

THE KINGDOM AND THE PREPARATION FOR THE PASSION

LUKE 22:24-46

REV. CHARLES R. BIGGS

Introduction

The first movement of Jesus' Passion began with Judas determined to betray Him. Judas in league with the teachers of Israel will seek to arrest Jesus in order to put Him to death and silence His teaching and influence on the people (22:1-6, 21-23).

ESV Matthew 26:14-15: Then one of the twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.

As part of the first movement of His Passion, Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper as a fulfillment of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. Judas Iscariot is the only one of the twelve who takes part in the last supper, never to sup with Christ again!

As we learned in our last sermon (22:1-23) the final Passover was celebrated because the final, eschatological and consummate Passover lamb was sacrificed for sin. Now as believers, we live celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread as those united to Jesus Christ by faith (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

In our passage this Lord's Day, we enter the second movement of Jesus' Passion, and darkness continues to fall over Jerusalem.

There is much preparation before Jesus is actually betrayed and so Jesus speaks to His disciples about greatness in the Kingdom, he tells them that he must fulfill Isaiah's prophecy of the Suffering Servant (22:37), and that they must pray to resist temptation in this eschatological moment when the enmity between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent is heightened and intensified in Jesus' betrayal ("the hour of the power of darkness", cf. 22:53b).

I. Greatness in the Kingdom (22:24-34)

Have you ever had a conversation with friend where you felt like you just revealed some important news or feelings or emotions about something, and then you look at them and rather than responding, they speak of something that has nothing to do with what you just said. It can make a person feel like saying: *"Do you even care what I just said!"* You've just shared intimate thoughts and feelings about yourself; you have "told your life story" to someone you thought cared- -and you look at them and they ask: *"What did you say; I'm sorry I wasn't listening!"*

This must have been what Jesus felt at this time of the end of His earthly ministry. Jesus had just told his closest friends and confidences that he loved them and would be betrayed (by one of disciples!) and they start up a conversation amongst themselves as to who was the greatest of the bunch! It would be humorous if this was not so sad and pitiful! The disciples' behavior is revealing of all sinners; at the end of the day, we all are concerned with ourselves rather than focusing our attention on our Lord!

Let's think about this situation! Jesus has set an example of how to be a servant by serving at the Lord's Supper in the upper room with his disciples. The Apostle John tells us that every one of the disciples had clean feet as well because of Jesus' service and grace to them (even Judas who betrayed Him had clean feet!):

ESV John 13:1-5: Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Jesus has instituted the Lord's Supper, and he has loved his own until the end (John 13:1ff). In fact, in John's Gospel we learn that Jesus has washed the feet of each of His disciples, *including Judas*. Jesus has not only given his disciples spiritual food to nourish and sustain them between his first and second comings in the Lord's Supper, but they have cleaned feet by our Lord for service.

But characteristic of previous behavior in the disciples, they begin to ask Jesus who is to be regarded as "the greatest" (22:23).

In the time of Jesus' greatest need of friends and encouragement, all he can find among his disciples are the sinful competitive questions of those who want to be great. Now this is not the first time the disciples have asked Jesus who was the greatest. In fact, they have asked him this before another time when Jesus spoke of His looming death (Luke 9:34, 46).

Jesus serves, speaks of his death and what is to come for the disciples in the way of tribulation-humiliation (see sermon on Luke 21) and they desire exaltation of the worst kind. Like Judas, they are seeking their own desires; unlike Judas, the Lord sustains them as their Great Mediator.

Our passage begins: "*A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.*" Don't forget in the present context, he has just told the disciples that someone at the very table with them all was going to betray him (22:21-23), and he had prepared a memorial meal for them so that His Name would be

remembered-memorialized upon His death on the cross. They asked each other who it may be, not knowing truly their own hearts before Jesus (v. 23).

The first conversation abruptly ends and another conversation about greatness begins in verse 23!

