

He Died For Us

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[0 : 0 0] We're reaching a very high point in the Bible story. As we get to Matthew chapter 26, we're reaching a very high point in what God is going to do or has been doing. From the very beginning of the story, we know that Adam and Eve sinned and God made a provision for their sin.

We also know that all through history, God was in the process of teaching us great lessons as lambs were slain and animal sacrifices were made, pointing to, they didn't understand all that, they just knew that a sacrifice was dying, but it all points to where we're going to get to today.

Jesus was born of a virgin. It'd make no sense for Jesus to be dying for us if he wasn't God in human flesh. So God in human flesh is coming now to the point of dying on the cross and we're at that part of the story.

It's a time to really feel what he did. They've sung about the cross this morning. You've heard specials about the cross. But the truth is, it's the cross of Jesus Christ that's everything for us.

Because it was Jesus dying on the cross and paying our sin debt that would bring about salvation. In the story today, we start up with Judas deciding that he would betray Jesus.

[1 : 1 6] Look if you would at chapter 26 and verse 14. Then one of the 12, it says, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said to them, What will you give me? And I will deliver him unto you.

And they coveted with him for 30 pieces of silver. And so Judas went out from that time looking for the opportunity to betray Jesus. One of the 12. Somebody who had been with Jesus all the time.

Somebody who had been taking part in his ministry. Somebody who had seen the miracles. Somebody who was extremely trusted. When you look back on this story and you see the story of Judas, you see this wicked, vile, ugly man.

But the truth is, he was the treasurer of the group. And you don't get to be treasurer unless you're highly respected. Nobody wants a crook handling the purse that belongs to the church.

Amen? Everybody wants to know, how's that money going to be handled? And that money was being handled poorly. But he at least put on a good charade. The church people didn't know about it. The apostles didn't understand it.

[2 : 1 7] But Judas was a very good looking man. Had you been there, you would have seen a good man. You would have seen a moral man. You would have seen a person who knew how to fool everyone into believing that he was a good guy.

And he has walked with the apostles. It's possible it seems that he probably even had a miracle working power when they went out. He went out as a witness. I mean, all the things never is it mentioned that he wasn't one of those guys and that stuff wasn't happening.

By the way, when it's all said and done in the story, he will betray Jesus with a kiss. The honor. The love that he'll show. The respect that he'll show.

All faked, obviously. There's no way to know what the guy's motive was. He could have been just some wicked guy who hated Christ. Others have said, well, he was just misguided. Thinking that Jesus was about to set up his kingdom.

And maybe Jesus was a tad too laid back and he wasn't pushing Rome enough. And maybe he thought that if by getting Jesus arrested, he would go to fighting and the kingdom would be set up.

[3 : 16] You know, they did have two swords with him. Jesus had said those swords were enough. Who knows exactly what's going on? But Judas has decided that he is going to betray Jesus.

He goes. He makes a plan. And he sets a price to betray Jesus to be crucified. He is looking for an opportunity to betray our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you've ever been betrayed, you can only imagine. In fact, it's in the Psalms the story is told about how it felt to have a guy you worshipped with. A guy you walked into the temple with.

A guy you enjoyed sweet communion with. Being the one who would bring about your betrayal. That's what's happening in this story. Then in chapter 26 and verse 17, the second thing that happens is they begin the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Read with me if you would verse 17. Now the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? See, it's Passover time.

[4 : 15] Underline that verse, that word in the verse. Passover time. That's a big time. We talked about it last week. That's a big time because you remember this is about the story of what God did in Egypt.

It's about when the death angel marched on Egypt and the firstborn in every house was dying. But the Jewish people who believed God, they took and killed a lamb. They took that blood and they put it on the doorpost.

They put it on the column above the door and they covered the door. And when the death angel came to a house that was a believer's house, that was a Jewish house, he simply passed over and went to the next house.

So a substitute had died. I told you that's a word you want to learn. In other words, the Bible is very clear. God hates sin. All sin. God will judge all sin.

There is not one sin that takes place on this world that won't be judged. But by the grace of God, our sins were judged in a substitute. Who took our place on Calvary and our sins were placed on him.

[5 : 15] So it's a Passover story. And they remembered the death of the lamb that died for them back in the book of Exodus. The first step in the feast of the unleavened bread, which is the first thing that we got going on here in this story.

