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MATTHEW SLIDE INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to Matthew chapter 20.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to Matthew 20,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find Matthew 20 on page **825**.

INTRODUCTION

Maybe some of you have a story like mine,

- but before I became a Christian...
- I really thought Christianity was kinda crazy.

I was in high school, and I thought myself to be pretty smart.

- I was a good student.
- I liked to read books and discuss with friends.
 - We'd go out and pretend we were deep...
 - Like, we'd smoke clove cigarettes,
 - and drink pots of chai tea,
 - and wear jackets with elbow patches on them...
 - Right?

So, when I first started to hear about Jesus,

- I was just baffled by how idiotic it all sounded!

You guys really believe this? It MAKES NO SENSE!

ILLUSTRATION: MODERN STORY

I mean, imagine if the story of Christianity was translated into our modern day.

Somebody knocks on your door. [knock]

- And let's just assume you don't hunker down
- and pretend not to be home.
 - "Shhhh...don't move!!! They'll go away."

But you open the door.

- "No, we don't need solar panels..."

And he's like:

- *"No, no, no...I'm here to tell you about God."*

And you're like,

- *"Oh...ok. Tell me about God."*

And he says:

- *"Great, well, the Son of God was born..."*
- *to a sixteen-year-old virgin girl."*

You're like,

- *"Wait...what?!?"*

But he keeps goes,

- *"And he never went to college.*
- *Never traveled outside of Colorado.*
- *Never wrote a book or anything like that...*

But he started doing miracles.

- *He walked across the Chatfield reservoir.*
- *He took a Chipotle burrito and fed a whole Broncos game.*
 - *A friend of his in Boulder died,*
 - *it took him three days to walk there,*
 - *they were worried about the body starting to stink...*
 - *but he was like, 'Nah, that's just Boulder...'*
 - *and he brought him back to life.*

But then he was arrested,

- *and was given the death penalty...*
 - *But then three days later he came back from the dead.*
- *And he's God.*
- *And we follow him.*
- *You wanna to join us?"*

TRANSITION

I'm calling today's sermon **SLIDE MAKES NO SENSE**

What we believe goes against our common sense in many ways!

- But our text addresses why this goes against common sense,
- AND actually, how our common sense must be overcome!

So, today we start with Jesus' third of four passion predictions,

- where he takes his disciples aside,
- and tells them what he came to do...what his plan is.

And if you think it's strange to us.

- It was just as,
 - if not more baffling to them.

So, here's what I've got for you. I've got FOUR points today!

- You're like, "pastor, you've normally got three points..."
- and you go like an hour..."

Don't worry! You'll be fine.

FOUR points in our text today.

- They're what Jesus came to do...
- AND what we're supposed to do.

But, we've gotta move! You ready?

OK, let's start off in verse 17. Matthew 20:17

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MATTHEW 20:17-19

[17] And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, [18] "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death [19] and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

EXPLAIN

Now, what we just read...what's that called?

That's the Gospel. It's the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

I kinda wish you had been a little quicker to that...it's like all we talk about!

- But these disciples don't get it.
- They don't understand it.
- It MAKES NO SENSE!

Because it culminates with Jesus being crucified and dying!

Actually, the first time Jesus told them that, Peter said,

- *“Oh no you aren’t!*
- *You aren’t gonna die!*
- *Jesus, this will never happen to you!”*

And Jesus called him Satan! **“Get thee behind me...”**

POINT 1

But it’s here that I’ll make my first point, that’s kinda baffling.

WHAT did Jesus come to do?

He came to **SLIDE SACRIFICE**

- He came to be killed!

When it says **“he will be DELIVERED over”** that has a dual meaning.

- Yes, we know that Judas Iscariot will betray Jesus
- and literally hand him over to the authorities.

BUT commentators point out that there is also a divine passive here.

- God is DELIVERING his Son over to his destiny.

Jesus didn’t JUST HAPPEN TO die...no!

- This is WHAT Jesus came to do.
 - He came to be killed!
 - He came to die.
 - He SACRIFICED his life.

