

T.J. CAMPO

The Twelve | Enrolled in the School of Jesus Christ

The Sheep Scattered

Matthew 26.36-41, 55-56

4.19.19 – Good Friday

Mat 26.36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." 39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." 40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

55 At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. 56 "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

I want to take you back, now, before the Cross... to the hours before the arrest on that Thursday night (in the Upper Room – where we've been for the past few Sundays) and then after the Upper Room (where all those weighty words were said) and then from the Upper Room... perhaps to the Temple [14.31] and from there, John records, "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples." (John 18.1-2)

This is a very ominous moment. The disciples MUST know that something big is about to happen (Jesus Christ was speaking plainly and they had to know it was serious). And, of course, Jesus Christ knew exactly HOW serious... He knew exactly what would happen.

He knew that the ONE THING He feared was about to come upon Him – that He would be shunned (as it were) by His Father, would become the one thing that His Father hated: He would be charged with MY sin... "God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf..." (2 Cor 5.21) and AT the very thought of THAT Jesus Christ, "began to be grieved and distressed". It wasn't the mocking or the whipping, the humiliation or even the suffocating agony and physical pain of crucifixion that Jesus Christ feared – it was being estranged from Him with whom He had been in perfect harmony/love for all eternity.

There, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ began to feel the dread of being charged with my bad record. The Garden is where things happen – it's where we LOST our innocence and our representative

sinned FOR us...and NOW, in a Garden, our BETTER REPRESENTATIVE, the Last Adam (1 Cor 15.45) will obey for us – for all who believe (Romans 5.19).

Here, Jesus goes with the 11 disciples (we've gotten to know them these last weeks) and He takes the Inner Circle (Peter, James and John) and tells them how He was feeling; He says "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death" and He asks them to "remain here and keep watch with Me."

"And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping" and later when the crowd of soldiers came to take Him with their swords and clubs, Matthew records OF THE DISCIPLES, "Then ALL the disciples left Him and fled." (26.56) The sheep were scattered!

TONIGHT, I want to ask TWO QUESTIONS: 1) What was missing in the disciples? 2) WHAT – if that thing were NOT missing – what would've been different?

What did Jesus Christ WANT them to do when He was arrested? Were they supposed to resist? Were they to fight...to defend Him?

When the mob showed up, Peter has a burst of misguided courage and cuts off the ear of the High Priest's servant, Malchus (John 18.10), and Jesus heals the man (Luke 22.51). But Jesus was NOT happy with Peter's action.

It's obvious, He did NOT want them to resist. Nor did He want them to be crucified with Him – after all, He had invested everything in them and they would take up the mission. A.B. Bruce wrote, "He gave Himself up to death that there might be a gospel preached; He desired the safety of the disciples, that there might be men to preach it."

So, what was missing?

Well, they were not believing. "Believe in God; believe also in Me." Had they been believing they would have walked away not FLED. They may have gone to the Cross to stand by Him OR may have gone to pray OR simply returned to that second-story room to wait...

BUT Jesus later confronted them for their lack of faith – they lost hope, gave in to despair because they were NOT believing (UNbelieving believers).

Now the second question: WHAT – if that thing were NOT missing – what would've been different? It's not that it surprised Jesus – remember, He predicted it in Peter and in the others and even used a quote from Zechariah, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP WILL BE SCATTERED.'" (Mat 26.31)

But if they had been believing – if they had been "believing believers" (NOT UNbelieving believers) they would have discerned the MOMENT! They would have known that THIS was the moment for which Jesus Christ had come. They would've been awake.

And they would have understood the meaning of the Cross. Some people are only repulsed by the Cross – some modern theologians call it barbaric or even "divine child abuse." That's a lack of faith. To be

believing the Gospel means to have some idea that OUR SIN IS AN OUTSTANDING DEBT THAT HAS TO BE PAID AND that the Cross of Jesus Christ pays the debt, satisfies God's justice so that, for everyone who believes, the Cross is the way that God can be BOTH just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom 3.26). When I ask people what Jesus Christ means to them and they say, "Oh He means everything..." But they don't mention the Cross and the GREAT reason FOR it – to take away my sin – I realize they are not believing and may NEVER have believed!

Third, had the disciples been believing they would have seen themselves. Peter still thought too highly of himself... and the rest too! If we're believing in Jesus Christ – it means we're NOT believing in something else – like OURSELVES!

LAST, (I'm indebted to my old friend here...sort of!) last, if they had been believing, they would have known that the battle is un-winnable... No one can stand up IN it except those who trust God. They not only OVERESTIMATE their own strength but they UNDERestimate the CRUELTY of the opposition.

As we saw last week – there's a lot of opposition in the Psalms – the spiritual life must be more dangerous than we assume!

When Jesus Christ says, "In this world you WILL have tribulation..." then the unbelieving believer says, "Oh...sure...absolutely...I know that..."

But the BELIEVING believer says, "For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate – on earth is not his equal" –

See, if I think I can win the fight against the world, the flesh and the devil by REALLY trying hard, by digging deep, by self-discipline, by accountability, by fear of getting caught, by just minding my own business and being the best person I can be... BY ANYTHING I COULD EVER DO – it just means that I am not believing... because to believe means to see that the opposition is supernatural, the battle is beyond me...the battle belongs to the Lord!

If we in our own strength confide...our striving would be losing...Were not the Right Man on our side...the Man of God's own choosing...Do you ask who that may be? Christ Jesus it is HE, the Lord of Hosts, His Name, from age to age the same...and HE MUST WIN THE BATTLE! –

Only He CAN win –

It's good that we remind ourselves of this...it's good to be together tonight...to survey the wondrous Cross – to see the Lord of Hosts put death to death... It's good to believe...ONLY BELIEVE.