We got the feast of unleavened bread, which is often used as a term to refer even to the Passover. And as they get ready to do that, they get rid of all the leaven in the house. It was a ceremony where they would run around the house to make sure all the leaven was gone.

All the stuff that would leaven bread because they saw leaven as a symbol of corruption, of fermentation, of rotting, of being corrupt. It's sin. It's a picture of sin.

And they wanted to get all of that out of the house. And so this feast of the Passover and the feast of the unleavened bread, that's like an eight-day celebration. It's like the central thing that goes on in their calendar.

It's going on for eight days. And now the guys say, hey, Jesus, where do you want to celebrate? This is like Christmas and Thanksgiving and a whole bunch of other stuff all rolled up into one. And we got to get ready for that special day.

[6 : 15] So that's what's going on in the story. Before I leave the Passover, you do understand. It's not a coincidence that Jesus is going to die at the time of the Passover. It's not a coincidence that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

He was virgin born. He was born. That's something everybody would laugh at except a true believer. Because it means a woman who never had been with a man had a baby. And the baby was born by a miracle performed by God.

And that baby wasn't a human baby, just a common, ordinary baby, because it was God in human flesh. In John chapter 1 and verse 1, in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God and the Word was God. In John chapter 1 and verse 14, the Word became flesh.

God took on human flesh and lived among us. It's called the incarnation. That's the big word for God taking on human flesh and so he's alive. And so the Passover story is the story of a substitute dying in the place of a person who ought to die.

And now Jesus is going to die on the cross of Calvary. That's the story. So go with me with the third thing I want you to see. It's finally time. We're there. We've been going through Matthew.

[7 : 22] We've been in the last weeks of his life for quite a while. But in chapter 26 and verse 18, look at what he says. Chapter 26 and verse 18, he said, Go into the city to such a man and say to him, the master says, my time's at hand.

My time's at hand. And I will keep the Passover at the house with my disciples. Now they probably, I don't know if they caught that. I don't know if they, you know, I don't know.

Typical humans, maybe they heard him say, my time's at hand, and they didn't realize what he was saying. But he's been talking about dying for a long time. He came to the earth to die. There was a shadow of a cross over his manger.

He knew who he was and he knew why he came to earth. And he came to die. There have been times in the story of the Bible where they came to try to kill him. And he said, nope, my time's not yet. It's not my time.

Not my time. But the Father has a time and I'll die just on time. Look, if you would, in chapter 26 and verse 2. The Bible says, You know that after two days is the feast of the Passover and the Son of Man is to be betrayed, to be crucified.

[8 : 30] That's before where we are now. That's right here in this chapter. He's already told them, guys, two days. Two days from now, feast of the Passover. Passover, I'm going to be betrayed and I'm going to be crucified. In chapter 26 and verse 12, a lady came.

If you recall, she poured an ointment, very expensive ointment on his head. And when they said, what are you wasting the money for? He said, hey, hey, hey, hey. They're about to bury me. They're about to bury me.

I think typical people. I think maybe they just didn't catch it over their head. But underline, if you would, in verse 12, she did it for my burial.

I don't know. You know, you've probably been there. I've only had one major time where I had surgery. But it's kind of an apprehensive thing.

You know, you ain't never been put to sleep. You ain't never been unzipped and had stuff taken out and put back whatever and sew you back up and then wake up. And, you know, then they take you in this room and it's cold and they put this little thing on you and you're laying there in your underwear.

[9 : 33] And you got this blanket on your ladies coming by. You feeling okay? No, I'm not feeling okay. Are you comfortable? Yeah. Laying here in a room with strangers around me in my underwear with a little flimsy blanket on me that made out of some kind of spaceman stuff.

Yeah, I'm really comfortable. I'm really comfortable. You know? And then they come and say, we're going to give you something else to make you a little more comfortable. That means we're going to dope you up. So you'll be okay. It's kind of an apprehensive time going on.

But Jesus is standing there. There's no dope. There's no hospital. There's no doctor saying, I've done this a thousand times and brought you back. And he says, two days, guys. She did it for my burial, guys.

It's my time. It's my time. I want you to get to the seriousness of it. I want you to understand before he has to suffer with them in a minute, if they don't understand it, he does.