EXPLAIN: COMMON SENSE

And that MAKES NO SENSE.

Gods don’t sacrifice for us...we sacrifice to gods!!

In the Jewish encyclopedia,

- which you can go and look up online,
- when speaking of Jesus' last words on the cross,
 - *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*
- The Jewish encyclopedia says this:

SLIDE *This last utterance was in all its implications itself a disproof of the exaggerated claims made for him after his death by his disciples...No Messiah that Jews could recognize could suffer such a death.*

And this isn't just the Jewish perspective. It's just common sense.

No real Messiah could die like this.

- Founders of successful religions don't die young like this...
 - killed by their enemies...
 - in defeat.
- No! Founders of successful religions live long lives...
 - they overcome their enemies...
 - they aren't abandoned by their followers.

That's why the Jewish leader, Gamaliel, said this about the early movement of Christians in Acts 5

SLIDE ACTS 5:38–39

[38] So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; [39] but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!"

TRANSITION

So, this thing should have flamed out!

- Why didn't Jesus go the way of cult leaders...
 - and failed messiahs?

Something happened to the disciples that overcame their common sense.

But I don't want to get ahead of myself.

Let's keep going in our text. Verse 20:

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MATTHEW 20:20

[20] Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something.

So, the sons of Zebedee are James and John.

- They're a part of Jesus' inner circle...
- the big three, Peter, James, & John.

They're also called the sons of Thunder.

- Right? They've got, like, a theme song:
 - THUNDER! AHHHHH!

MATTHEW 20:21

[21] And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

EXPLAIN: MOMMA

So, you've heard about the helicopter mom? Right?

- Just hovering around,
 - and when little Billy's skittle starts to melt...
 - she just swoops in there...
 - and puts him in a safe place.

Well, this is a lawnmower mom!

- She just goes in there and...
 - Rrrrrrrrr...
 - Just mows things over...
- Just making a path for her boys.
 - It's been going on for 2000 years...
 - I don't have time to preach on parenting.

But, talk about a case example of missing the point!

- Jesus has just told them...
- that his plan was to SACRIFICE his life.
 - And they think, *"hmm...this is the time do*
 - *a bit of a power grab.*
 - *Jesus, when you get elected...*
 - *we would like the top two places in your cabinet."*

22:

MATTHEW 20:22

[22] Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able."

EXPLAIN: CUP

Jesus says: “*you don’t even know what you’re talking about!*”

And so, Jesus asks if they’re able to drink the cup.

- Now the cup is imagery used in the Old Testament,
 - to represent the wrath of God poured out
 - to judge sinful humanity.
- It’s like everytime we sin...
 - we put a little more wrath in that cup...
 - and a little more wrath in that cup...
 - and on judgment day
 - that cup is to be poured out
 - on whoever deserves it.

And when Jesus says in Gethsemane,

- *Father, let this cup pass from me...*

- He’s saying let the cup of your judgment pass from me!

But he submits to the Father, *not my will, but yours*, and bears the wrath.

POINT 2

And it’s here I’ll make my second point:

Jesus came to **SLIDE SUFFER**

And again, this MAKES NO SENSE.

Gods don’t suffer! They relieve suffering...or maybe the cause it!

But James and John confidently affirm, “*we’re able to drink the cup!*”

- But they have no idea what they’re saying!
 - They think the cup is Jesus’ glory...
 - and it is...
 - But his glory, requires suffering.

APPLICATION: DUMB OR DANGEROUS

Hey, if you wanna be a Jesus follower, you are signing up for suffering!

Listen, following Jesus is not a path to fame, fortune, and popularity!
We are living in a day when hostilities towards Christians are on the rise.

Listen, when I got saved in 2001,

- my friends just thought I was dumb...

Like, all of a sudden, I believed what the Bible said about sex.

- That sex was only for one man
- and one woman
- in one marriage.

And my friends just thought I was dumb.

- Like no more porn...
- no more fooling around with girls...
- no more partying.

They thought I was dumb.

But believing that today...

