

Luke 22:14–23:56

When the time came, Jesus took his place there at the table and he gathered all of his apostles there with him and he said to them, "I have so eagerly desired to have this Passover meal with all of you before I suffer; because I tell you I am not going to eat again until the kingdom of God is fulfilled." And he took a cup and he gave it to everyone to drink and then said, "Take and divide this among yourselves; for I tell you from now on I am not going to take a drink from the fruit, from the grapes, until the kingdom of God comes." He took a loaf of bread, and he gave thanks for it, and he broke it and he gave it to all of them and he said, "This is my body, and it is given for you. Do this to remember me." He did the same thing with the cup right after supper. He said "This cup that is poured out for you is a new covenant, a new promise, a new agreement in my blood. But let me tell you, the one who is about to betray me is here with me and his hands are here sitting on the table. Because the Son of Man is going, as it has been determined, but I feel sorry for that individual." They began to look at one another, trying to figure out which one of them was going to do this thing.

But then, a dispute arose among them as to which of them was going to be the greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles, they lord over each other, those in authorities are the ones who try to call themselves, well aren't we so much better than you. But it is not so with all of you," Jesus said. "Rather, the greatest one among all of you is not the CEO; the greatest one among all of you must become like the very youngest. The greatest one among all of you should be the one who serves. Who is greater", Jesus asked. "The one who sits at the table or the one who serves the table? Of course, it's the person who is sitting there at the table; but what am I doing to you? Am I not the one who came around and served you? You are the ones who stood by me throughout all of the rough times; and I give to you, just as my Father has given to me, the kingdom. So that we can come together again so that we can eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and there you will sit on thrones just like the twelve tribes of Israel."

"Simon, Simon, listen to me! Satan has demanded that you be his; but I prayed for you Simon. I prayed that your faith would not fail; and that once you come back, your faith will strengthen everyone else." Well Simon said, "Lord, I am ready to go with you right now, even to death!" Jesus says, "Simon, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until three times you have denied me."

He went on to say, "Do you all remember when I sent you out, you didn't take a backpack, you didn't take a briefcase, you didn't even have shoes on your feet; but did you lack anything?" And they said, "No, no, we didn't lack a thing." And Jesus says, "I tell you now, take a backpack, take a briefcase, make sure you have good sturdy shoes, and anybody who doesn't have a sword, sell your coat and go buy one; because I tell you this, the scripture is going to be fulfilled that says, 'And he was counted among the lawless'; I tell you that indeed, what is written about me is

being fulfilled." Somebody said, "Lord, look, look, here are two swords." And he said, "That's enough." And so they got up and they went out, as was his custom, over to the garden of the Mount of Olives; and the disciples all went with him; and when they reached the place, he turned and he said to them, "Pray now that you might not be put to the time of trial."

Then he went off about a stone's throw away, he knelt down, and Jesus himself, started to pray. He said, "Father, if you're willing, please remove this cup from me; but not my will Lord, but yours, let that be done." An angel appeared to him and gave him strength. He was so distraught and he was praying so fervently that he was sweating so profusely, it was like blood coming off of his forehead and falling there on the ground. And when he finally got up to pray, he went over to the disciples and he found them sleeping; they were so exhausted from the distress of what Jesus had been saying. And Jesus said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up; pray some more that you do not come to this time of trial."

While he was talking there to the disciples, a crowd comes, and who is in front but Judas, one of the twelve; and he's leading this group of religious leaders and Roman guards, and he comes up like he is going to greet Jesus with this big kiss, hello; and Jesus just looks at him and says, "Judas, would you betray me with a kiss?" Those around, those who were with him looked around and saw what was happening; "Lord, Lord, should we strike them with a sword?" and then one of them takes a sword and he just swings away and he whacks off the ear of the servant of the high priest; and Jesus says, "Stop!" And he reached out and he touched the side of the head and he restored his ear and stanching the blood. Then Jesus turned to the religious leaders, the chief priests, and all those who had come from the temple and all of the elders who had come along with them and he said, "Do you come at me with swords and clubs like I am some kind of criminal? Didn't day after day I sit up in the temple and teach you, but you didn't once come to arrest me, but now here, in the middle of the night, in the darkness, at the peak of your power, this is when you come out?" They grabbed him and they drug him away to the high priest's house. Peter, though, Peter followed, at a distance; but Peter followed.

