

What is He doing? SMBC Student Albert Homerwijaya

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[0 : 00] Have you ever felt like you were born for something? That you were put here on this earth for one particular purpose? My father had a clear purpose for my life when I was growing up.

Since I'm from a Chinese background, you can probably guess what his purpose for me was. He wanted me to become a doctor. So my parents were migrants to Australia.

They came to Australia so that my sister and I could have a better life. My father worked hard so that he could provide for his family. Whilst I was growing up, he kept telling me, Son, you need to become a doctor so that you don't have to work as hard as I have to work.

So that you can have an easier life and provide for your family. So growing up, I could really feel this weight of expectation on my life.

I knew it was my father's will that I should become a doctor. I'll come back to this story a little later on. But as we look at the passage today, we see another man who bears the weight of expectation to do his father's will.

[1 : 22] But unlike me, it was not the expectation to choose a particular career path. It was we find a man who, in order to do his father's will, needed to die.

And we're going to be looking at three scenes of Jesus' life. The first of these is a feast or a party. The next is a private dinner. And the final scene culminates on a mountain in a garden with Jesus before his father.

These are the final chapters of Jesus' life. And so the passage begins with an introduction to let us know when these events are happening.

So please read with me from verse 1. Now, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were only two days away.

And the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him. But not during the feast, they said, or the people may riot.

[2 : 32] So it is two days before Passover. What is Passover? Well, Passover for the Jews was a big celebration. It's a festival which lasts for seven days.

It commemorates God rescuing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. So here we are, two days before the Passover begins, preparing for the celebrations.

But already, something isn't right. The Jewish authorities were looking for a sly way to arrest Jesus and to kill him.

But they didn't want to kill him during the feast, during the celebrations, because it would upset the people. So they waited for an opportunity to kill Jesus.

And as we approach the first of the scenes, Mark, the gospel writer, is already showing us that death is lurking. Scene 1.

[3 : 30] Jesus takes us into a home of a man named Simon the leper. There is Jesus reclining at a table with a whole bunch of people around him. This is a party, a celebration.

Suddenly, a woman bursts through the door, carrying a jar, and everyone's surprised by her entrance. Seeing Jesus, she runs over to him and breaks open the lid of the jar.

The sweet scent of perfume fills the air. It's a pleasing aroma, a very pleasing aroma, from a very expensive perfume.

The woman starts pouring the perfume over Jesus' head. So what's the significance of what is happening here?

Why would the woman pour perfume over Jesus' head? It seems quite strange. Well, clearly, the woman loved Jesus and wanted to express her love by bathing Jesus with what would have been

her prized possession.

[4 : 38] A jar of perfume worth a whole year's worth of wages. What she didn't realize, though, was her act of love was a far more significant act.

Pouring perfume over someone's head is an act called anointing. And not just anyone was anointed. Kings were anointed.

The great kings of Israel, Saul, David, Solomon, were all anointed. But the person normally doing the anointing was supposed to be the high priest.

And so it's a bit surprised, it's not surprising why the Jews around Jesus didn't recognize what was happening here. Rather than being anointed by a high priest, Jesus was anointed by a woman.

This still begs the question, though, why is Jesus being anointed? So earlier in Mark chapter 8, verse 29, Jesus asks Peter, Who do you say I am?

[5 : 45] And Peter responds saying, You are the Christ. Jesus has been declared to be the Christ. Christ. Now, Christ isn't Jesus' last name.

Christ is his title. He is Jesus the Christ. And what does Christ mean? Well, Christ means anointed one.

And why? What's the significance of being an anointed one? Well, because for the Jews, being anointed signified the start of a king's reign.

The declaration that Jesus is the Christ or the king has been made and now he is being anointed. This is a really exciting moment. Jesus' reign as king is about to commence.

But let's look at the reaction of the people to the anointing. Verse 4. Some of those presents were saying indignantly to one another, Why this waste of perfume?

[6 : 54] It could have been sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor. And so they rebuked the woman harshly. The people around thought, It was such a waste to be using this expensive perfume.

