

Community Group Discussion Questions

“Obedience Unto Death”

Matthew 26:36-56

Setting: We are starting Jesus’ Passion account in Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew is part of the Synoptic Gospels, most likely based on Mark’s Gospel. In the previous passages, Jesus talked about His second coming, was anointed at Bethany for His death, and administered the first communion with His disciples.

Summary: In our passage, we see Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane, Judas’ betrayal through a kiss, and Jesus’ arrest and restoration. We see our own sin in Judas’ betrayal and Peter’s false beliefs. But through Jesus’ arrest and cross, we see our freedom and salvation.

Main Point: *“Jesus is the One who obeyed to save disobedient people like us.”*

Sermon Points:

1. The Struggle
2. The Sin
3. The Sword

Opening Question

1. What is your overall feeling as we enter Passion Week?

(Answers may vary.)

To start off Passion week, we will look at Jesus’ time in the Garden of Gethsemane and His betrayal/arrest.

Read Matthew 26:36-56

2. What about Jesus’ struggle in the Garden speaks to you the most?

(We see that Jesus is struggling so much that He sweats blood in Luke’s account. Luke is a physician, and he wants us to understand just how much Jesus is in distress. He prays alone plenty of times in the Gospels, but he is struggling so much here that He needs the support of His closest friends.

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Compared to other Christian martyrs, Jesus is struggling with His death more than them. In the Gospels, He is seen as unflappable. Nothing can take Him by surprise. And yet, He is struggling in prayer.

If you were making this up, you wouldn't want your Savior to be seen in this way. You would want your Savior to die without issue and struggle.

So, why is He struggling? It's because He is not experiencing just physical death, though He did. He's not just experiencing humiliation and shame, though He did. He will be experiencing the wrath and judgment of God. The infinitely loving and perfect relationship He had with the Father will be broken. That is why He is struggling in this prayer in Gethsemane.)

3. How do we betray Jesus like Judas and Peter?

(Every time we sin, we are betraying Jesus. Just like Judas chose silver over Jesus, we are choosing temporary pleasure and glory over Jesus. We are betraying Jesus whenever we stand for idolatries, earthly glory, false truths, and ourselves over Jesus.

Peter's disobedience in this passage was when he believed wrongly in the order of the kingdom. He took out his sword and tried to kill the servants of the high priest. He believed that Jesus' kingdom is defended and advanced by force and might. But that is not it at all. God's kingdom comes through humility, love, compassion, grace, and peace. And that is how Jesus is living here. In this passage, we see Jesus' submission to the Father, His healing of the servant, and His rescue of Peter. Peter should have been arrested, but instead, Jesus is. Jesus was arrested, so Peter could be set free.

We are like Peter when we try to force people to change and believe what we believe in. We might force others through physical might or politics, but we might force others through guilt, shame, and manipulation. True change does not occur when that happens. Actually, we see the worst times in Christian history when political power and Christianity mix.)

4. What does our passage teach us about His love for us?

(We see the difficulty of this obedience through Jesus' struggle in the Garden, and yet He still obeys for God's glory and our salvation. We see His love and compassion on us when we see Jesus' compassion on the servant and love for Peter. In Jesus' arrest, we see

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the arrest we deserve in our sin, but we also see the freedom we have received in Christ. The passage ends with two references to the Scriptures having to be fulfilled. The Passion of Christ has been prophesied and foretold about throughout the centuries. It was in the will of God for His Son to die and be resurrected like this for the salvation of the world. This is all from the loving and merciful heart of our Father.)

Final Thoughts: *In our passage, we see the immense difficulty of the cross and betrayal while also seeing the immense love of God for us. Jesus is the One who takes on the sword for our judgment so that we may receive the crown of our salvation. Jesus is the One who was arrested so that we may be set free. Jesus is the One who was betrayed so that He may never leave us nor forsake us. Jesus is the One who drank the cup of wrath for us, so that we may drink from the cup of grace and life. Jesus is the One who received the kiss of death, so that we may receive the kiss of life. Jesus is the one who obeyed regarding the tree, even though it meant His death, so that we who disobeyed the tree (under Adam) would receive life.*