The disciples have yet to learn how important it is to understand that the way of the disciples is first humiliation, tribulation, suffering- -THEN later exaltation and glory. ***If Jesus must suffer humiliation, tribulation, and suffering, then later to experience exaltation and glory, so must His disciples (as He has told them many times before!).***

Jesus answers their prideful concerns by telling them that they are not like the Gentile unbelieving kings (and implied other world leaders). In the world's way of doing things, greatness is determined by position and if you have a high position you do good to the "underlings" beneath you; they are even given the title of "benefactors" that is, they desire to be recognized for their goodness and kindness to all the "underlings" who don't "deserve" them as their king and ruler (22:25). This is an interesting example Jesus uses because many times people will be tempted to serve even in the Church and in Christ's Kingdom so as to be thought of more highly as a servant or "benefactor".

Jesus is saying do not serve like worldly leaders who expect to have their positions ***noticed and recognized*** even with nice titles like "benefactor" (notice important contrast in v. 26: "*But NOT so with you...*")- -but rather let your own thought of yourself be as the youngest in a group or as a slave among important folks.

In contrast to this Gentilic, worldly way of thinking that characterizes this present age, the disciples are not to think this way in being conformed to the pattern of this present age, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds according to God's Word (Rom. 12:1-2).

As Kingdom disciples they (and we!) must understand that greatness is not determined by or found in position *or recognition of service*, but in the way one faithfully, tirelessly, persistently serves God and man (22:26: "*But not so with you...*").

The leader → Servant-Slave

The great one among them → Servant-Slave

Those who are servants are the great ones (22:27-28). Jesus tell all of His disciples to remember that He is among them (and us!) as the host of the banquet; Jesus says: "I am among you as the one deserving of your service (deserving of your recognition!), but I am among you as one who serves as a lowly house slave to set an example to you of what greatness looks like" (22:27).

Jesus teaches them that one's heart before God is revealed in the way their hands (and feet) serve others.

How is your "serve"? Do you serve to get from others (recognition, power, influence, reputation, position)? Do you serve to be recognized as a servant –in other words, do you want to be known as a kind "benefactor" to the lowly, despised "underlings" beneath your dignity, dependent upon your kindness and grace?

You will know that you are serving for worldly "greatness" and recognition when you cease serving (or when you're service lacks zeal) Christ and His Church because you were not granted the *significance* that you thought you deserved from others (In other words, you were not called and treated in your estimation as a great "benefactor" to the underlings).

Do you serve because you understand that service to God and neighbor, a focus on Christ rather than self, is defined as true greatness? We must be watchful of this in the Church lest we become those who are wondering before God and man who is the greatest amongst us. We all can be tempted in this area and we must be aware of this part of our sinful tendencies.

Even after we have done what God has commanded of us in our service, we are still unworthy servants as far as being more righteous, or greater, as Jesus has taught his disciples earlier in Luke's Gospel:

ESV Luke 17:10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'

Especially important is this for those God has called to be leaders in His Church (as the disciples had specially been called). Leaders must not lead for recognition or for their own glory, but must in humility consider others more important than themselves in their service. Is your service truly to God because of the grace shown to you in Christ, or is even your service another attempt at your being great and more significant than others?

Do you seek to consider others more significant than yourself? Even in your service, do you seek to be more significant *in your service*?

ESV Philippians 2:1-5: So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...

As Philippians 2 teaches this is the mind that we have “in Christ Jesus” (2:5). Those who are united to Jesus Christ must live as those who are servants to God and each other- ***-this is TRUE greatness.***

Philippians 2 goes on to teach that Jesus has been exalted to the position of King of kings and Lord of lords, but *he reached that exalted-glorified place through service*; he reached that exalted-glorified position because of God’s grace to him after he humbled himself even to the point of death- -even the shameful death on the cross (2:6-7).

Jesus goes on to tell the disciples in our passage from Luke 22 that *they are assigned a kingdom and an exalted position* (22:29ff), but first they must suffer humiliation through service with Jesus Christ. They will eat and drink at Christ’s table in His kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel because they stayed faithful (22:28-30)- -but not NOW.

In fact, they must be prepared for tribulation as we have learned (see sermon on Luke 21) and specifically to be sifted and tempted by Satan to give up and deny Jesus because of the difficulty they will face (22:31ff). Jesus tells the disciples in light of their temptations to be great in the wrong way as His disciples, to be alert to the reality that *Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat* (the “you’s in the passage are the plural “y’all”).

