

Matthew 26:47-68 | Jeffrey Smith

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 August 2025

Preacher: Jeffrey Smith

[0 : 00] All right. Let's get into it. To be very frank, this morning it's like my mind's going in a million different directions.

! Sometimes you're like, where do we begin? I was just thinking as we were praying for Cynthia, you know, a week ago she was standing up here saying, hey, here's the opportunity.

Can you guys pray for me? And here she is on a flight to Columbia. It is exciting to think about it and a bit nervous to think about what will the Lord do with you?

If you are seeking his will, what will he do? Thank you.

I did a great teaching on prayer, which I want to kind of touch on, and did some outreach in the park. Again, Watsonville is a very immigrant-heavy town, about 90% Mexican. It's the strawberry capital of the world, so a lot of immigrant, you know, farm workers.

[1 : 28] So I just wanted to kind of give just two things that were kind of, for me, big takeaways from that week. If we can show, Brad, if we have that first picture. I have three pictures to show.

One was kind of a knock on Sirian, but he's not here, so Vivian, if you want to just pass this along for me. This is us playing basketball. The guy in the middle that looks like Michael Jordan, that's actually me.

And I don't know if he can make it a little bit bigger, Brad, but the guy on the far left is Sirian. And it looks like I'm actually with a great play. I think I missed that layup, a wide-open layup.

That was more of a joke. Okay, next slide. Just the last two I want to show. I think I sent this out, if you were getting the daily emails. This was the last day. This was Friday, and that is a line of immigrant workers that are there to get food, frankly.

And kind of as they went up and then turned left, there was like a distribution area where food and other necessities were being given out. Most of these people did not speak English, and so there was obviously a language barrier there.

[2 : 47] Puedo ayudarle was the Spanish phrase, may I help you. Meaning, can I help you carry your groceries to your car, to your house, whatever it was. And if you go to the last picture I have up here, this was just a picture of obviously some of the campers just sitting there hearing the gospel.

I think the girl in the blue is Molly, I think, David. Your niece, Frank's granddaughter Molly from Nebraska, she joined us out there.

She was the one non-St. Louisan, so it was great to have her. But just one thing I'll kind of share, and I mentioned this to some others, but it was obvious that these people here had a burden for the community of Watsonville.

You can go ahead and close the slide deck. And so this burden was obvious. It kind of drove what they prayed for. It drove what they did.

It tugged on kind of the heartstrings of their emotion. They wanted to see this community be impacted for the Lord. They wanted to see the gospel go out and people get saved, quite frankly.

[3 : 59] And you heard this term, burden. The Lord had given us this burden. So, you know, I think that was a big takeaway for me. What is our burden? Where do we see that in the Bible?

What does that mean? A couple passages, just, you know, touching on this before we kind of jump to Matthew 26 here in a second. You'll see how this all connects. You know, you see in Romans, in Romans 9 and 10, where Paul is talking about the sorrow and the unceasing anguish he felt for his fellow Jews.

And just this strong desire he had for their salvation. We see Jesus in Matthew 9, when he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

And he says to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field. And so that was probably the number one.

That was the first takeaway. The second was just how much they sought the Lord in prayer. And that was just so impactful for me. What a neat thing to be able to pray for Matthew today.

[5 : 08] Matthew and Kent Nicole are on their way, I think, right now up to Michigan. And if I can just confess something like my prayer life historically had been just one of, Lord, let your will be done.

Just plain vanilla, the safest prayers you can give. Lord, just pray that you're glorified. And then you realize that the Lord, you know, there is this relationship of prayer that can be had.

And a couple of verses that were shared during our teaching time there was Romans 12, 12. It says, be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.

And to be faithful in prayer. And to go beyond, just again, the checklist of supplications, which, again, we're to take to the Lord, these things.

And to go beyond just the thank you notes. You know, which, again, we're to be thankful for the things that the Lord has given us. But what does it mean to go to him and recognize him for who he is? And to go beyond that.

[6 : 12] To adore him. John 15, 9 says, as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in my love. What does it mean to abide in his love?

Just a couple brief observations just this week for me. Focusing on that relationship of prayer.

Father, it's amazing to see two things.

How the Lord continues to add more to that list of things to pray for. You know? And maybe it's just where we are. I don't know. Like, maybe it's just, you know, we're praying for Roman.

That is a very serious thing. To be praying for Matthew. To be praying for Cynthia. Like, and I think when you have this open eye to what does it mean to be in relationship with the Lord with a deep level of communication and prayer.

He starts to open your eyes to the many things that need prayer. And then in addition to that, you see how the Lord answers that prayer. You know, just in this short week since we've gotten back, like, there's things that I'm writing down.