If they didn't understand it, you should. He is ready to die. And he's making that clear. So go with me, if you would, to chapter 26 and verse 21. As they did eat, so they started eating.

[10 : 35] They're kind of laying on their side around the table. And they're beginning to eat. And he says, one of you is about to betray me. He knew exactly what was happening. Not one surprise.

Not one unexpected thing is going to happen. When he is God in human flesh. This isn't the story of a political hero. This isn't the story of a George Washington or a Mohammed.

This isn't the story of some famous person. This is God in human flesh. On earth. Living like us. With a human body.

Feeling what we feel. Tempted in all points like as we are. Ready to die. He said, one of y'all is about to betray me. I don't even know who's going to betray me. He knows it's right on time. According to God's plan.

This is going to be a very special Passover. Now you've got to remember these apostles. They've done this all their life. Every year since they were children. They've done the Passover. And this time they're grown men.

[11 : 32] And they're out with Jesus. And I think they were probably early 20 boys. They're late teens, early 20 guys. They were young men. Christianity started out with very young men leading everything. And they're all there. It's a very special time.

And maybe they're slowly beginning to put it together in their head. What's happening? Jesus is the real Passover lamb. The blood of lambs and goats has never been enough to cleanse anybody from sin.

The most important moment in history is very close. Now, Jesus will soon hang on a cross. But before he does, one last meal for the condemned man.

One last meal with his friends before he does. Look if you would at chapter 26 and verse 20. Now when evening was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me.

The moment intensifies. Jesus announcing directly that one of them will betray him. They're shocked. And they're sorry. Chapter 26 and verse 22 says, They were exceedingly sorrowful.

[12 : 39] And they all began to talk. Not a one of them looked over at Judas and said, We knew it all along, you scumbag. Oh, they didn't do that. They're all like, Is it me? Am I the guy? Is it I?

Lord, who's going to do this to you, Lord? They were sad. They were hurting. They couldn't believe anybody would do such a thing. They began to ask. No one's pointing their finger at Judas.

They couldn't even figure out who would betray him. But he says, verse 23, He answered and said, He that dips his hand with me in the dish, that's the guy that will betray me.

That's really a sad situation. Do you understand what's going on here? This guy's so much a part of the group. You understand, if you go to other cultures, sometimes you eat out of a common bowl.

Maybe you take your bread and you dip it in, or your tortilla, and you pick up a piece of meat, and it's a common bowl, and everybody's hand's going in it because you're close. You're family. You're not afraid to eat after each other. It's a different way of doing things.

[13 : 35] And he said, Watch the guy who dips his bread in the oil with me. Watch the guy who eats with me and dips his food in there. That's the one that's going to betray me. They're all doing that. They're close. This is family.

They're all there. What is about to happen to Jesus has already been told in the Scriptures, so he's not shocked. The apostles are shocked. But look at chapter 26 and verse 4, and make sure, 24, make sure you underline it.

The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him. You need to underline that. And you need to look this way just a second. Jesus didn't die by accident. Jesus didn't die because He was caught unaware and shocked.

He didn't think, I'm fixing to set up a kingdom. I'm fixing to do great things. And wow, they got me. And I'm not going to be able to fulfill my plan. His plan was to die. An agonizing death.

And it was all written in the Old Testament. It was all clear about what was going to happen. And so as He's sitting there, He said, yep, this is in the Bible. This is in the Word of God. It's written to happen this way.

[14 : 39] That He's going to die. Then He said, in that same verse, He said, but whoa, horrible, terrible problems to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.

It would have been better if that guy had never been born. To be the person who would betray Jesus was extremely horrible. And though you and I and people around us may not even be so spiritual and be so Bible-oriented, you don't meet people named Judas.

You know, I've met Delilah. I've known Delilah. The lady who deceived Samson who was a prostitute. I mean, in fact, when she told me that, it was in Spanish. And I looked at her and I said, excuse me, would you say that again?

I'm not sure I heard your name right. And she said, Delilah. And I looked at her and I said, I'm very sorry. I think you're saying Delilah. And she said, I am. I said, this is a first for me to hear that. I've never met a guy named Judas.

I baptized Jesus, Maria. I baptized Jesus and Mary and Jesus, Mary and Mary, Jesus. I baptized all of them. I baptized Jesus, Mary and the same person and Mary and Jesus in the same person.