Although the disciples want to be great, they will be humbled. It is not because of their greatness that they will overcome the Adversary’s sifting process, but because of the Greatness of their sovereign Mediator and Lord who is the man of God’s own choosing! Although Satan has laid claim on Jesus’ disciples; although Satan has asked God to deliver them up to him- -Christ is greater and Satan cannot prevail against Christ!

In fact, God will allow this sifting process to bring about greater humility and a better understanding to His disciples of what it means to be a servant of Christ through their sanctification. Through sanctification, those formerly “hungry for glory” will be “hungry for humility” before God and man!

One scholar noted helpfully here about how the sifting process in God’s allowing Satan to sift His people can bring about our sanctification: “The sifting of wheat, through which alien matter is separated from it, is an indispensable and wholesome process. As Satan undertakes this ‘sifting’, he destroys that which Jesus also hates: all untruthfulness, all play-acting, all hypocrisy” (Quoted in Geldenhuys, pg. 568).

Look at Luke 22:31-32.

^{ESV} Luke 22:31-32: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Jesus says specifically to Peter (who was also guilty of seeking to be great with the rest of them!) that Satan has demanded to have them (plural- u`ma/ j). Jesus speaks to Peter directly as representative-leader of the rest of the disciples. He tells them that Satan has asked permission [or also translated “demanded” - **evxh | th, sato**] by God (as Satan did with Job before them) to sift them all like wheat- -to cause their faith to fail.

What is the sifting process in the ancient world? A farmer grasps the sieve, half-filled with grain in both hands. The sieve is shaken from left to right six or seven times. Shreds of straw and bits of chaff that were mixed with grain rise to the surface and are separated; whether by hand or with a machine, the goal of the process is to remove the dirt and the straw from the good grain (Described in *Christ In His Suffering*, Klauss Schilder, pg. 257).

Sifting represents a violent shaking process where the chaff can be removed and separated from the wheat. The disciples will be totally shaken throughout this night, an experience that none of them could bear through if Christ their Mediator was not on their side!

Dr. Klauss Schilder wrote in his excellent work *Christ In His Suffering* “[Satan] wants to shake the disciples so violently that they will lose their minds in the night of fear and anxiety. Then- -that is, when they hardly know what they are doing, it will be so much easier for him to blow the wheat, to blow what was good in them away, and to retain the bad in them, to keep the chaff. By means of the sifting, in other words, of the suffering, Satan wants the evil, the chaff, to predominate over the wheat, which is good. In his presence the night of suffering now at hand becomes one of demoniacal *temptation*” (pg. 258).

In fact, although the disciples will be greatly shaken by Satan their Adversary, God’s grace in Christ will be more than sufficient for them to stand firm and not lose faith. In fact, Jesus specifically tells Peter: “*I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.*” Whereas 22:31 Jesus speaks in the plural to all of the disciples, here he specifically prays by name for Peter (22:32- **sou/** “you” singular).

As Job learned about God’s power and grace through his suffering-sanctification-sifting, so Peter (and the disciples) would learn as well (cf. Job 42:12ff; James 5:10-11)!

ESV James 5:10-11: As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

As Genesis 50:20 teaches when Joseph was sold into slavery by His brothers:

^{ESV} Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

This should bring great hope to the believer! No matter how difficult the situation, no matter how much temptation and no matter how much it seems our faith will fail us - Christ prays for us by name (Rom. 8:31-39; Heb. 7:24-28). Christ reveals here a preview of his eternal High Priestly ministry that will continue into heaven (and continues for His people today - he "ever" intercedes, not being hindered by sleep or death from continuing in office).

As Satan again acts as Adversary against God's people (see Zechariah 3), so Jesus acts as the Mediator who defends them!!

Here Jesus tells Peter that the ultimate reason he will overcome and his faith will NOT fail him will be the result of his prayers to God *for him*.

Jesus not only gives his body and blood for his people, he commits himself to praying for his own! JESUS IS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIESTLY KING ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (see Hebrews 7).

This is part of what we mean in our confession of Jesus ruling, reigning and defending, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies. Jesus, knowing that his prayers are always answered by the Father ("Father, you always hear me..." - John 11:42) gives himself as the reason for Peter's confidence.

