

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

03.10.2023 | 3 Men on Trial | Matthew 26:36-75, 27:1-10 | Ben Day, Senior Pastor

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Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go there in a fray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My father, if it be possible, let us come pass for me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came 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 may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 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 it for the third time, saying the same word 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 the Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand." While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him." And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings Rabbi." And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus, fed it back to his hand and drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me?" "Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me." "But all this has taken place at the scriptures of the prophets my people filled." Then all the disciples left him and fled. Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. He was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest. And going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death. But they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days." The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has set a blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?" They answered, "He deserves death." Then they spit in his face and struck him, and some slapped him, saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ, who is it that struck you?" Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." And then he went out to the entrance, and another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you two are one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed, and Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death, and they bound him and led him away, and delivered him over to Pilate the governor. Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." (...) They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests taking the pieces of silver said, "It is not lawful to put him into the treasury, since it is his blood money." So they took counsel and brought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the field of blood to this day. Then it was fulfilled what has been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel. And they gave them the potter's field as the Lord directed to me." Thanks be to God.

Would you pray with me? God, your word is living and active. I pray that before I speak that the words from you that were just read would pierce our hearts and our souls. Pray that your spirit who inspired these words as living and active in your word would work in our midst, even in these moments. God, as we just heard your word read, I pray that your spirit would speak your word clearly to us. May it take root in our hearts. May it grow that we would see the fruit of your work and your spirit and your word in our lives. I pray, God, that we would not only hear your word this morning, but by the power of your spirit, we would be doers of your word as well. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

I appreciate Andrew reading a long passage for us. We've been walking through the book of Matthew and at different times we've taken pretty long sections of the book to consider when you have a book that is narrative, when it's telling a story. Sometimes it's good to be able to see a longer portion of the story. Today might be one of the longest passages that we've gone through at once in the whole study of Matthew's gospel. And I went back and forth about how to cover this section where we get to the time of Jesus on trial. And I really wanted us to cover this whole section that was read because I think it actually gives us the chance to look at three men who are on trial. Or really, we could say maybe three men who are in the midst of trial. Jesus here is literally on trial. We also see two other important characters in the story, if you will. Two other men who are in some way facing their own trial. In some way each of these men are facing in some different way the weight of sin. In some way each of these three different men are feeling sorrow and grief. These three men are Judas, Peter, and Jesus. It's probably most helpful, I think, to compare and contrast Judas and Peter as we're going to this morning. But I also think it's really important to include Jesus in looking at these three characters because it is Jesus who gives us hope when we find ourselves in the shoes of Judas and Peter. I think the story's laid out for us that we would be able to see some similarities and some differences in Judas and Peter. But also probably written in such a way that we might see ourselves in one way or another in their story. And then in looking to Jesus, giving us a hope of when we find ourselves in those types of situations.

So I want us to look at these three men who are in the midst of trial in this passage. And really what I want to focus on is the way that they respond to this sorrow or grief that is facing them. You know there's a lot even in just not just this passage but in other Gospel accounts about Judas and Peter that we probably won't be able to focus on this morning. I mean other Gospel writers use language like Satan entered Judas. Or another Gospel writer mentions the fact that Jesus tells Peter, "I prayed for you, that you might return and strengthen the brothers." Those are some very important aspects of the story that Matthew doesn't include. And so we're going to focus on them as much. And instead I really want to focus on how these three men face the sorrow and the grief and the weight of sin that they face in these moments. And really what's been kind of instructive for me are the framework that I've been working around as I've read the story. It really comes from a verse that Paul gives us in 2 Corinthians chapter 7. So 2 Corinthians 7, Paul is right under the church in Corinth and he's referring to a really hard word that he had to give them in a previous letter. Really calling them out for some of their sins, some of their wrong actions. And he says that he is thankful that they have been led to what he calls a godly grief or a godly sorrow. But then he contrasts this godly grief with a worldly grief. And particularly in 2 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 10 he says this, "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. Whereas worldly grief produces death." When you see the word grief there, you should probably think so much as a grief that you would experience over a loss of mourning. But rather you should probably think about sorrow. Some type of pain, remorse. Paul says there is a type of godly sorrow that would actually produce repentance that then leads to salvation without regret. He says there is also a different type of remorse, a worldly sorrow that actually only produces death. I think in this story we see an example of godly grief. Some way we see an example of worldly grief. And then I think we also see an example of the hope that we have in having godly grief and having repentance and the salvation that comes. And that's what I wanted to kind of consider this morning is it would be my prayer that we would be led to a godly sorrow over our sins. A sorrow that leads us to repentance to salvation. That we would not be led by a worldly sorrow that leads only to death.