But what they failed to recognize was the importance of the person. And the importance of the event. Jesus is the Christ.

And he was being anointed. The king was about to commence his rule. And this was his inauguration. Of course you would pull out the best for this occasion. What is a year's worth of wages when you're talking about the inauguration of a king?

Jesus responds by highlighting the importance of the event. But not in the way in which we would expect. Let's keep reading.

Verse 6. Leave her alone, Jesus said. Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you.

[7 : 59] And you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand.

To prepare for my burial. What Jesus said would have left the people around him gobsmacked. In stunned silence. Jesus has just said that his anointing is the preparation for his burial. Jesus is the king.

But his reign begins with death. So as we close the first scene, we have this strange tension. Jesus is the king.

But he is also going to die. So immediately after this, Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, agrees to betray Jesus to the Jewish leaders.

[8 : 56] We saw earlier that the Jewish leaders were looking for an opportunity to kill him. Now they have their opportunity. Death is coming. But why does Jesus need to die?

The disciples might have been quite confused by this last encounter. Why would this anointing be a preparation for his burial? It can't just end like this, can it? God's promised king has arrived.

And as soon as he arrives, he's going to be taken away. Why does Jesus have to die? Jesus gives the answer in the next scene. And so let's look at what's happening.

We move from a larger gathering to a smaller gathering. From a party with many people to an intimate dinner with a few friends. This intimate dinner happens two days later on the first day of the Passover.

We are told that this is the day when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, foreshadowing the reason why Jesus needed to die.

[10 : 04] As Jesus and his disciples are eating together, enjoying one another's company, Jesus gives this explanation. Let's read from verse 22. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave

thanks, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take it, this is my body.

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and offered it to them, and they drank from it. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many, he said.

I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God. Jesus takes the bread, he breaks it, and he gives it to the disciples.

Jesus takes his cup, gives thanks, and passes it around to his disciples. Jesus explains the bread is his body, and the wine his blood.

His body is about to be broken. The blood spilled. The symbolism is clear. Jesus, the king, is going to die.

[11:16] And the reason Jesus is going to die is there in verse 24. So that many can be saved. This is the reason why it is the will of the Father that Jesus dies.

Because by his death, Jesus can save many. Jesus is the Passover lamb who needs to be sacrificed for us.

This is why Jesus came to earth. This was his purpose in life. His purpose in coming to this earth was to die so that many can be saved.

So that many can live. Just because you were born to do something, though, doesn't make it easy. As I mentioned before, my father wanted me to become a doctor.

And so my parents put me in one of the best private schools in Sydney. I was in that school from kindergarten to year 12. And not only that, I was in tutoring from year 3.

[12:19] As the years went by, I studied hard and I did well at school with the goal of getting a high enough mark in the HSC to get into medicine.

It was all going as planned. But then in year 12, the weight of all this expectation started to bear down on me. The pressure of performing at school year after year started to get to me.

I wanted independence. I wanted to make my own decisions. I wanted to be free. Eventually, I couldn't bear it any longer.

With the finish line in sight, I made the decision not to do my father's will. And I didn't apply to study in medicine. I would not become a doctor.

Just because your life has been directed to do something, doesn't mean it's easy to do. Doesn't mean it's easy to carry it out.

[13:24] I was living with the expectation that I should become a doctor. Can you imagine what it would be like living with the expectation that you needed to die?

Here in the third scene, we come to the crux of the matter. The turning point. Will Jesus carry out what he was anointed to do? Will he choose to die so that many will be saved?

This is the point of no return. Will Jesus choose to go to his death? Scene 3. Jesus is now all alone. He has just told his disciples that they would abandon him. Every single one of them. And now we can already see this taking place.

It's night time. Jesus is in a garden called Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. He is with his most trusted disciples, Peter, James, John.

[14:31] He asks them to keep watch for him. But they cannot. They keep falling asleep. Jesus is utterly alone as he prays to his Father.

Let's look at what Jesus has to say. Before he prays to his Father, he expresses his state of mind to his disciples. Let's read from verse 33. He took Peter, James, and John along with him.