As the *Shorter Catechism* teaches us all about Jesus as Priest and King:

WSC 25 How doth Christ execute the office of a priest? A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice,(1) and reconcile us to God,(2) and in making continual intercession for us.(3) (1)Heb. 9:14,28. (2)Heb. 2:17. (3)Heb. 7:24,25.

WSC 26 How doth Christ execute the office of a king? A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself,(1) in ruling(2) and defending us,(3) and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.(4) (1)Acts 15:14,15,16. (2)Isa. 33:22. (3)Isa. 32:1,2. (4)1 Cor. 15:25; Psalm 110 throughout.

In response to Jesus' words, Peter at first does not receive Jesus' gospel message here, and confidently in his own flesh declares: "*Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death*" (22:33). Like many of us, we cannot hear, understand and believe the gospel good news of Jesus - we attempt nearly all of our endeavors in our flesh!

It is interesting to note something that Pastor Butterfield and I spoke about recently. Many times when people say something that they feel confident that they can do, especially toward God or for others, they seem to reveal an inner insecurity about themselves. Peter here is acting confidently on the outside in his manner and speech, but he is revealing an insecurity from within in his confession *just because he will not go to prison and to death for Christ; if he had resolved to go to prison or death, he*

wouldn't necessarily have to say it aloud- -unless he didn't think he possessed the powers to do so in actuality.

Jesus with kindness, yet boldness in truth, speaks the truth in love and tells Peter that “If it were not for my prayers, you would wholly deny that you even know me- -in fact, you will be reminded of my prayers *for you* when tomorrow, when the rooster crows that the new day has begun, you will have denied me three times” (22:34; In Jewish time, the third watch of the night was from 12-3AM or until the cock crows so Jesus is saying that before the end of the third night-watch Peter will have denied him repeatedly).

Humbled. Greatness is achieved through humility—realizing that there is nothing we do for Christ that is not because of what He has first done for us!

And this is what Peter learns. Through these humbling circumstances, when Peter realizes his sinfulness *again*; when Peter realizes God's grace toward him, he will become a servant and he will “strengthen his brothers” through service (22:32). Jesus will NOT pray that the sifting would NOT occur- -but rather that through it Peter and the disciples would learn to say (with the Apostle Paul):

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. – 2 Corinthians 12:9-11

Like Peter, we must hear the words of Jesus- -His gospel message to sinners- -that **greatness is achieved through grace**; greatness is achieved through humbling circumstances; greatness is achieved when we realize that we fail our Lord, and yet he forgives us, and the ultimate reason why we are still standing for him at this very moment is because of His prayers for us- -because he has called our names before His Father in heaven- -and his Father always hears him!

As one professor wrote profoundly humorously: “All our thinking finally rests in the prayer of Jesus. Thinking, our thinking- -that finally leads to supralapsarianism” (Schilder, pg. 264). ☺

We must watch ourselves, our confessions of what we can do or will do for God, relying all upon His grace to accomplish it! And better than confessing what we will do, it is important for us just to do it in reliance upon His grace (unless we are called upon a specific situation where we must vow before God and man).

Again, we should be reminded that if getting into and staying in the Kingdom depends upon us and our best intentions, there is really no hope for us all!

Thanks be to God for His loving, caring and merciful Christ!

II. Two Swords and the Kingdom (22:35-38)

Now Jesus turns to all of the disciples and reminds them of their ministry of the word earlier in His earthly ministry. He reminds them of when he sent them out to declare his word and the people met the disciples warmly welcoming them into their homes (Luke 9:3; 10:4); they had no need of moneybag or knapsack or sandals (22:35)- -and they were so warmly welcomed that they returned with great joy from their short-term mission trip on behalf of Jesus (Luke 10:17).

The point that Jesus is making now: *Although you were taken care of by the people previously, the situation has drastically changed! Jesus teaches them: once I am betrayed, mocked, beaten, and crucified- -you must be prepared! Everything changes now...!*

Jesus is telling them to be prepared specifically for the hour of evil and the power of darkness (22:53) when they will no longer be shown hospitality by the majority of the people; no longer will they be thought of as great by association to Jesus; no longer will they be received as the disciples of a beloved master—now the people will turn against him- -and them!

The disciples recall how God was faithful to them even though they took nothing with them- -and they recall how the people treated them well (22:35b).