So first I want to look at Judas. Judas, we can see him as the betrayer who to me seems to be filled with worldly grief. Judas is in this story and he has given the title of the betrayer. And I think he gives us at least in part an example of what it looks like to respond to sin with a worldly sorrow. So we were introduced to really Judas' whole part in this story last week. You know up until this point you haven't really heard much about Judas in terms of his involvement in Jesus' ministry. It's not really pointed out in most of the disciples that much but in his last days of Jesus' life Judas becomes highlighted because he's an important character in this part of the story. So we saw last week at the beginning of chapter 26 that Judas agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. He goes and he makes a deal with the chief priests and those

elders of the Jewish religious system. And here we see Judas carry out that betrayal of Jesus. We saw in chapter 26 and verse 47 it says that while Jesus was still speaking, Judas came who was one of the twelve and came with him a great crowd with swords and clubs from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Notice that Matthew now uses the title. He says now the betrayer had given them a sign saying the one I kissed is the man. Sees him. So here's Judas carrying out his act of treachery, his act of betrayal. Matthew a couple of times referred to him as the betrayer. He is the one who leads this whole crowd of people. I mean just picture the scene. A mob of people with swords and clubs. Like they're going to attack some monster or Jesus as some criminal. It's the religious leaders of the people going after Jesus. And you might think why do they need one to betray him? I mean why couldn't they just arrest Jesus right where he was? Why do they need someone to identify him? Well there's probably a lot of speculation that we're not sure the exact answer. But a lot of people think that we read back in the beginning of chapter 26 that they wanted to do this in stealth and in quiet. To try and not do this out in the open because it might incite really a revolt from the people who saw Jesus maybe as a prophet or even the sign. And so going in the dark in the middle of the night to get some knee where there probably was a lot of light. They actually probably needed someone who knew Jesus well to identify him. And Judas agrees to play his role. And so he goes to Jesus and verse 49. He came to Jesus at once and he said greetings Rabbi. And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him, friend, do what you came to do. They came and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.

It's kind of interesting here that Judas calls Jesus Rabbi. I mean in some ways it seems like he's trying to act like nothing's going on, right? He says greetings Rabbi. Matthew even gives us an exclamation point. Like he's excited to see Jesus maybe. Now you'll notice he doesn't call Jesus Lord. Which in Matthew the Count is often an indication that somebody maybe respects Jesus as a teacher but doesn't really submit to him as Lord. And notice how Jesus responds. He calls Judas friend. Some people have different opinions on why Jesus responds in this way. I mean is he being somewhat ironic? Is he being sincere? Does he really see Judas as at least somewhat of a friend? Is he saying this to try to bring some conviction to Judas and what he's participating in? Some people say maybe it's just a general greeting. We shouldn't read too much into it. But no matter what I think it does point out the real treachery of this act. I mean this isn't just an outsider coming in. This isn't just the people who are Jesus's typical enemies coming in to oppose him and now arrest him. This was one of the twelve. And that's what Matthew says. One of the twelve came. This was somebody who had been called by Jesus. Who had followed Jesus for about three years of ministry, gone everywhere, done all sorts of things together. He was, at least in Jesus' estimation, a friend.

This was the closest act of betrayal that you can imagine. The most intimate type of stabbing someone in the back. And because of this, people have taken a lot of different opinions on who Judas was and what his motivations were. I mean if you go back and look at kind of earlier in the Church, a lot of people there thought that Judas was maybe one of the worst sinners of all time. If you ever go and read Dante's *Inferno*, if you've ever heard of that Christian classic, it's from the Middle Ages. There's this fictional account of a guy named Dante traveling into the different circles of hell. What you'll find is if you read the account and he gets to the innermost circle of hell, there he finds Judas. Almost depicting Judas as kind of the worst sinner of all time. They're kind of the closest to Satan in the middle of hell. But sometimes if you talk to people today, they kind of take a different opinion about Judas. You know after some people say, "Well, maybe Judas thought Jesus really was the Messiah." And he knew that Jesus wasn't going to set up his throne or take any sort of action until his hand was forced. Some people think Judas was just trying to move Jesus' plot along of becoming a king and showing himself as king by bringing these people against him. Kind of these varying opinions that people have about Judas that probably often reflect the way we think about sin and the way we think about our actions against God.