And he began to be deeply troubled, deeply distressed and troubled. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

He said to them, stay here and keep watch. Can you imagine being in this state of mind? Having your soul overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Here is a man who is clearly struggling under the weight of what he needs to do. The weight of his Father's will for him.

[15:45] Verse 35. Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that, if possible, the hour might pass from him. Alone, Jesus prays to his Father.

Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.

This prayer speaks volumes. Abba, Father, Jesus is addressing his heavenly Father, the one with whom he's had an intimate relationship since before the creation of the world.

Everything is possible for you. Here, Jesus is acknowledging the sovereignty of God, of his Father.

This is the same God who spoke the world into existence, who breathed life into it. For God, nothing is impossible. Jesus knows this.

[16:52] Take this cup from me. This is Jesus' plea. The cup is the wrath of God. By dying on the cross, God is asking Jesus to bear his wrath.

This wrath should not have been directed to Jesus. No, this wrath should have been directed to you and me and all of humanity. Because we could never obey God's will perfectly.

This is how Jesus will save many. By drinking the cup of God's wrath. By sacrificing himself for our sakes.

Jesus is standing before this cup and asking, Father, if there is any other way for your purposes to be fulfilled, if there is any other way to save humanity, don't make me die on the cross and drink the cup of wrath which they deserve.

Yet, not what I will, but what you will. This is Jesus' resolve.

[18:07] Jesus submits himself to the Father's will because he loves the Father. And he loves humanity. Jesus loves the Father so much that he chooses to go on to the cross and die.

He chooses to bear the wrath of the Father so that we might be saved. He chooses to bear the wrath which we deserve. And through this, to fulfill God's great plan of salvation.

The Father loves Jesus as well. And so after this, the Father will raise Jesus to life again. And enthrone him as the rightful king and ruler of all.

Verse 41. The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us go. Here comes my betrayer. With this resolve, Jesus chooses to do his Father's will, to die on the cross so that by his death, many will be saved.

[19:20] What does this mean for us? Jesus did his Father's will and died on the cross precisely because we could never do the Father's will.

God's will for us is that we be in perfect relationship with him. That we treat God as he deserves to be treated. That we praise God for who he is and give thanks for everything he's done for us.

That we love God with all of our hearts, all of our soul, all of our strength, and all of our minds. Who among us could even imagine loving God with all of our hearts, soul, strength, and mind?

Who among us could imagine living in perfect relationship with God? None of us could do the will of the Father.

And so Jesus had to do the will of his Father by dying on the cross. By this, our relationship with God could be restored.

[20:28] All we need to do is believe in Jesus and accept this free gift of relationship. If you haven't accepted God's offer for relationship, I urge you to accept it.

By your own strength, you can't please God. You can't do the Father's will. But the beauty of the gospel is God knows this. God knows that you can't do his will.

And so he sent Jesus to come to earth 2,000 years ago to do his will perfectly. And to die on the cross. To bear the punishment of your failures and my failures.

And all we need to do is accept this free offer of relationship. If you want to find out more about this, if you want to know more about this offer which God is making to you, please come talk to me or one of the other church leaders at St. Paul's.

We would love to talk to you about this free offer of relationship which Jesus provides for us. If you have already accepted this offer and are a follower of Jesus, let us rejoice.

[21:53] Let us give thanks for what Jesus did. That Jesus did what we could not do. Nothing we could do could make us right with God. All the works of our hands.

The good deeds we do. Our attendance at church and Bible study. The money we give. All of these could not restore the relationship. Could not restore our relationship with God.

Let us rejoice because Jesus did the will of the Father when we could not. And by his death, he saved us. We have seen today that Jesus was anointed to be God's king.

But as the king, he needed to die. Because by his death, he would save many. We saw the anguish and sorrow which Jesus experienced as he was faced with death and the wrath of God.

But Jesus chose to submit himself to the Father's will and die on the cross. Jesus did what we could not do. And for that, let us give thanks and praise.

[23:02] You are clear to God's words. You had You God's God's God's God's