

Matthew 26:36-75 –22 March 2020

“The Process Of Pressing Toward The Prize”

Introduction

Christ has come into Jerusalem for the last week of His earthly ministry and life.

He has just celebrated His last Passover Sedar and introduced Christian Communion from part of it

Now He's taken His disciples out to the Mt of Olives
He's given His last full messages and guidance to them.

The rest of what He'll teach them is thru EXAMPLE!
Jesus is in the process of pressing toward the prize!
The prize of winning our souls back to God!

As Christians, we should be on mission! We should be in the process of pressing toward a prize as well!

We each have different missions with the goal of bringing Christ glory! THIS will be rewarded with the prize. (Do your own study on the prizes in heaven)

Tonight, we see 4 steps in the process of pressing toward the prize!

Step #1 – Commune with God for Guidance & strength (Chap 26:36-46)

Read Vs 36-38

1. Notice the layered approach of closeness to the Son of God.
 - a. The masses – not involved
 - b. The other 8 disciples – sit here while I pray
 - c. The 3 disciples – stay here & watch w/ Me
2. ALL people have the opportunity to have close communion w/ Jesus, but do we take advantage?
 - a. Read John 14:17 – w/ you & shall be in you
 - b. If's there's distance between us & God it's b/c we've moved away!

Read Vs 39

1. Jesus role-models how to have communion w/ God for guidance & strength
2. As a man, Jesus doesn't want beaten & to die
3. Keep this verse in mind the next time someone says wrongly, "I believe all people will go to heaven, whether they believe in Jesus or not"
 - a. What a horrible thing to do to Jesus if there's another way to eternal life w/ God!

Read Vs 40-41

1. Even the disciples need the guidance and strength of God in the coming hours...but they didn't really know it!
2. They're tempted here to sin by sleeping
3. Read I Cor 10:13
4. Some think of fleeing temptation & sin in a vacuum apart from being active for God

5. Purpose of avoiding temptation is to notice what God wants you to be actively doing!!
6. They missed out on God strengthening & guiding them b/c of the temptation to sleep.

Read Vs 42

1. Luke 22 tells us Christ was sweating as if it were great drops of blood
 - a. Gethsemane literally means *the olive press*
 - b. He's being spiritually pressed to choose God's way or a sinful way
2. Jesus freely chose to die for and redeem us
 - a. Our free choice to obey shows our love for God.
 - b. Christ's free choice of the cross shows love for us.
3. Luke 22 also says God sent an angel to strengthen Him.
 - a. God always provides clarity of direction and strength to fulfill the good plan!

Read Vs 43-46

1. We said already that there was work for the disciples to do but they didn't know it.
2. Now the time is past. They missed the chance.
3. Christ has gained the spiritual strength & guidance that He needed but they didn't get to experience it.
 - a. Even when others aren't available, God Himself can still meet your needs as He did for Jesus!
 - b. We, as disciples, have the opportunity to join God and be apart of the great process of pressing toward the prize!

Step #2 – Go boldfaced into the plan of God no matter the cost (Chap 26:47-56)

Read Vs 47-48

1. John 18:4-9 Jesus asked, “Whom seek ye?”
 - a. They said, “Jesus of Nazareth”
 - b. Jesus said, “I AM” & they fell backwards

2. Jesus is a man that is boldly moving forward into God's plan. (Nothing half-hearted about this)

Read Vs 49-50

1. Jesus is asking him, "Where did you come from just now?" (Trying to prick his conscience)
2. Luk 22 – Jesus said, "Betrayest thou Me w/ a kiss?"
 - a. We have impression the guards held back, till Judas kissed someone, then they appeared.
 - b. What hypocrisy! Even in betrayal, he didn't want to be known as a traitor!
3. Jesus went willingly, boldfaced into everything & Judas wouldn't be honest about any activity!

Read Vs 51-56

1. Peter's reaction still misses the point (b/c he hadn't receive God's guidance & strength in garden)
2. Jesus is willingly going into God's hard plan.
 - a. Angel discussion is to prove this is willing.
3. Jesus even challenges them to live openly!

Step #3 – Expect the world to twist God’s truth against you (Chap 26:57-68)

Read Vs 57-58

1. Peter is following Christ, not as part of a mission for God, but “to see the end” of the matter
2. Peter is against Christ here but doesn’t even know it.
 - a. For or against, there’s no 3rd option of following at a distance.
3. Mark 14 says Peter was warming himself by the enemy’s fire.
 - a. It’s a disservice to let people think they’re not enemies of God when they’re living a neutral life.

Read Vs 59-60

1. They’ve already begun at this point to mock & hit Jesus.

Read Vs 61-64

1. Read John 2:19-21 – ‘Destroy this temple’
 - a. They’re twisting His words for their goal.
 - b. Their view wasn’t the truth of His words
2. “Are You the Christ, the Son of God?”
 - a. Again, they’re twisting the truth
 - b. The truth – If any man other than the true Christ proclaims he’s Christ...it’s blasphemy
 - c. Their view – If any man AT ALL proclaims he’s Christ...it’s blasphemy.
3. Notice the word “nevertheless”
 - a. He knows this will condemn Himself in their eyes, but it doesn’t matter b/c it’s true.

Read Vs 65-68

1. This was a trial waiting for a crime instead of a crime waiting for a trial!
2. The world will seek for ways to use God’s truth against you. Be ready!

Step #4 – Run back to God whenever needed (Chap 26:69-75)

Read Vs 69-70

1. We have 3 enemies in life (flesh, world, devil)
2. Peter here is in the flesh, apart from communion with God.

Read Vs 71-72

1. He denied “with an oath”.
2. An oath is designed to proclaim to all.
3. This represents Peter succumbing to the world.

Read Vs 73-74

1. His speech betrayed b/c he has Galilean accent
2. Peter began to curse and swear.
 - a. A curse is literally *to invoke evil upon*
 - b. This represents Peter succumbing to the devil
 - i. Luke 22:31 – Satan has desired to sift you...

Read Vs 75

1. Peter “remembered the Word of Jesus [God].
2. This cause him to “wept bitterly”.
 - a. Is this good or bad?
 - b. I say to you, THIS IS GOOD!
3. Read II Cor 7:10
 - a. Godly sorrow involves meditating on God’s Word & how we messed up.
 - i. Worldly sorrow involves meditating on our self & how we got caught.
 - b. Read Rom 2:4
 - i. The kindness of God leads people back to repentance and salvation.
 - ii. People can run back to God at any time!
 1. And we show that the door is wide open by demonstrating God’s kindness and grace until repentance is shown!

Conclusion

4 Steps in the Process of Pressing Toward the Prize

1. **Commune w/ God for guidance & strength**
 - a. Even if no one else is helping you, we can have God's great provision poured out on us!
2. **Go boldfaced into the plan of God no matter the cost**
 - a. Once you know that true way God is leading you, go whole-hearted into it.
3. **Expect the world to twist God's truth against you**
 - a. Those in the world will throw you out to keep what is there's.
 - b. Satan was the father of twisting scripture (Garden or Eden, temptation of Christ), expect the world to follow this example.
4. **Run back to God whenever needed**
 - a. There's always God's grace, & it's enough!

Read Phil 3:10-14