You know, I think it's interesting, the Bible doesn't really probably support either one of those opinions totally. The Bible does give us kind of a complex picture of Judas. I mean, someone who seems to be maybe at many points a true follower of Jesus, I don't think from the very beginning he had this whole grand scheme of selling Jesus out. Maybe it was just greed, but 30 pieces of silver seems like he probably could have gotten more than that. There seems to be this complex thing that's happening with Judas, and it gets even more complex when we see the way that he responds to Jesus being found guilty. So you go into chapter 27. Verse 3, it says, "When Judas his betrayer saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests of the elders. He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." They said, "Well, what is that to us? Seek to it yourself." When throwing down the pieces of silver to the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. You know, people are really torn on how to interpret this section.(...) I mean, here is Judas confessing his sin in some way. He says that he betrayed innocent blood. Even Matthew uses a phrase there in verse 3 where he changed his mind.

Now, I thought the typical word the Bible uses for repentance, but it doesn't know how we often talk about repentance. To repentance is to turn. To repentance is to change your thinking, to change your mind. So people wonder about Judas and his actions here. Well, some people really speculate on Judas' eternal state and all those things, and that's not really my goal. But I really do think it's interesting to consider how Judas responds to this sin and this sorrow and this grief that he's facing. I do honestly believe that Judas here is actually giving us a picture more of worldly sorrow rather than godly sorrow. I think when it says that Judas changed his mind and speaks of his actions in this way, I would say that Judas seems to be feeling a good deal of regret and remorse, but I don't know if it's the true conviction of sin that leads to repentance and salvation. I think what Judas is feeling is guilty for what he has done. Sometimes people think that's what religion is all about. Sometimes people think religion is really just about making you feel guilty so you do the things that religion is telling you to do. And to be fair, a lot of religions and even a lot of Christian sermons sometimes sound that way. That they're just aimed at making you feel bad for what you've done. But to be honest, I don't think you have to go to church to just feel guilty anymore. I know we don't live in the most religious society, but in some ways our society and our culture kind of reflects a religious way of thinking sometimes. There seems to be a moral code in our culture. Granted, it's kind of always shifting, but there does seem to be some rules that you're supposed to live by. It seems to be if you're not doing enough things that measure up to this moral code, that you need to express some type of guilt and wrongdoing for your actions or your inadequacies. Now, I think that you can find yourself feeling guilty in many different places in this world. This is why Paul speaks of a worldly sorrow that comes from the world, a guilt or shame over our actions when we recognize that they're wrong. But I think what the Bible is telling us is this is not a godly conviction of sin.

In a few ways, I think Judas gives us a bit of an example of what worldly sorrow looks like. So just to use his example here, notice that Judas seeks to really atone for his own wrongdoings. Judas goes back to those cheap priests and elders that he had, you know, schemed to play up with, and he tries to give the money back. It's almost like Judas has tried to make up for his own wrong actions, kind of atone for his sin himself. I think that's what worldly sorrow will lead you to do. Worldly sorrow won't lead you to trust in the sacrifice of Jesus. Worldly sorrow will make you think that you have to atone for your wrongdoings yourself. And notice that as he confesses these sins, Judas doesn't go back to Jesus or to the other disciples and say, "I did something really bad, guys." He goes back to the cheap priests and the elders. He goes to those outside of Jesus' circle. Now maybe you could say, "Well, he's just hoping to stop the process and stop everything from happening by talking to the people in charge." But I mean, if you really thought that Jesus was the Son of God, don't you think he would have gone to Jesus himself? I think it's a picture that worldly sorrow will often lead us to people outside of the community of faith. Worldly sorrow won't often lead you to God. It will often lead you, I think, to God's people. I think sometimes when you're feeling a shame or remorse or regret for wrongdoings, and you feel led to go to people maybe outside the Christian community, outside the church to talk about these things, because maybe they'll understand it better, maybe they'll be a little less judgmental, I think that if a worldly sorrow that's drawing you away from God and his people, I think we see worldly sorrow leading Judas to try to atone for his own sins, leading him away from the community of faith. And then as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7-10, we see that his worldly grief is ultimately leading him to death. Now Judas' example is quite vivid and explicit, and his sorrow literally leads to his death. But I think it's an example for us that as we feel a guilt and a shame over our sin that doesn't come from God, we try to atone for ourselves and we go outside of God and his people to process this sin, that ultimately just leads us farther and farther away from God, eventually to the point that we would be separated from the life that is in God. It's just that Judas is showing us here how easy it can be to fall into not just sin, but to worldly sorrow or worldly grief. This is why I often try to gain my sermons by reminding us, let's not be motivated by guilt, as if the whole point of the Bible is telling us we need to try harder and do better. And I think that can lead us into a worldly grief or worldly sorrow that we see from Judas. In fact on the contrast I would say that we get maybe just a small way a contrasting picture of godly grief from Peter.