But at this time “NOW”- -this time of heightened intensity in the eschatological battle between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the serpent, they must understand themselves like weak and insignificant persons in the world who are in constant need of defense (22:36).

In fact, as Jesus is being betrayed and handed over to be sinfully mocked, brutally beaten and killed on the heinous cross, his disciples must NOW take a moneybag and knapsack; they must buy a sword if they do not have one (22:36-37).

Why must they wage warfare “as the world” seemingly with a sword at this intensified eschatological moment (“But NOW...” 22:36)? *This passage must be understood carefully.* This passage has been misinterpreted and misquoted in the history of the church (in the Medieval Church this passage was used to support the “two swords theory” of papal church authority: authority over church and the state; see Pope Gelasius I -5th century).

Jesus refers to the sword *figuratively*. Jesus is saying that even though the disciples did not need provision before, they will need it now; they will need purse, sandals and sword (basic ancient Near Eastern travel equipment for those who did not expect hospitality)- -the disciples did not need protection from the people before, but NOW they will.

The disciples are not to sit around NOW and share glory stories of the glory days, “back in the day” when Jesus’ ministry was just starting and how they were so welcomed and appreciated by the people.

Theologian and conservative Bible commentator Leon Morris writes: “[Describing the need for a sword] was Jesus’ graphic way of bringing it home that the disciples face a situation of grave peril” (*Luke*, pg. 338).

It may be that Jesus is referring in allusion to Zechariah’s prophecy about the shepherd’s sheep being scattered that personifies the sword, and prophetically says:

ESV Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.

In response to what Jesus tells the disciples about the sword, they gather together and find two swords and they think that Jesus is telling to use the sword against the church’s enemies (22:38)- -but this is to misunderstand their call as disciples yet again!

The disciples who have always misunderstood Jesus’ Divine Messianic Mission are still looking for the Kingdom of God to be brought in victoriously through human strength and might (see Acts 1:6ff).

What Jesus tells the disciples about the provisions and swords was misunderstood; Jesus is speaking figuratively, not literally.

We should not make what Jesus says about the sword mean that we literally must fight for the kingdom with the sword- -this would be to misinterpret as the disciples do later in 22:49-51!

"Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.⁵¹ But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him.

Jesus rebukes the disciples and heals the slave’s ear, saying: “No more of this!” He has already responded with “That will do” in verse 38 or “It is enough!” Jesus’ words could be translated into modern vernacular speech as “I give up!” (See Hughes, *Luke*, pg. 326).

When Jesus says “It is enough” it does not mean “Great! Two of them are enough!” But rather the meaning is more of “Stop the nonsense!”

In the book of Acts, after the disciples have grown in their faith, and after Peter has been sifted and overcome because of grace, and able to strengthen his brothers (22:32b), the disciples’ spiritually mature response to persecution and tribulation is not with the two swords that they had come up with, **but rather with the Word and**

prayer (cf. Eph. 6:12ff)- -through prayer and preaching shall the Kingdom be manifested (cf. 1 Cor. 1:25-2:5):

ESV Acts 4:25-31: ...who through the mouth of our father David, your servant,¹ said by the Holy Spirit, "' Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed¹ - ²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants¹ to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus. " ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Those who interpret this literally are either at best Medieval in their mindset, or at the worst triumphalistic in that they think the Kingdom comes through power and glory and greatness- -rather than in humble suffering and service! The misunderstanding of the sword was yet another example of the disciples seeking to great in the eyes of this present age.

Why are the disciples to understand that *things have changed* in their world and that they must seek provision NOW?

Because Jesus must fulfill the Scripture of Isaiah: "*And he was numbered with the transgressors.*"

This text is from Isaiah 53:12:

ESV Isaiah 53:12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,¹ and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,² because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Remember that when Jesus or an apostle quotes a Scripture from the Old Covenant, even if just a part was quoted the entire Scripture's meaning as well as context should be taken into consideration.

This is Jesus' further teaching on the fact that he is the Last and Consummate Passover Lamb. We should not forget that Jesus is still in the upper room, gathered with his disciples for the last Passover until he leaves for the Mount of Olives in the final part of our text this morning (22:39ff).

