

## Matthew 26:31-35

### “There’s No Getting Around God’s Word”

Let not familiarity desensitize you to the intensity of this Ch emotionally. Matt 26 is an emotionally charged Ch. The emotional spectrum swings us from truth to treachery, devotion to deception. We see at work both righteousness and wickedness, good and evil, light and darkness.

& As I mentioned last time, at the center of it all is God’s love for you & His willingness to pay the ultimate price that He might redeem you & redeem me. Not w/corruptible things like silver or gold, from our aimless conduct received by tradition from our fathers, but w/the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb w/out blemish & w/out spot (1 Pet 1:19-20). As Jesus said, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*<sup>1</sup>

In this section of scripture that’s before us we see the failure, the fight & flight of the disciples, the falsehood of Judas & the *faithfulness* of Jesus.

To catch you up to the context let’s recall that Jesus has just finished the Last Supper w/His disciples. He’s instituted the new covenant (which we receive as further affirmation of His Deity). *Who but God could ever say, “Mankind has been subjected to the covenant of law & priestly intercession & the sacrificial system as a means to approach God & relate to God & by faith be made right w/God for the last 1,500 yrs... But not anymore, I’m instituting a new covenant, based not upon the blood of bulls & goats as a covering for sin, but upon the breaking of My body, the shedding of My blood for the cleansing of sin. The covenant of law is closing & the covenant of grace is commencing.”* As we read in John’s gospel, *“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”*<sup>2</sup> If Jesus was anything less than God it would be utter blasphemy to presume to have the capacity to change the conditions upon which we *come* to God & are found justified in the *sight* of God.

But Jesus, right there, on that night, in that room ended the old covenant & instituted the new. No longer are we under the *law* of Moses, we’re given life by the *grace* of God through faith in J.C. Supper being ended, they sung a hymn & went out to the Mt of Olives.

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 3:16–17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 1:17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Perhaps you have a quiet place you like to go, a secret space you like to visit where you can think, & pray, regroup & refocus. There you are locked in your bathroom treasuring the moments until your little one's lips, or fingers pop under the door, "Mom!" ☺. Well, Jesus had a place He liked to go as well. It was called the Garden of Gethsemane on the lower slopes of the Mt of Olives just to the east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. John tells us in the 18<sup>th</sup> Ch of his gospel that Judas was familiar w/that place because Jesus met there often w/His disciples.

So we can see the scene in our minds eye. Jesus institutes the new covenant (reinterpreting the elements of Passover in Himself), they sing a hymn & then head out of the upper room toward the east, down the western slope of Jerusalem & across the valley. & As they're making their way toward the Mount of Olives...

### Vs 31-35

Let's remember that though Jesus had told His disciples repeatedly that He was going to be taken, tried & crucified at the hands of the religious leaders, that He was going to be taken after 2 days (which was now this day) & that He was being betrayed, they still weren't tracking along those lines. They couldn't connect the dots of a *suffering* Savior. They're still thinking that He's on the verge of inaugurating the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, of which they were going to be major players & hold positions of honor & esteem. This whole "stricken Shepherd" thing just wasn't part of their equation. "I mean, how does that fit in?" That gives more the appearance that Jesus wasn't powerful enough to perform what He'd promised!

& I find that's a common problem that many people (including believers) struggle w/at various times in their lives... If God is so powerful, why is "this" happening? Or, why does He allow me to suffer or struggle in this way? Why doesn't He do something?

Perhaps you remember J.B. had the same sort of struggle. There he was, in prison, the forerunner of the Messiah! Jesus had come to "set the captives free" & I'm bound in prison! "Are you the Guy or not?" (That was the message John sent to Jesus by way of His disciples.) "Because if You are, why am I in prison? Why don't You do something about this? Why are you allowing me to suffer?"

Do you remember what Jesus said? He said, "Go tell John what you see & hear. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear; the dead are raised & the poor have the gospel preached to them."

& He finished His message to John w/this, "*And blessed is he who is not offended* (or stumbled) *because of Me.*"<sup>3</sup> That is, blessed is the one who doesn't get tripped up because I'm not fitting in the box they've preconceived, because I'm not doing *what* they think I should, *when* they think I should, but they trust Me implicitly & know that I'm working in ways they can't see or in ways they can't connect.

Too often we have tunnel vision, can't see the forest for the tree in front of our face. But God is at work, often times on a scale much larger than we can see or comprehend in that moment of personal struggle.

Such was the case in this moment, on this night. Something was about to happen that was going to rock their worlds & it would stumble the disciples. They would be tripped up, they would tap out & scatter. Why? Because the Shepherd would be struck.