So let's move from Judas to Peter. Peter, we could call him the Denier who is filled with godly grief. So Judas is the betrayer who is filled with worldly grief that leads him farther away from God, and ultimately leads him to death. I think in Peter we see the Denier who experiences in some way godly grief. Now Peter is always like an interesting character in the stories that we get from the gospel accounts, right? I mean Peter is the one who walks on water but then ends up sinking. He's the one who first confesses that Jesus is the Christ, but then just a few moments later he tries to stop Jesus from going to the cross, and Jesus actually calls him Satan. We see Peter being this kind of interesting figure and he's

really interesting in this story. I mean from the beginning Peter is presented as someone who is ready to go to battle with Jesus. It says in verse 51, "The whole, one of those who were with Jesus, stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear." Now Matthew is kind of being nice to his friend here because he's his name, which follower of Jesus this was. But other accounts tell us this was Peter. Peter is ready to go to battle. Now I've heard some people say you can tell that Peter's not a soldier but a fisherman because he hits the guy's ear. I mean most likely if you're going to battle you're not aimed for the ear. Probably Peter was aiming for something else and he just only got the ear. But you see his eagerness here. I mean he is ready to fight with Jesus.

But then why a contrast? That the one who was ready to fight as soon as Jesus tells him we're not going to live by the sword because that only means death by the sword. And all this is happening only according to God's plan. And Jesus willingly gives himself up to be arrested and brought to trial. Peter's whole perspective seems to change. You go down to the end of chapter 26 in verse 69. It says that Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. So he's outside waiting for the results of Jesus's trial. And the servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus as a Galilean." But he denied it before them all saying, "I don't know what you mean." I mentioned before that Jesus and his disciples weren't from Jerusalem. They're Galileans. They're outsiders in the city. Their look, their accent would give them away. Peter's feeling really by himself in this moment. Jesus is inside on trial. It seems that a battle is not going to take place. And then just about the opposite of a soldier approaches Peter. I mean Matthew specifically says, "Here was a servant girl." This is a young lady that has no position or power to inflict any harm on Peter. But yet Peter lives in fear in this moment. Peter tries to avoid even knowing Jesus. I mean, no, it doesn't even answer the question. It just kind of a, you know, does that evasive thing that we sometimes do. Like, "I don't even know what you're talking about. What did you say? I didn't quite catch that." But it gets more explicit as it goes on. It says in verse 71, "He went out to the entrance and another servant girl saw him." This time she brought on other people. She said the bystanders. "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And he denied it again with an oath. And he said, "I do not know the man." So now Peter's becoming more emphatic in his answer. Even taking an oath to say that he does not know Jesus. But eventually leads in verse 73 when it says that, "A little while, after a little while, the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you two are one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man."(...) And immediately he roosted crowed.

Here Peter comes to the most emphatic way of speaking about his relationship to Jesus. Most emphatic way to deny Jesus is it says that he cursed. There's different ways that you could translate that. Our translation here seems to indicate that Peter is invoking a curse on himself. As if he is saying, "I don't know Jesus and if I'm lying, I'm cursed." But other translations say maybe he is actually cursing Jesus as a way to distance himself from him. I don't know that blankety-blank. He's trying to say, "I would not ever associate myself with such a man." But whatever way, it seems here that Peter is living under a curse. He is living in his sin, separated from God. Peter here is denying Jesus and feel the weight of that. And when we read earlier in Matthew's Gospel that Jesus said, "Whoever denies me on earth, I will deny before my Father in heaven." Peter is literally doing what Jesus said will bring him to a place of Jesus saying, "I do not know you when you get to those pearly gates." Peter is denying knowing Jesus. He realizes the weight of his sin because it says in verse 75, "Peter remembered the saying of Jesus before the research froze you will deny me three times, and he went out and he went bitterly."