By quoting Isaiah 53:12 (and understanding the larger context of Isaiah's prophecy), Jesus is telling them that he is fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah of the Suffering Servant of YHWH who would become a sin-bearing, substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of His people. Their sins would be laid on his back; his righteousness would be

given to them. This is the great exchange that happens on the cross of Christ as the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:21:

ESV 2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

By God's grace, Jesus will not only make his disciples great through humiliation and service (22:26-30); not only will Jesus pray specifically for his disciples that their faith may not fail them during difficult times (22:31-34); Jesus will die in their place for their pride, hunger for glory, and constant cosmic treason against God. Jesus will graciously become the sin-bearer and undergo God's wrath in their stead- *for them* by His grace and because of His love. As Matthew records in His Gospel more of what Jesus said at this time:

ESV Matthew 20:25-28: 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,^{1 27} and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,^{1 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."

Jesus IS the Suffering Servant of YHWH! Jesus quotes a Scripture from Isaiah 53 that was known as a passage describing service and true servanthood before God. Ironically, again, in light of the disciples conversation concerning greatness and Jesus teaching them about true greatness through service, Jesus reveals the ultimate form of service- -death for the sins of God's people.

Through death, Jesus will be made great; through the death of Jesus the disciples will be made great. True greatness is not found in the way the world would think, but in humility and laying down one's life for one's brothers!

Jesus tells them of no more seeking to be great and strong like the world- -no more this kind of behavior. Why? Because he will be numbered among the transgressors!

He will be considered by God tainted by sin because the sins of his people will be laid upon him- -but also, the people will consider him sinful and a blasphemer! In Jesus' trial and crucifixion he will ultimately be crucified between two thieves- -and so the ***disciples should expect nothing less from the unbelieving people!***

III. Final Prayer and Preparation for the Passion of Christ (22:39-46)

After the Lord's Supper was instituted, as was their practice, Jesus went with his disciples to pray on the Mount of Olives (22:39). How emotionally charged and somewhat confused the disciples must have been! They knew Jesus would be betrayed; they knew that Jesus has done great things for them; they knew that Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper for them; they knew that former prayer times with

Jesus on a mountain were sweet and memorable times- -but so much is happening- - and so quick as it were.

As Jesus has shown to his disciples many times throughout his ministry, Jesus focuses on his disciples. Again, Jesus shows himself as the true Great Servant of YHWH and how in Him they are to reveal themselves as true and great servants—Jesus prays with his disciples.

Notice first that Jesus tells his disciples lovingly what the content of their prayers should be, specifically in light of the coming tribulation upon Christ and His Church: “*Pray that you may not enter into temptation*” (22:40- this is an imperative not a suggestion in Greek).

Jesus kneels down near his disciples and shows the proper pose of a true and great servant before God: *kneeling before God in prayer* (22:41).

Dr. Luke records the content of Jesus’ prayer: “*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*” This is not only a specific prayer of Christ as he is about to face the greatest difficulty of His life, it is also instructive for all Christ’s disciples when faced with difficult and challenging circumstances. Come what may, ***ultimately it is God’s will that must be done- -not our own.***

Especially with our Lord in His unique situation as Suffering Servant of YHWH and sin-bearer- -he must submit even to the last moment to the will of the Father in order to redeem his own! What love! What incomparable strength and resolve to live obediently as a great servant of the Lord *on behalf of his people.*

While Jesus’ people seek worldly ways of being great and don’t often think seriously about the will of God for their lives, Jesus knows that God’s will is what he must do on their behalf in order to make them righteous. If Adam, Israel, and every one of us can’t perfectly keep God’s will and fulfill all righteousness- -then Jesus must!

Notice the content of the prayer: “Father, if you are willing...” There is a request that Jesus makes (a supplication if you will) that requests that if there is any other way, then may it be so; but then he adds, if it is not, then your will be done- -Jesus had to fulfill the Divine Messianic Mission that His Father sent Him on- -and He had to do it perfectly obeying every detail in word, thought and deed for his people.

Yet there was a terrible cup (22:42b)! This cup was Jesus’ assigned portion as the Suffering Servant and Sin-Bearer of God’s people- -he must drink the cup of God’s wrath to the dregs on behalf of His people, lest they perish under God’s wrath for eternity for their sins.