When they got to the high priest's house, there in the middle of the courtyard, there was a big fire going and Peter snuck in and he sat down in the crowd hoping he would kind of blend in; but some woman there, she sees him in the firelight and she says, "You, I know you; you were with that man." "Nah, nah, woman, nah you've got the wrong guy, sorry, not me." But a little while later somebody else saw him and said, "Yea, yea, you're one of them, too." "Man, no way, it is not me; you got me confused." An hour later, give or take, another guy had been listening and he says; "You're a Galilean, surely; surely, you're with that Galilean there," and Peter said, "I do **not** know what you are talking about," and before he even finishes, the rooster crows. And Jesus turns and looks at Peter; and he remembers what Jesus said there around the table; "Before the rooster crows, three times you will deny me." And Peter gets up and he runs to be alone and he just breaks down in tears.

Now the men who are holding Jesus, they begin to mock him, they beat him, they strike at him, they blindfold; "Prophecy! Who is it that hits you now? You can do it; you're supposed to know everything." When daylight finally comes, the assembly of elders, the chief priests, the scribes, all of the religious police, they're gathered together and they go into their own little star chamber and they say, "Ah, come on, if you're the Messiah, tell us." Jesus just looks at them and says, "If I tell you, you won't believe me. And if I question you, you won't answer me. But from now on," Jesus said, "From now on the Son of Man is going to be seated at the right hand of the power of God." Well, there was a catch phrase. "Are you the Son of God?" And he replied, "You say that I am." "Whoa, what else do we need? We got it right here, the guy's just blaspheming, he's called himself God. We've heard it in our ears from his own lips," and they rise up as one, they grab hold of him and drag him over to Pilate, the Roman governor of the whole place; and they begin to accuse Jesus right in front of Pilate. "We found this man perverting our nation; he's forbidding us to pay taxes to the Caesar, and he's calling himself the Messiah. He's calling himself king."

Well Pilate is really not all that interested in what a bunch of Jews are talking about, so he says, "Are you the king of the Jews?" And again, Jesus answers him, "You say so." Pilate turns to the religious police and he says, "I find no basis for an accusation against this guy." But they are insistent, they've got to drive home their point, they've got to make it twelve different ways. "He stirs up the people by his teachings throughout all of Judea from Galilee. He began in Galilee and he's brought it here." Oh, oh, there's another keyword: he heard 'Galilee.' Pilate hears 'Galilee.' "Well if he's a Galilean then he's Herod's problem; let me send him off to Herod's doorstep." And so off Jesus goes.

Now Herod was there in Jerusalem at that time, and when Herod saw Jesus, he got all excited because he wants to see some tricks, he wants to see some magic, he wants to see a resurrection, he wants to see some kind of sign or something that Jesus can do. So he questions Jesus and he pokes and prods him, but Jesus says nothing. The chief priest, the scribes, they're all standing around, they're angry, they're spewing out this vile against Jesus and even Herod's soldiers, they start to treat him with contempt. They mock him, they put this beautiful robe on him and they send him back to Pilate. Now here's the weird thing: up until this point, Pilate and Herod had been at each other's throats; but on that day, Pilate and Herod become friends.

Pilate calls together again all the religious police, the chief priests, the leaders, the elders, and he says to them, "Look, you brought this guy to me once, you said that he was perverting the people; I have questioned him, I have talked to him, I cannot find anything wrong with this guy that causes me to say that he is bringing tradition against the empire. None of your charges stick. Look, even Herod couldn't find anything wrong with him, because he sent him back to me. He doesn't deserve death, so to appease you, I will have him whipped, but then I am kicking him out of here." Well this does not bode well with the religious police. "You can't do that!" "Give us Barabbas instead. Release Barabbas!" Now Barabbas is a local insurrectionist who had been imprisoned because of the murders he committed with his own IEDs.