(You see almost some similarities between Judas and Peter. They both recognize their sin. They have both had some remorse. Both of them at their moment of Jesus' greatest need, they sell Jesus out for their own benefit. But what's the difference? I think here we see godly grief, but we think literally only at the beginning of the godly grief. We do see that their two lives take a sharp divergence. Where Judas goes to the chief priest of the elders and tries to toil for his own sins and eventually takes his own life, Peter we know returns to disciples. We know that when Jesus is killed, he is there, huddled in the room with the other ten. We know that when the women report back that the tomb is empty, he is there with the disciples. We know that when they report the tomb is empty, he runs to the tomb. We know that when Jesus returns to that room with the disciples, he is there to meet the risen Jesus. We know that eventually one day he will have breakfast on the beach with Jesus. As Jesus restores him to the ministry, we know that Peter will go on to be used by God to be a leader in the church. I mean just the exact opposite of Judas in almost every way. Why? Well again there's so many other parts of the story, but at least in portion I would say because he seems to experience a godly grief. Yes, he experienced a real conviction of denying Jesus. He weeps bitterly over what he has just done. But yet it leads him to the people of God, not away from the people of God. It leads him to his Savior, the one that he knows that could bring

forgiveness of his sins, not to other people who we hope can right his wrongs, try to atone for his sins himself. Yeah, I think the whole difference in their lives is not what happened on this night in the terms of their sin. I think that was really similar. I think the difference is how they respond to their sin. One with worldly sorrow that drove him farther away from the presence of God. And one with a godly sorrow that drove him farther into the presence of God.

The question is how in our lives are we going to experience godly sorrow? If we don't want to just experience worldly grief that leads to death, but we want to experience godly grief, how do we do that? There are many parts to that answer I think, but at least in part I would say the answer is to look to Jesus. And he's the third person of the story that we have to end by focusing on because he is our hope. He is the whole hope of Peter in the midst of his sin. He is the hope of each one of us when we are experiencing this type of grief and sorrow for our sin. Because Jesus is the Savior who faithfully faces the greatest grief. That's the last part of your notes of here. The following along. This is the last man who's on trial in this story. Jesus is the Savior who faithfully faces the greatest grief. We're going to see Jesus experience a lot over these next couple of weeks as we study Matthew's gospel account. We see here that he is literally on trial. And what's so interesting is that when Jesus is on trial, whether it be before Caiaphas and the other elders and chief priests or whether he is before Pilate, Jesus always seems so calm and in control. I mean, you notice here like in verse 67 as the trial is coming to an end in his portion of it, they spit in his face and they struck him. Someone slapped him saying prophesied to us, Christ. Who is it that struck you? I mean, do you imagine how infuriating that must be? I don't know when's the last time you got spit in the face? Spat in the face? I don't know how to say that. I don't know when's the last time you were like insulted and treated like this? Good chance, maybe never? I mean, Jesus throughout all of this is so calm. It's so peaceful.

Jesus throughout all of this, he says that they revile him. He doesn't revile or return. He says, Father, forgive them. But what's interesting is that the earlier part of this passage in chapter 26 where we began reading this morning, Jesus is so calm and collected. In fact, Matthew says Jesus is sorrowful and troubled. The word there is that while Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane, he is in agony. In fact, he says in verse 38, he says to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch with me. Jesus is telling them that his soul is so troubled, it feels like he might die. This is the Jesus that we see in so many other times as being peaceful, being in control. I mean, this is the Jesus who is experiencing grief. He is in agony. His soul is troubled unto death. Luke tells us that while he is praying, he is sweating drops of blood. He is under such stress and grief and sorrow himself.

The question is, well, why? What says in verse 39 that he goes a little farther and he fell on his face and he prayed, saying, my father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. This is a prayer that Matthew tells us Jesus repeats three times. Each time I say, if possible, let this cup pass from me. But not as I will, but your will be done. This gives us an insight into why Jesus is in so much grief and agony in the garden. Make no mistake, Jesus isn't grieving the fact that he is going to die, leads to the physical sense. I mean, throughout his whole ministry, Jesus has been talking about the fact that he is going to die. We just saw earlier in chapter 46, Jesus said, in two days they are going to deliver me up and I am going to be crucified. So Jesus not only knows that he is going to die, he knows it is going to be a very painful, excruciating death. Jesus here is not concerned. He is not anguished over this physical death. He is not concerned over the insults, the beatings, the nails driven through his hands and his feet. What Jesus is concerned about, what he is in anguish about, is this cup. He prays to Father about the cup that he has to drink.