Jesus prays for God's will to be done- -and it was done because of His love for His people. We who believe are recipients of this answered prayer. In fact, the author to the Hebrews wrote:

ESV Hebrews 5:7-10: In the days of his flesh, Jesus¹ offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him...

Because Jesus prayed, because God heard and answered his prayer, because God's will was done, Jesus was made perfect as the one Christ and became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him!

Jesus shows that this is the way to true greatness in the Kingdom of God- -humble dependence upon Christ alone; a recognition of the salvation that Christ has secured for His people NOT because of anything we have done with our own hands or works before God- -but because of grace; prayer to God thanking Him that his will was done for us in Christ; prayer to God asking him that His will might be done in our lives as well as those united to Jesus Christ by faith.

To undergo what Jesus went through is unimaginable! Jesus was in such agony, knowing first hand and intimately the vengeance, holiness and awesome wrath of God (Nahum 1:2-8), that he prayed all the more earnestly- -an angel even came to aid him at his time of death and betrayal as the Prophet Elijah before him when he faced death (1 Kings 1:6ff).

So great was Jesus' agony in light of the impending doom where he will "descend into hell" undergoing the wrath of God for us, his sweat became like drops of blood on the ground.

Where were the disciples? Where were those he had revealed so much Gospel grace to? Where were those who he had told numerous times of his agony and pain that he would undergo in Jerusalem? Where were those who had seen and heard things that no other person had had the privilege to hear and experience? Where were Jesus' friends?

These ones so concerned about their greatness, and who among them was the greatest, were sleeping (22:45-46).

They awoke by the gentle touch of Jesus, not being cast out and turned away from his kindness because of his being hurt or angry at their obvious lack of care. No! Rather, he gently rebukes them and tells them again to rise and pray *that you may not enter into temptation* (22:46).

Once again, Jesus patiently bears with His own and teaches them through His Word. This is the true meaning of 1 Corinthians 13:4: "*Love is patient...*"

Remember what Jesus told his disciples earlier in Luke's Gospel?

ESV Luke 12:37 Blessed are those servants¹ whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.

And this is our great Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the second movement of His passion to the cross for His own!

Let us be reminded of the grace of God that is found in our Lord Jesus. Although we are sinful and we fall short of his glory every day, he is the One who does not condemn us, but rather represents us as our Great and Gracious Mediator before God in Heaven (Romans 8:31-34).

Let us put our trust in him and watch and pray so that we do not fall into temptation. Let us realize who we are as those in constant union with the lamb slain for our transgressions; let us be reminded that we are in union with the One who lives to intercede for us at God's right hand!

Thanks be to God for His Word! Thanks be to God for His Christ!

CRB

www.aplacefortruth.org

Bibliography- For Further Reading

Beale, G. K. and D. A. Carson. Editors: *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Baker, 2007.

Bock, Darrell L. *Luke: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, Volumes 1-2, Baker, 1994.

Bromiley, G. Editor: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)*, Volumes 1-4, Eerdmans, 1982.

Geldenhuys, Norval. *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke (New International Commentary on the New Testament, NICNT)*, Eerdmans, 1952.

Green, Joel B. *The Gospel of Luke (NICNT)*, Eerdmans, 1997.

Green, McKnight, and Marshall. Editors: *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. IVP, 1992.

Hughes, R. Kent. *Luke, Volumes I-II (Preaching the Word Series)*, Crossway, 1998.

Marshall, I. Howard. *The Gospel of Luke (The New International Greek Testament Commentary)*, Eerdmans, 1978.

Morris, Leon. *Luke: The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, IVP Academic, 1988.

Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman. Editors: *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, IVP, 1998.

CRB

Scripture Lesson

^{ESV} **Isaiah 53:10-12:** Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief;¹ when his soul makes² an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see¹ and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² ***Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.***

^{ESV} **Daniel 7:9-18:** As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. ¹⁰ A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. ¹¹ I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. ¹³ I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. ¹⁵ "As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me¹ was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. ¹⁶ I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. ¹⁷ "These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever."

^{ESV} **Zechariah 13:7** "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones.

^{ESV} **Amos 9:9** "For behold, I will command, and shake the house of Israel among all the nations as one shakes with a sieve, but no pebble shall fall to the earth.

^{ESV} **Philippians 2:1-11:** So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than

yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ¹⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, ¹being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.