But in quoting this scripture, Jesus is again assuring them that what's about to take place isn't taking Him, or the Father by surprise, it had to happen, it was written/recorded by the prophets & they shouldn't be thinking, "Why isn't Jesus doing anything?" Jesus *was doing something*. He was allowing Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter that He might shed His blood for the sin of the world.

It was part of God's plan from the beginning. None of what's about to take place points to things spinning out of control. To the contrary it demonstrates the fact that God is very much *in* control as things unfold exactly as foretold by the Scriptures. "I will strike the Shepherd & the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

Question; who is the "I" in that Vs? You need to realize, it's not the devil who struck the Shepherd (though surely Jesus was taken at the hands of lawless men). It was God who would strike the Shepherd. Isaiah 53:10 "*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*" The cross was God's plan, the bible is clear that it was God who delivered Jesus up for us all (Rom 8:32). It was according to the determined purpose & foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23).

Here's the deal; we serve a *just* God. & As a just God, He must punish sin (or else He's no longer just), & Jesus became *sin* for us (2 Cor 5:21), never a *sinner*, but He was made sin for us & as such He would absorb the wrath of God against sin upon the cross. He would pay the price for *our* sin, He would be wounded for *our* transgressions, bruised for *our* iniquities.

<sup>3</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Mt 11:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God would strike the Shepherd & the sheep of the flock would scatter. So in quoting the scripture, we see not only the control/command of Jesus (nothing is happening that's catching Him off guard), but we also note His *confidence* in the word of God. If God has said it, so shall it be... Paul told the Corinthians, **"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen,"**<sup>4</sup> You can stand *on* God's word, trust *in* God's word & lead your life by the instruction *of* God's word. Jesus trusted God's word so implicitly, so completely & confidently that He said w/out wavering, "The scriptures says you're going to be stumbled, therefore you're going to be stumbled."

Now they argued w/that didn't they? "Jesus, I know You've never been wrong before, You have a pretty solid track record w/speaking the truth, but I'm afraid You've missed it this time...☺" But who's word does Jesus hold confidence in? "You say you'll stay, God says you'll scatter... let's go w/scatter." Listen, stand *firm* on the word of God, Jesus did & we should as well. The scriptures are clear, **"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"**<sup>5</sup> God will, bring His *word* to pass; always.

BTW you should note in Vs 32 that Jesus is already looking beyond the cross & gives them the promise of resurrection & reunion. As a shepherd goes before his flock, Jesus says, "After I have been raised, I will go before *you* to Galilee." They would forget this (the angel would remind them at the empty tomb). These guys will flee, they'll be flaky, but Jesus remains faithful. Aren't you grateful for that? We so often flee when we should remain fixed. We're flaky when we should stand firm, but Jesus is always faithful to go before us, to regather & refocus us, recommission us in the accomplishing of His plan & His purpose.

In Vs 33 Peter is all, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will *never* be made to stumble..." Sounds pretty sure of himself, doesn't he? Of course that's problem isn't it? He's sure *of himself*, he's trusting in his own ability, confident that he loves the Lord to a greater degree than any of the others & because of that he will stand firm even if the others scatter... Can I just point out a few obvious things here? #1 When will we ever learn that it's folly to argue/combat or try & contradict the word of the Lord? Peter here makes a promise contrary to the word of the Lord. "They may all stumble because of You, I *never* will."

<sup>4</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Co 1:20] Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Nu 23:19] Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now let's not doubt Peter's desire, nor his sincerity, or the fact that he loved Jesus & wanted to stay true to Him unwaveringly. The problem wasn't in the willingness of his spirit, but in the weakness of his flesh (& we'll see Jesus point that out in our next gathering). The problem was that rather than rely on God's Spirit, he was seeking to work it out in his flesh. That is, his own capacity, his own will/want personally.

He even had a measure by which he took confidence. He compared himself to the other disciples (that's our 2<sup>nd</sup> observation). He considered himself much braver, much stronger, as having greater resolve than any of the others; & maybe he did! But do you remember what Paul said to the Corinthians? He said, *"For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."*<sup>6</sup> We err greatly when we compare ourselves amongst ourselves. James wasn't the measure, John wasn't the measure, Thomas wasn't the measure, God's word was the measure. & When it comes to God's word, we don't measure up. When God says something, what we say is irrelevant.