The cup, throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, there are many references of the cup being symbolic of the wrath of God. Jesus is experiencing the greatest grief because he is experiencing the wrath of God. Perhaps even in these moments, some theologians speculate that even before Jesus gets to the cross, he becomes maybe face to face with this cup, this wrath of God. I mean, if you think about the wrath of God that is due to sin, it can be hard to conceptualize what does that even mean. But just think about how upset people are about injustices in this world. I mean, us as fallen people ourselves, we get mad when innocent people are treated wrongly. There are protests about it and marches about it. Think about how much shame there is for a certain type of wrongdoing that is just despicable in our culture's eyes. This type of indignation against injustices, this type of shame over sin, this is what Jesus is experiencing in an infinite way as he takes on the punishment that was due our sin on the cross, as he drinks the cup of the wrath of God. Jesus knows that in these moments, things are going to be different. He's going to the Father, and for the first time it's a bit different. Now, this is all a bit mysterious, all a bit. The Father and the Son and the Spirit, they are one. There is one true God. I believe he has one divine will. But yet Jesus in these moments is in such agony that he's

almost coming to the Father saying, "I know what the will is." So I submit to you, but if there is another way, my will, as I incarnate into a human man, would be that there would be another way. Because he is seeing the pain and the anguish that he is about to experience on our behalf, the greatest grief that you could ever imagine. He knows that in these moments, I think he prays to the Father that something is different in the relationship of the Father and the Son. Again, it's hard to explain the two or one, but yet it seems that for the first time, maybe their relationship won't be as unified as it's always been throughout all of eternity.

You know, many people have pointed out that many followers of Jesus actually went to their deaths more joyfully than Jesus did. You ever read about Christians, followers of Jesus who are martyred for their faith? You can find many stories of them singing songs of praise to God, rejoicing that they are about to die. But Jesus, you see him in the garden leading up to his death, and he is in anguish about it. Because Jesus wasn't as brave or as courageous as these followers of his? I think because the followers of Jesus knew that their death was only going to bring them closer into the presence of God. But Jesus knew that what he was about to face was actually going to bring him separation from the Father like he had never experienced before. Jesus is coming face to face with the greatest grief that you and I should face for our sins. But yet, he comes to the Lord and he says, "Not your will, but yours be done." He comes to the Father and he prays the same thing that he taught us to pray in the Lord's Prayer. "May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May your will be done in this hardest moment of my life, as it has been in every other moment of my life."

Jesus here is faithfully following the plan of redemption in the face of the greatest grief. He is faithful where everyone else has failed. I mean, you go back to the very beginning of the garden, there was Adam who looked to God and said, "I don't want your will. My will be done. Let me eat from the fruit of the tree, however I choose, please." But here's Jesus in the garden saying, "Not my will, but yours be done." He is faithful where everyone else has failed and he is our hope when we are caught in sin. I think the answer to experience godly sorrow is to look to Jesus. Because you can't look to Jesus in the garden and take your sin lightly. I mean, you just can't look to Jesus as he is in anguish over what he is about to face, as he is sweating drops of blood and think that the sin is just not a big deal. When we look to Jesus and what he is facing in these moments, we have to feel the weight of our sin. We need to feel the conviction of our sin. And I think it's good that we do.

I think that's what led Peter out of his state of denial thinking that he was strong enough to last under the hardest circumstances. When he brought to a state of conviction and wept bitterly, that's what led him back to Jesus. It is important, as I mentioned last week for us, and it is weeks leading up to Easter to consider our sin. That it was our sin upon his shoulders. That it was our sin for which he died. It is important, I think, that we would feel that conviction. But it is also important that we would feel that it is a way that is godly, that would lead to repentance. That when we see Jesus in the garden, we not only see him in anguish and the grief that he is facing, but we see that he is willing to do it on our behalf. In fact, the Bible says that there was joy that was set before him as he came to the cross. It was a joy of seeing sinners repent and fall into his arms of grace. When you look to Jesus and you see the grief that sin causes, but you also see the grace that is there in him, that is what will lead you to godly sorrow. That is what will lead you to not think that you have to atone for your sins yourself. That you need to go out and do so many other things to right your wrongs, but will lead you right back to the Savior, who has paid the price, who has canceled the record of debt, that you might now know forgiveness and freedom in him. Let us be like Peter, not just. Let us experience the godly sorrow, and that will come when we look to Jesus,(...) the one who was in the garden, faithfully, sifting to the Father's will. Faithfully carrying out the plan of redemption. Grace filling his heart, even as he poured out his soul unto death.