- **you're not dumb...**
- **you're dangerous.**

We used to be prudish and old fashioned...now we're a threat.

- A danger to their way of life...
- A danger to their mental health...
- A danger to their very identity!

And listen, it's probably not getting better...

And it will probably lead to more hardships for Christians.

But Jesus says this in John 16:

SLIDE JOHN 16:33

[33] I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Now those two things don't make sense together:

- PEACE...and...TRIBULATION.
- Following Jesus...and SUFFERING.

Chuck Swindoll says it this way:

SLIDE *“When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible man and breaks him.”*

In every great & impossible work of God...brokenness is necessary!

And I don't know about you...but...

- Oftentimes we don't learn much in the blessing...
- but our ears are wide open in the breaking!

To follow Christ is to SUFFER.

Verse 23:

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MATTHEW 20:23

[23] He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

EXPLAIN

So, while James and John...

- will indeed partake of Jesus' glory through suffering...

Jesus makes it clear that he does not have the authority

- to grant them their request.

Only God the Father has that authority.

Verse 24:

MATTHEW 20:24

[24] And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.

They're like, "You sent your mom? Are you serious?"

MATTHEW 20:25-27

[25] But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [26] It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,

EXPLAIN: GREATNESS

Jesus is asking...

- *Are you interested in authority and power and greatness*
- *rather than SACRIFICE and SUFFERING?*

If so, you're leading like the Gentiles!

- And, by that, he doesn't mean non-Jewish...
- no, he's asking, **are you leading like you don't believe in God?**

He says, **it shall not be so among you!**

- Greatness in the kingdom...
- is the opposite of greatness in the secular world.

It MAKES NO SENSE!

POINT 3

And it's my third point.

Jesus came to **SLIDE SERVE**

- He came to SACRIFICE.
- He came to SUFFER.
- And he came to SERVE.

But this is confounding! It was to them, and it is to us!

Paul says as much in his speech in Athens in Acts 17:

SLIDE ACTS 17:24–25

[24] The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, [25] nor is he **served** by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

Listen, gods don't serve us...we serve the gods.

BUT Jesus served...and if you wanna be great...**SLIDE SERVE**

APPLICATION: SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Listen, if you take any sort of leadership course...

- or watch some TED talk...
- you will hear about SERVANT LEADERSHIP.

So, Jesus says, “*You wanna be great...serve!*”

- And we’re like, “*Well, I’m a servant leader!*”

But it’s like, hold on a second...

- servant is a noun.
 - A servant...serves someone.

You just took it and made *servant* an adjective to your noun...*leader*.

But Jesus didn’t tell you to be a leader...he told you to be a servant.

Listen, if serving is beneath you...then leadership is beyond you.

- Do you see yourself as a leader that serves?
- Or a servant...who might get the opportunity to lead?

Gosh, this is why we love and honor those three college interns!

- Man, they served us this summer so well!
- And I’ll tell you, they’ve got leadership in their futures!

TRANSITION

So, all this messes with our COMMON SENSE.

Jesus came:

- to SACRIFICE
- to SUFFER
- to SERVE

And one more. Verse 28:

BLANK SLIDE

MATTHEW 20:28

[28] even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

POINT 4

Now, this is an unbelievably famous verse!

And that's because it tells us WHY Jesus came!

Jesus came to SACRIFICE, SUFFER, and SERVE...but WHY?

Listen, so many people know THAT Jesus died.

- But when you move from knowing THAT Jesus died...
 - to WHY Jesus died...
- it will change everything!
- It is what will overcome your COMMON SENSE!

The only way you can really change...is to understand the WHY.

- It changed everything for these disciples...
- and it will for us, as well.

So, let's answer the question:

- WHY did Jesus die?
- WHY did he come to sacrifice his life?

Well, it says in that last verse:

- he GAVE his life as a RANSOM for many.

And it's our last point: Jesus came as a **SLIDE SUBSTITUTE**

EXPLAIN: RANSOM

Now, a ransom is an incredibly important and rich metaphor...

- that, at some level, gets lost on us.