Which brings us to the 3<sup>rd</sup> observance. Peter (& the others) were filled w/pride. & If you're not already aware of what the bible declares concerning pride, allow me to inform you. *"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."*<sup>7</sup> They're all too confident that they'll stand, that their strength is sufficient... What does the bible say? *"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."*<sup>8</sup>

I have discovered, perhaps you have as well, that this is so often where the enemy likes to attack us. We think he's always looking to exploit our weakness & I have no doubt that he looks to & loves to do that. However, the truth is that our weakness isn't always where we think it is... Often times it's in the area that we consider our greatest strength. If I'm acutely aware of a weakness, I'll be diligent to safeguard that area. I'm praying over it, sensitive to it, staying humble about it... (It's no wonder the Lord revealed to Paul that His strength is perfected in weakness [2 Cor 12:9]). However, in an area I consider myself strong in... I tend not to worry so much about that, don't pray over it so much, I allow myself to have a false sense of assurance, an overconfidence & my guard comes down. I'm not trusting in the Lord, I'm seeking to survive & thrive in my own ability, my personal capacity & that's where the enemy pounces. Jesus seeks to warn Peter again (Vs 34, read).

<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (2 Co 10:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>7</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Pr 16:18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>8</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 10:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He's reminding Peter that he's not as strong, not as wise, not as capable, not as bold as he thinks he is. The psalmist said it like this, **"For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."**<sup>9</sup> So check it out, Peter was declaring one thing about himself, Jesus was declaring something different. Who knew Peter best? Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves. Jesus underscored it; "Not only will you scatter *from* Me, you'll deny that you even *know* Me 3x's before the rooster crows this night!"

Peter would've been wise at this point to humble himself, fall down before Jesus & say, "Lord, strengthen me, give me the grace to stand by You, that I would never deny You!" He would've been wise to believe the Lord & be humbled in His presence. But what he would learn is the same lesson we all come to learn, it's foolish to trust in the flesh.

Instead he says this (Vs 35, read).

I read somewhere that few people need voice lessons to sing their own praise. How true is that? "Even if I have to die w/You, I *will not* deny You!" It's like Peter is in denial or something 😊.

But it wasn't just Peter was it? He of course is highlighted here because he's the one speaking out most defiantly against the Lord, but note it well, "& so said all the disciples."

Question; will the stand or will they scatter? They'll scatter; there's no getting around the word of God.

Here's my point. Here's the take home. Trust the word of God implicitly, believe it wholeheartedly, completely, unreservedly. It blows my mind (though I suppose it shouldn't) the amount of people who claim to be Christians who aren't sure that the bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God.

There's nothing historically that's ever been proven in accurate in the bible. There's nothing archaeologically that's ever been discredited in the bible. But beyond that there's the more sure word of prophecy. What's that? In 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, Peter was writing & speaking of the things which he witnessed w/his eyes. He said, "Listen, we weren't following cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power & coming of our Lord J.C. But we were eyewitnesses of His majesty." He said, "We saw Him transfigured in glory right before our eyes on the holy mount. We heard the voice of God saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased."

<sup>9</sup> [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Ps 103:14]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He went on to say, *"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;"*<sup>10</sup> Or to understand that another way; beyond even the eyewitness accounts is the even more credible witness of the prophetic word of God fulfilled.

Zechariah prophesied that the sheep of the flock would be scattered when the Shepherd was struck. What happened when the Shepherd was struck? The sheep were scattered, the disciples fled. Listen, there are around 2,000 prophecies in the word of God (give or take). If you can find one that has missed, we can then agree that God's word is not inspired, the bible isn't inerrant, it's not infallible. But you're going to have real trouble finding it, why? Because the bible has never missed. Take God's word to heart & trust it.

What it says about sin will come to pass, don't be deceived. God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. You can take it to the bank, it's written in the word of God. Paul told the Corinthians, *"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."*<sup>11</sup> *It's written, there's no getting around it, no loophole that I can work out between me & God. When Christ comes into my life, He changes me, I'm not who I used to be.*

Equally true are the precious promises of the word of God. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs in the kingdom of God, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted... Blessed are you when you're reviled & persecuted, when people say false things about you for Christ's sake. Rejoice & be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. One more & we'll close. Gal Ch 3, *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*<sup>12</sup>

*God is not a man that He should lie. He has said it & He will do it, He has spoken it & He will make it good. Amen?*

<sup>10</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (2 Pe 1:19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>11</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 6:9-10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>12</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ga 3:26-29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

**Prayer Points:**

God we thank You for the unwavering truth of Your word. That what You say You will do, & what You speak, You will make good. Increase our faith. Help us to walk in humility before You, trusting *in* You knowing that even when we can't see it, or understand it, You're in control & You love us, You're working for us & not against us & in that we give You praise.

A precious promise of the word of God, "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you're a "whoever" (& you are), you qualify. You can call upon Him now & enter into that promise. Salvation by grace through faith in J.C. who has loved you & given Himself for you. Believe upon the Lord J.C.