions.

[15 : 05] And each of them mention it, so it has to have some particular importance in these few moments before Jesus' crucifixion.

The person who strikes the high priest's servant. Well, we know from John's gospel, this is Peter, the impetuous disciple. There's Peter and his recklessness. He takes out his sword and he lashes at whoever was first there.

For him, obviously, it's dark. Peter can't see who he's striking. In this case, it's the high priest's servant. Peter cuts off his ear. I mean, obviously, a very tragic injury and a very, very tense situation.

But it's Jesus' response to Peter that really carries the weight of this incident. Put your sword back in its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Do you think I cannot appeal to my Father and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? I think there's several things to notice. And notice for our application.

[16 : 09] What do we notice, firstly? Surely that Jesus will not and cannot be prevented from the way of the cross. Because he must walk on that road.

He must walk the road to the cross. And no amount of physical resistance to that road is going to succeed because Jesus walking that road to the cross is the only way.

The only way for sinners to be saved. Through his death on the cross. And Jesus telling Peter to put your sword back in its sheath highlights that truth.

Because Jesus must go to Calvary. He must go as God has so ordained for him. So Peter's intervention is useless. You know, you can just read Peter's mind.

Very impetuous mind. You can just read his mind. You know, he thought maybe I can stave off this arrest of Jesus and do it by force. As if to say, well, Jesus now is defenseless.

[17 : 06] He needs my support to resist this arrest. But of course, Jesus isn't defenseless. As Jesus tells him. Jesus could call on this vast number of angels to fight for him against that motley crew who had come to arrest him.

Jesus isn't going to do that. Because he must go to the cross and go there alone. He alone must bear the sin of his people. He's not going to call on that angelic host to save him that hour, that moment.

Why? Because the hour has come. He must offer himself up for sinners. So even as we see in that statement, these verses there, surely we're reading of Jesus' great love for sinners.

Jesus could have resisted the arrest. In an instant, he could have called on angels to beat back those who were arresting him. I mean, it wasn't his power.

It was his power to stave off this arrest. It wasn't his power, we might say, to move from that road to the cross. I mean, just moments before it had so troubled him.

[18 : 17] We read elsewhere, his sweat was like great drops of blood. But he must walk that road. He's in full control of the situation. And he'll walk that road out of love for his father.

Out of love for sinners. What's your response? Surely it has to be what a saviour. What love that Jesus should deny even his own escape from the cross and deny that for our sakes.

He's not going to take the way of escape. He's going to do his father's will. And he'll suffer for the sake of sinners for whom he came to die. This is the saviour.

The Lord Jesus. This is the same yesterday, today and forever. The Lord Jesus whose death we remembered last Lord's Day morning at our communion meal, our supper.

This is the saviour. He gave his life for you. This is the saviour. Whom I, whom you, so often wronged by our sinful selfishness.

[19 : 23] But what about Jesus' words to Peter? So well-known words. Verse 52. Put your sword back in its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Now, to think this through. In Peter's case, yes, literally, it was a sword. Literally. But of course we know it more as a metaphor. A metaphor for force.

For armed force. Our Westminster Confession of Faith speaks about the power of civil authorities who have, as it says, the power of the sword to exercise justice.

I'll read it. For the defence and encouragement of them that are good and for the punishment of evildoers. So when we speak of the sword, we're referring in the first instance, yes, to force.

Armed force. Now, context is important to understand Jesus' words. Jesus isn't denying the use of military force. When the context demands it, of course not.

[20 : 21] He wasn't preaching a doctrine of pacifism. Some people take that. No, absolutely not. In this particular instance, Jesus is declaring that the use of force in preserving his life and ministry is utterly misplaced.

The use of force utterly unjustified in the greater purposes of God in the work of salvation. Now, there's a personal application here.

Now, I don't think any of you are going to, not most of us anyway here have ever carried weapons of war, but we do respond to life situations. We don't take revenge, whether through physical force, or acts of hatred, or words of hatred, or retaliation, or, you know, getting our own back against someone, even when we've been wronged.

Because the Christian's duty is to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us, as Jesus said. Now, that love doesn't dispense with justice, of course not. It doesn't dispense with the use of the sword by those in authority.

But as Jesus says, if, you know, if we have that attitude of revenge, and retaliation, and hatred, it's going to fall back on us. Because if we're of that mindset that, you know, just goes out to wreak vengeance, and retaliation, retribution, the settling scores, it creates a cycle of more retaliation and counter-retaliation, and so on.

[21 : 52] Now, taking the sword, the sense of the violence of word and action against others, has tragedy amongst God's people.