Pilate just wants to get rid of Jesus, so he says to them again, "I am going to let the guy go," but the people start to cry out, "Crucify him!" A third time he addresses the people, "What evil has this man done? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. I told you I am going to have him whipped and then I am kicking him out." But they kept demanding and they were so insistent, that finally just to shut them up, Pilate gives in. He releases the terrorist, Barabbas, whom they had asked for, the one who had been put in prison because of murder; and he hands them over Jesus.

Now as they are leading him away, Jesus by this point has been so beaten, starved, and tortured that they grabbed some guy out of the crowd, a guy named Simon, he from Cyrene; they grabbed him and they put the cross on Simon because Jesus can't carry it himself, so he is dragging this along behind Jesus and there is a whole number, a whole group of folks following them, including some women who had been following him, and they are wailing and beating on themselves because they are so distraught. Jesus hears them and he turns around and says, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves instead, because I know the days are coming when you are going to say, 'Blessed are the women who haven't had any children, blessed are those women who have never born any child, blessed are the breasts that have never nursed anybody, and you pray to the mountains to fall down upon us, and you ask the hills to cover us' for if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

There were two criminals with him as well who were being led away to be put to death and they come up, they get outside of the city, they get to the top of the hill, this hill outside of the city where they do the executions, it's called "*Golgotha*," it's called The Skull; and that's where the guards ripped their clothes off and they throw them down on the cross and they take these spikes and they ram them through their arms and through their feet and they take the crosses and they drop it into the hole; and there is Jesus in the middle. One criminal on his right and one on his left. And Jesus looks at the soldiers and he looks at all the religious police who are standing there all excited and he looks at the two guys on either side of him and he says, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they are doing."

Well the people are watching, but the leaders, the religious police, they're scoffing, "He saved others, let's see him save himself if he is really this Messiah, the chosen one!" The soldiers are getting into the act, they're giving him sour wine, "Hey come on, come on, you're King of the Jews, save yourself!" And they put an inscription up on the cross above his head, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals hanging there with him, he gets into the act, he's nailed to the cross, he's dying, but he says, "Come on, if you're the Messiah, save yourself and us too." But the other guy, the other guy said, "Don't you even fear God? We're all hanging here, the three of us under the same sentence, a commendation, and we've been justly condemned, we deserve this for what we've done, but this guy, he's done nothing wrong." And he looks as best as he can over at Jesus (it's hard to do when your arms are nailed to a piece of wood, but he does his best to look at Jesus) and he says; "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And Jesus looked back, and he says, "I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." All this

happened about noon, and darkness came and it covered the whole land until about three in the afternoon. And that's when the sun's light failed completely; and the curtain in the temple, the curtain that separates the holiest place in the temple from everything else, that curtain just rips in two, and Jesus cries out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And he's breathed his last.

When the Roman soldier who had been standing there heard this and saw what Jesus had gone through, he praises God and he says, "Surely this man was innocent." All the crowd that had gathered together to watch this spectacle, to watch this debauchery, to watch this entertainment, they turned around and went home. The show is over. Some of them were beating their breasts, but his followers, his acquaintances, including those women he had turned to speak to, the women who had been following him all the time since Galilee, they stayed put and they watched to see what was going to happen next.

There was a guy, a good man; a man who tried to do what the Lord God Almighty wanted him to do. His name was Joseph, he was from Arimathea. He was part of that council, he was part of that kangaroo court, but he was one voice against a hundred. He had not agreed to anything that they had done to Jesus. He went to Pilate and he asked Pilate if he could take Jesus' body and bury it and Pilate gave him permission. And so Joseph takes down the cross, he takes Jesus, he pries those spikes out of his body, he wraps him, he wraps him in a linen cloth and he carries him to a tomb, a cave really; and he lays him down on the slab there in the tomb. No one else had used that tomb.

Now it was Friday, it was the day of preparation for the Sabbath; and the women who had been with him from Galilee, the women who were standing there watching, the women watched what Joseph did. They followed him and they saw where Joseph put Jesus' body and they knew that they didn't have enough time that day to put the spices, to put the fragrance on Jesus' body to help mask the odor of decaying flesh; and so they went home and they got all of their spices ready, but by that time, because it was the Sabbath, they rested because that is what they knew they were suppose to do.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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