

- Gethsemane

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Preacher: Peter

[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Join me in prayer. This prayer is entitled The Precious, well, I've adapted it from The Precious Blood, which is a prayer in the Valley of Vision. Bow your heads and pray with me. Blessed Lord Jesus, before your cross we kneel and see the heinousness of our sin, our iniquity that caused you to be made a curse, the evil that excites the severity of defying wrath.

Show us the enormity of our guilt by the crown of thorns, the pierced hands and feet. The bruised body, the dying cries.

Your blood is the blood of incarnate God. It's worth infinite. It's value beyond all thoughts. Infinite must be the evil and guilt that demands such a price.

Sin is our malady, our monster, our foe, our viper, born in our birth, alive in our life, strong in our character, dominating our faculties, our chains that hold us captive in the empire of our soul.

[1 : 30] Sinners that we are, why should the sun give us light? The air supply breath. The earth bear our tread. Its fruits nourish us.

Its creatures subserve our ends. Yet, your compassions urine over us. Your heart hastens to our rescue.

Your love endured our curse. Your mercy bore our deserved stripes. Let us walk humbly in the lowest depths of humiliation, bathed in your blood, tender of conscience, triumphing gloriously as heirs of salvation.

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name.

They compelled this man to carry the cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means place of the skull, they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall.

[2 : 43] But when he tasted it, he wouldn't drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided their garments among them by casting lots. They sat down and kept watch over him there.

And over his head, they put the charge against him, which read, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on the left.

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him, saying, He saved others and he can't save himself. He is the King of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross and we'll believe in him.

He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

[3 : 47] Now from the sixth hour, there was a darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani.

That is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And some of the bystanders hearing it said, This man is calling Elijah. And one of them ran at once and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink.

But the other said, wait, let's see if Elijah will come to save him. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. Tonight we have walked through Matthew's account of the terrible reality that faced Jesus at the end of his life.

He was betrayed by Judas and arrested in the garden. His trial before the high priest and council. Peter denied him publicly and repeatedly.

The people chose a murderer, a notorious one, over the king of the world. He was beaten and mocked by soldiers and people and high priests and scribes.

[5 : 09] And finally came the excruciating humiliation of the cross. Now, keeping all these things in mind, I'll invite you to pick up your Bibles.

This isn't in your program. Pick up a Bible in the pew in front of you. If you brought one with you, please turn to Matthew 26. And our homily tonight will begin in verse 36.

Or the text for it will. Jesus and the disciples had come to Jerusalem and celebrated the Passover meal together. During the meal, Jesus prayed over the bread and the cup.

Letting his disciples know what was soon to be on the horizon. And as Ron so wonderfully talked about last night, the new covenant that's found in his blood. And as an even more stark forewarning, Jesus told them how they would fall away one by one.

So that his purpose would be fulfilled even as the scriptures had said them. Needless to say, the disciples at this point should have been on high alert. They really should have known what was soon to come.

[6 : 16] And these warnings aren't unique to the disciples. From the faithful saints of all time to you and to me, we've been gifted with the opportunity to know a Savior.

And show that we love him by following him and doing what he commands. We possibly more than his disciples know everything that is at stake when it comes to sin.

And so as those of us who know the rest of the story, let's find ourselves in the story of those disciples who should have known what was soon to come.

We're in Matthew 26. I'll begin in verse 36. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, sit here while I go over there and pray.

And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death.

[7 : 22] Remain here. Watch with me. Going a little further, he fell on his face and prayed, saying, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. And he came back to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, so could you not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray that you might not enter temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, my father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

And again, he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, sleep and take your rest later on.

See, the hour is at hand and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.

[8 : 37] Imagine the excruciating reality of being the God-man in these moments. The anguish of the Savior is really apparent here in every line.

He seeks comfort, so he takes his friends with him, his best friends, his inner circle. He seeks comfort, so he prays to his heavenly Father. He seeks comfort, so he requests that things might go differently for him than what he knows it will.

And meanwhile, what do his disciples do? They seek comfort. They've lived with Jesus. As Ron said last night, they got to see God face to face. They've been told repeatedly about the nearing hour of his death.

Everything is on the line. Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with them, and then he let them in on the secret. What was going on in his heart? My soul is sorrowful even to death.

Remain here. Watch with me. Their leader, their friend, needed them. And they fall asleep.

[9 : 50] Long before they're scattered, denying God a very God, they can't stay awake and support their friend. How familiar we are with this type of failure in the face who is a loving friend to sinners.