Cause when we think of a ransom...

- we tend to only think of a kidnapping.
 - We think of a Liam Neeson movie,
 - "I have a special set of skills..."
 - Right?

So, a ransom is what you pay to kidnappers...

- and that's part of this idea...
- but not completely.

Ransom is from the Greek word (loo'-tron) *lytron*.

- And to understand how Jesus is using ransom here,
- you have to understand how this word was used back then.

So, what did ransom mean back then?

Well, a ransom came from the idea of ancient warfare.

- It was the price paid
- to bring a prisoner of war
- out of his captivity and slavery.

Now, in ancient warfare,

- there were no POW camps.
- There were no ethics of prisoner rights,
- or prisoner exchanges.

If you were captured in war,

- you were either killed on the spot,
 - because you were too much of a burden to bother with.
- OR you were conscripted into forced slavery.

And the only way you would ever escape that slavery,

- was if someone would pay an enormous ransom price
- to buy you out...
 - but that rarely happened.
- It was just the cost of warfare.

And that metaphor is critical for you to understand WHY Jesus came.

You see,

- a ransom is only required if you are a dead man walking...
- If you're a slave, with no hope of release or escape.

And Jesus paid the price FOR US.

- He SACRIFICED,
- and SUFFERED,
- and SERVED...
 - as a SUBSTITUTE for you!

And if you don't get that...

- like deep down in your guts...
- this'll never make sense.

He was a SUBSTITUTE for YOU!

ILLUSTRATION: RIVER

Here's Tim Keller's illustration about this:

I took my family to Buena Vista this summer for vacation.

- And my plan had been to do some fishing...
- but the melt-off flow rates on the Arkansas river were just wild.
 - I mean, it was rough and fast.
- Like, there were reports of people drowning
 - while white water rafting, like, every week.

Now, imagine I was walking along the Arkansas with my wife and I said,

- *"You know, I love you so much! 16-years-married!*
- *And I just want you to know how much I love you.*
- *So, let me just show you right now."*

And then I throw myself into the Arkansas River and drown.

Now, does Maryse say, *“Oh! How he loved me!”*

- Is that a life changing example of self-sacrificing love?
 - No! Of course not.
- You’d think I was mentally ill or something like that.
- It’s actually appalling or even offensive.

But image the same scenario,

- I’m walking with my Maryse,
- when she accidentally falls
- into the wild rapids of the Arkansas River...
 - and as she struggles,
 - I dive in,
 - save her,
 - but am swept away in the process.

You see, that’s different.

Then we’d all say, *“Oh, how he must have loved her.”*

APPLICATION

You see,

- until YOU understand that YOU are dead in the water...
 - that there was no hope for YOU...
 - that the ransom owed is YOUR VERY LIFE...
 - AND that the Son of God
 - came to sacrifice his life
 - as a substitute for YOU!

Until the WHY is made real to you...

this will **SLIDE W/PADS** MAKE NO SENSE

But when you see it...

- when you really grasp what Christ did for you on the cross...
 - It makes all the sense in the world...
 - And it changes everything!

CONCLUSION

And this is where Paul's magnificent words from Romans 5 ring true:

SLIDE ROMANS 5:6–9

[6] For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. [7] For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—[8] but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9] Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

ENDING

You see, other religions will tell you THAT God loves you.

- They tell you THAT.

But it's only Christianity that SHOWS it to you.

Christianity isn't just a STATEMENT it's a STORY!

It's a story that, on the surface, **SLIDE MAKES NO SENSE...**

But it's a story of...

- WHAT Jesus came to do...
- and WHY he came to do it...

God SHOWS us that he really does love us.

- He gave his life a ransom for many.
 - That, and only that, will change everything in your life.

And my question is, have you surrendered to that?

Jesus came to give his life as a substitute instead of us.

- And when that hit me in 2001...
- Gosh, I've just never been able to recover!
 - It went from MAKING NO SENSE...
 - To CHANGING EVERYTHING!

So, have you SURRENDERED to Jesus?

Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

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