You know, the damage to the cause of Christ, when a brother has not sought peace with brother, but instead has waged us continuous war of violence, verbal violence upon verbal violence.

It's not done in the spirit of love. But it's that spirit that has caused so much havoc in the church of God. And I pray not in this congregation, or any other congregation, whether it's in our own church or other denominations, that there is that mindset of revenge and retribution, for that truly the sword will be put back in its place.

And instead, the reign, the peace of Christ reign, reign in the hearts, even of those who are former antagonists, for the glory of God and for the good of the church, for the witness of the church here and there.

And it's for each one of us to look to our hearts and not insist on our own rights, but willing to suffer wrong. Even as Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6, there's Jesus willing to suffer at the hands of those who wish them out of their lives once and for all.

[23 : 16] Yet, as we see from Scripture, that willingness for Jesus, of Jesus to suffer wrong, is for that great purpose, to fulfill Scripture.

And that's our last little section, verse 54 to, certainly onwards, 56. The Scripture fulfilling Jesus. Scripture.

God's Word. God's Word, our Old Testament told of the suffering servant. The suffering servant who'd give his life for sinners, who'd be numbered amongst the transgressors, who'd be smitten and afflicted and pierced for our transgressions, who'd be that lamb led to the slaughter.

And the very thought of Jesus calling on twelve legions of angels to repel his arrest, utterly contrary to the prophecies of God's Word. I mean, what God's Word had said of the one to come who'd crush Satan's head and, of course, in the process of doing so, be bruised.

Scripture must be fulfilled. And fulfilled in Jesus, full submission to the Word of God. And that submission would involve his arrest that evening.

[24 : 31] Even betrayed by that, his close companion. Scripture itself had prophesied that. You go to Psalm 41, verse 9. Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

The very betrayal of Jesus by one whom Jesus addressed as friend. The very betrayal must be fulfilled that evening. The very arrest of Jesus, the consequent, as we said, the fleeing away of the disciples, prophesied by Zechariah, chapter 13.

Fulfilled by Jesus. All, of course, leading to the very death of Jesus, prophesied in the Old Testament scriptures, the death of Jesus must be fulfilled.

It must be. Because there was no other way by which God, a just God, could receive unjust sinners. The only way was through Jesus to take the sinner's place on the cross and face the penalty that sinners deserve.

So, in love, Jesus fulfilled scripture. In love, Jesus, that Thursday evening, Jesus faced the cross. Why?

[25 : 45] Because he must fulfill scripture. There are many things that many of you are going to face this week. Things that may well be difficult, troubling.

Well, in that case, you look to the one who faced the cross for you. The one, Jesus, who wouldn't call on these twelve legions of angels to save him from the cross.

Look to Jesus who is willing to fulfill all righteousness for your sake. He's not just a historic figure to be admired. He's not just a good man who did good things before bad people.

Jesus is the Son of God who faced death with that serene submission and bowing to his Father so that sinners might be saved.

Saved from the wrath, the wrath of God that Jesus himself would face there on the cross. So look to Jesus. Look to the one, yes, the one who is innocent of all charges against him.

[26 : 51] The one who is considered even a terrorist. by those who would not see him as the sinless Son of God equal to the Father.

And yet, though Jesus was despised and rejected by men and even in that despising before the cross and then in this despising enduring the cross, Jesus wouldn't retaliate.

He wouldn't resist because of course Jesus is the Scripture fulfilling Savior and in fulfilling Scripture he suffered for your sake.

So praise him. Praise him for his willingness to submit to his Father's will. Praise the Father for the love that he showed sinners in giving of his Son for us.

And in that praise be resolved to live that life of thanksgiving and glorying in the God of all grace. Center your life in the Lord Jesus.

[27 : 52] Center your life on him who did all for you so that you might know eternal life. Amen. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father we give praise and thanks to you that you should so love the world that you gave your one and only Son for us that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

And we praise you our Lord Jesus for your willingness to go to the cross to submit fully to your Father's will. You Lord Jesus who suffered for us even the ignominy of the arrest and the mocking before the cross we give you praise Lord that you did it for us.

Lord forgive us our sins we pray. Forgive us the many shortcomings that many times we fail to follow you and instead follow ourselves.

Forgive us Lord we pray and go before us. Pardon all that has been said amiss or thought amiss this day and we ask Lord and commit to you the remainder of this day we pray in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. Let's now sing in Psalm 4 on page 4 singing from verse 4 from verse 4 to the end four singing verses four stanzas in anger do not break God's law consider and be still present a righteous sacrifice and wait upon his will oh who can show us any good I hear so many say oh Lord shine on us with your light show us your face I pray 4 to 8 the tune is Ayrshire