How often have we known that we need to simply keep watch? And yet we fail. Our hearts on full display as those who love evil.

These types of sins, sins of apathy, sins of omission, are often small and we find them insignificant in our own eyes. After all, I've done some really big stuff that needs to be covered.

I'm sure that you could say the same. Small acts of selfishness and arrogance. Not loving my wife as Christ loved the church. Not setting before my children a godly example as I vowed to do.

Selfishness. Arrogance in other ways. Each of these times that we fall asleep. These are the little pieces of metal that are molded together to make the nails that are driven into Jesus' hands and Jesus' feet.

[11:16] Even these are enough to condemn us in the face of a holy God. And Jesus, deep with sorrow and sadness, accepts the reality of what these beloved of his are.

They're flesh. You look down and it says, the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak. And he says this to them, not to offer them an excuse.

Because immediately before that, he told Peter how to guard against the weakness of the flesh, didn't he? Watch and pray that you might not enter into temptation.

Jesus, who with all of his humanity on display, has just asked his heavenly father to take the cup of wrath away from him, walks back to see exactly how needed his sacrifice really is.

His sacrifice will truly be the only way that those of us who think little of our sin, who fall asleep in the face of direct warning, his sacrifice is the only way that we'll be comforted.

[12:29] Today they seek rest and comfort in sleep. And for eternity he will give them rest and comfort in him. And Jesus returns to prayer, again asking that these things might go differently for him.

But this time he gives himself over to a wholehearted obedience. We think of the Lord's Prayer, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

The perfect obedience of the Son is shown in his desire to see the will of the Father done above all else. to participate obediently in the plan of the Father, fully knowing the consequences.

The heartbreak of betrayal, the humiliation of crucifixion, the loneliness of abandonment. This is what awaits the obedient Son of God.

And he says, My Father, if this cannot pass, unless I drink it, your will be done. He returns to see his friends asleep again.

[13:43] All human comfort lost. Knowing the immediacy of what will happen as the shepherd is struck and the sheep are scattered. And he again walks away and repeats his prayer.

The sleeping sinfulness of the disciples is soon to be replaced by the act of malice of the betrayer and of the crowd. The cup is being set before Jesus to drink.

He urgently requests the attention of his friends. See, see and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand. even as Judas and the chief priests and the elders approach, I wonder how willing I am to identify with the murderous intent of this crowd.

Have I really committed any sin that's such an affront to the holiness of our creator, the creator of the universe, that I should be lumped in with those who need this type of sacrifice that is coming from Christ?

[15:00] The answer from my head is yes, but I'm afraid that that's not always the answer from my heart. Is my lust what caused a crown of thorns to be shoved down on his head?

Is my hatred to blame for the shards of glass fitted to a whip used to beat him and mar his flesh? Is my lack of love for my neighbor sitting under the cross, casting lots for his clothes and mocking him?

Is my idolatry swinging the hammer pound after pound putting nails into his hands and into his feet? Is my love for myself my love for myself that's over and above any love that I have for God? The sharp spear that I thrust into his side.

Far from comfort our Savior hangs there on a tree. The wisdom of God being shown in the murder of a perfect man. The obedience of the Son to the Father being shown in utter humiliation.

[16:25] As we heard last night, the sacrifice is necessary for the salvation of God's people through all time. The sleeping sins of those before Christ and the sleeping sins of all who come after him are remedied in this one act.

As we just sang earlier, the deepest stroke that pierced him is a stroke that justice gave. Justice. God is a God of light and in him there is no darkness.

In him there is no sin and no sin can be tolerated. From our sleeping sins to our active malice, all of this has separated us from our Creator.

we owe a debt to God that we can never repay. And yet, God's view of justice will not hold to account those who trust in his Son.

God's view of justice is to provide payment for our debt. When through grace in Christ our trust is, justice smiles and asks no more.

[17 : 43] God, throughout the history of his people has always chased his people down. He's comforted them. He's provided a way out. He's forgiven sins.

And here hangs our Savior. He cries out to the Father, echoing Psalm 22, Eli, Eli, Lema Sabachthani.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He's not comforted.

There's no way out. The full cup of God's wrath is poured out on him. Wrath for the sins of all of God's people.

Wrath for you and wrath for me poured out upon the perfect one. Let's read about his death. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

[18 : 49] And the earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.

And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, truly this was the Son of God. Remain seated as we sing. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.

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