[15 : 42] I ain't never seen Judas. What a horrible guy to be. What a horrible moment in history as he steps up. But old Judas is such a stinking hypocrite that in front of all the apostles, he says it so low nobody hears it.

Maybe, I don't know what's going on in the guy's head. He's playing out the charade because in chapter 26 and verse 25, he said, Judas, which betrayed him, actually said, Master, is it I?

And he said unto him, you said it. And the truth of the matter is that Peter didn't hear him because in another book, Peter looks over and says, is he talking about me?

So they didn't hear it. But old Judas, playing a game, playing a charade, as they began to eat, Jesus said something shocking to them.

They knew that the meat they were about to eat, they knew that the bread they were about to eat, they knew that the drink they were about to drink, all of it had to do with the sacrifice, the Passover.

[16 : 44] But Jesus says, you got to remember now, you got to see the story intensifying, saying, I'm going to die, I'm going to die, I'm going to die. Hey boys, two days from now, I'm dying. Hey, don't be saying anything to her about pouring that ointment on me.

That's for my burial. Guys, one of you that's eating with me is going to betray me. And then look what he says in Matthew chapter 26 and verse 26. As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and he blessed it, and he break it, and he gave it to his disciples, and he said, take eat.

This is my body. Those are shocking words. Who are you? Who could you be to look at us and say, this is my body?

But they knew, this is God. This is God in human flesh. And he's talking to them, and he's telling them, this piece of bread represents the broken body of your Savior.

This piece of bread represents the broken body of a lamb that was broken due to their sin. He is offering what they need to live and not die. And he looks at them, and you've got to understand, man, can you see it?

[17 : 47] There's a seriousness that's come over the meeting. They're not laughing and cutting up. It's not Santa Claus that's coming to town. It's not Turkey Day. It has totally changed the air, somber and intense.

He said, one of you is about to betray me. They're all wondering who's going to betray him. Then he takes some bread, and he breaks it, and says, take it and eat it. That's my body. Take it and eat it.

That's my body. Then he takes the drink. Chapter 26 and verse 27. He took the cup, and he gave thanks, and he gave it to him. He said, drink all of it, guys. That's my blood. This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many through remission of sins.

The drink represented his blood. The blood was a mark of his new promise, a new covenant, a new testament. In his blood is remission of sins. For all those who will believe, for some of you Bible scholars that get hung up on words like many, you shouldn't.

His death on the cross was free, and he would believe, and that's a lot of people. That's many. If you don't trust Christ, then obviously you didn't receive what you could have received by his death. chapter 26 and verse 29.

[18 : 55] He gives them a great promise. He said, I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day. When I drink it with you in my Father's kingdom, and they sung on him, and they went out.

I don't know if you can sense the picture of it. I don't know if you can feel the somberness. I've sat by the bed of dying people before and watched them slowly die, and so I kind of have an idea, I think, of the intensity that's going on in the room.

Two days from now, I'll die, boys. She prepared my body for burial. One of you is about to betray me. That's my body. I want you to get this home, boys.

This is my body. This represents me. Take this drink. It's the symbol of my blood, which was about to be shed for you. So it's really heavy, and he looks at them and said, but it's okay, boys.

I'm coming back. Look at the verse. He said, it's okay, boys. This ain't over. I'm not going to go out there on a firing squad and be killed and put in a grave and be dead. Look at what he said in verse 29, if you would.

[20 : 04] He said, now guys, this will be the last time I drink this cup like this until we do it together in my Father's kingdom. In other words, I'm about to die, boys. They're going to kill me.

I'm getting betrayed. I'm going to be killed. My body's going to be broken. My blood's going to be shed. So this is our little party before I go. I want you to feel the intensity, guys.

I'm dying for you. I am the Lamb. John had said in John 1 29, behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and that's what he's doing.

He's going to die on a cross for them. And he said, but guys, I'll eat this again with you. Now let me sum up some thoughts for you before we take the Lord's Supper. How much have we, like Judas, been making excuses for our lack of faith or denying Jesus?

You know, I think if you can think of Judas for me for just a minute, three and a half years or whatever he's been with Jesus, he's been acting the part and looking the part and answering the questions. He's been participating in the soul winning when they went soul winning.

[21 : 08] When he sent the 70-odd, old Judas is there. When they worked miracles, he's there. He had cultural Christianity. He looked like a Christian. He talked like a Christian. His mouth said all the right words, but his heart was far from God.

And I wonder how many of you came to church today very much like Judas. You look good. You talk good. You act good. You know all the right words, but in truth, way down deep in the pit of your soul, you know you've never accepted that you've sinned against the Holy God.

You've joined all the churches and you've been baptized and you've prayed the prayer and you've done everything everybody told you, but never once in here did you say, I have sinned against God.

I need a Savior. You might have the best of intentions and think you're okay, but it will not be your decision as to whether or not that pleases God. Nobody goes to heaven who doesn't know they sinned and trusted what Jesus did on the cross.

You will believe Jesus. Let me explain to you, there's whole categories of Baptists in hell. There's whole categories of Catholics in hell. There's whole categories of every denomination and every religion.

[22 : 19] Good people, pastors, and deacons who did all the right stuff, but it was, as they say in Spanish, boca por afuera, mouth out, not heart.

You must believe in your heart that Jesus is God and that he died on a cross for you and you're trusting him. For Christians, I'd ask, how much are we thinking about getting the leaven out, seeking out the sin and getting rid of that?

How much of this has just become a ritual, a story? Do you realize that the reason he died was so you could be saved? When we read this story, this is not a Easter story.

This is not a Matthew story. This is our story. This is our story. His body was broken and his blood was shed to pay for your sin.

He had never sinned and he didn't deserve to die. Here's my question. Are you living a double life? One that looks like a believer when your heart's not there?

[23 : 27] You say, I don't think that'd be possible. Old Judas got away with it until he died and went to hell. Kissed the very door of heaven and died and went to hell.

So close and yet so far away. Jesus did die and he rose again and he's coming again. Are you ready? To meet God. We'll take the supper in just a second but I just want you to realize this isn't a game.

This isn't a Baptist church thing and I'm not trying to put on some little pageant or some show. This is the most important news in the world. There is a God, an almighty creator God, a judge of the universe and every human being has sinned against this holy God and every human being in the universe deserves to die and go to hell.

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There's none righteous, none good, not a one in the world. Everybody's turned to his own way. Nobody seeks after God, the Bible says.

We can be religious. We can play all the religious games but when it comes down to it, the only way to be saved is to come broken, humbled, poor, needy, admitting you can't get to heaven.

[24 : 46] Pride. Such a big thing that stops us from getting saved. when I was a kid, I was in a swimming pool. I grew up on a farm, swam in creeks all the time and I went off to camp during the summer with all the boys and they said you couldn't swim in the deep water if you couldn't swim from one side to the other so I took off running and jumped in and dove and basically glided all the way to the other side and passed the test.

So one day I'm in the pool and I'm swimming. You don't understand, this guy's so full of pride. I mean, I'm like an arrogant guy and so I'm swimming and I can't stay afloat anymore and I got about this close to the edge of the pool.

All I needed was just one more good kick, one more good push but I'm like four foot eight, five foot five, I don't know, I'm a little big guy still and I'm pedaling and I'm pedaling and I'm dog pedaling and that's all I can do and my legs are exhausted.

I'm like 12 years old and I'm thinking to myself, I'm not about to call out. There's lifeguards all around. All I had to do was go, hey, I could have had help but not me. Not me.

You see, I'm proud. People walked by and they'd see me and I'm like, they walked by and said, hey, you want some help? I said, no, I'm fine. Finally, after about five people had asked and I thought I was going to drown, one last guy came by and asked and I said, yeah, man, and he reached his hand and pulled me, I was fine.

[26 : 07] I got out, sat on the side of the shore and thought to myself, you're an idiot. I kind of feel like that about you. You know you've been treading water. You know you're that close but you're not going to make it and you're going to die in your sin and you're going to go to hell because you're so proud you wouldn't want anybody to know you were lost but everybody in this room was born again, had to come to a place in their life when they admitted they were lost.

Big shot businessmen in this room and little old bitty employees and people who don't even have a job. People who've got no marriage followers and people who've got married, every one of us that are born again had to come and say, as the pastor of this church, I had to come and say one day, I don't have it and I can't do it and I need Jesus.