[7 : 19] Lord, we are praying for this. And then there is the answer. So, it's just, it's a really neat thing. I'm reading Jonathan Goforth's story.

He's a missionary to China. Late 1800s, early 1900s. And he quotes, you know, fellow Chinese, not Chinese, but fellow missionary to China. The China Inland Mission founder, Hudson Taylor.

And he's got a very famous quote that says, The church moves forward on its knees. The church moves forward on its knees. And so, we're going to pick it up in Matthew 26.

And we see the Lord, he is on his knees in the Garden of Gethsemane. We're going to be looking at 47 through 68. But, you know, this is a passage that I don't think is the most widely looked at.

It's kind of sandwiched between the institution of the Lord's Supper, the bread and the cup, and ultimately the crucifixion.

[8 : 23] And for those that were in California, I'm sorry, you're going to hear this sermon again. I gave this when I was there. They asked me to speak. And so, I just jumped to this passage here in Matthew 26.

So, let's just go to the Lord in prayer again. Coat this time with prayer. And just, yeah. Heavenly Father, thank you again for the morning.

Thank you for just all the things we can take before you and the things we're lifting up to you. We ask that you help each one of us to have a relationship of prayer that goes beyond the surface, that is extremely intimate, Lord, in what we share and what we seek.

As we're seeing with Cynthia, Lord, it is an exciting and a bit of a wild thing to be seeking your will. We don't know where you're going to send us, what you're going to do, how you're going to work.

Lord, we're trusting in you. So, I just pray that this passage here in Matthew 26 would just speak truth and impact the hearts and the minds of those here in this room.

[9 : 37] Amen. Okay, so I just want to kind of work our way through this passage. It's kind of broken into two parts. Again, starting in Matthew 26, verse 47. There's going to be two main points.

The first main point for verses 47 through 56. And then kind of a second point after that. Okay, so just read with me.

Starting in verse 47. While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs. From the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign saying, the one I will kiss is the man. Seize him. And he came up to Judas at once and said, greetings, Rabbi.

And he kissed him. So, if we pause and just, again, take a moment to really understand what's happening here. If you're thinking just, you know, if you're like me and you look at the schedule a lot and you're like, okay, what do I have going on this week?

[10:38] This is a Thursday night. The week-long festival of unleavened bread had just begun. And this is, again, one of the most widely observed Jewish holidays.

So, Jesus tells his disciples to go into the city of Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover feast. This includes the preparation of the one-year-old lamb, the baking of unleavened bread, all the things that were done with the Israelites when they were thinking about when they had to depart quickly from Egypt.

And as we know, during this meal, Jesus institutes the remembrance of his body and his blood with the bread and the cup. The bread representing his body, the cup, his blood, the new covenant.

I kind of talked about that this morning during communion time. And as Paul later puts it, we are to declare the Lord's death until he comes.

So, that's what we're doing. So, keep in mind, he's already told his disciples, one of you will betray me. And we know that Judas is that betrayer.

[11:47] So, if we continue on in verse 50, Jesus said to him, friend, do what you came to do.

They came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Then Jesus said to him, put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my father? And he will at once send more than 12 legions of angels.

So, after supper, just to kind of pause again there. After supper, Jesus and his disciples leave the city and they go to this familiar place, the Garden of Gethsemane.

And they go there to pray. And we know the story. While Jesus is in deep prayer, the disciples keep falling asleep. And Jesus is in deep anguish, it says, and sorrow.

And all the while, his followers are sleeping. While he's sweating blood and pleading with his heavenly father, let this cup pass from me nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.

[13:00] Just the thought again, I think David spoke on this, the sweating of this blood, this like medical condition where there's so much stress that like sweat, this red blood-like sweat is coming out and he's pleading with the heavenly father.

Let this cup pass from me nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. His disciples couldn't keep their eyes open. First Peter emphasizes the fact that Jesus suffered unjustly.

He committed no sin, but he bore himself for us. The weight of sin and what was about to come was bearing down on him. But this was the mission.

This is the reason why he came. This is the reason why he was sent. Acts 2 says, Jesus was delivered according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. While this was an extremely stressful, heavy, dark situation, this was all part of the plan.

None of this was uncertain. None of this was... We knew how this story was going to unfold. Jesus knew how this story was going to unfold.

[14:10] And it's interesting to see that Judas identifies Jesus with a kiss. But yet he came with this angry mob. You know, you think of like the mobs in the movies.

You know, the pitchforks and the torches and the... You know, people are yelling and... They're coming, but yet Judas identifies Jesus with a kiss. It's a very hypocritical picture.

Which for Judas is par for the course. The name Judas comes... Is a deviation or a variant of Judah, which means praise. And so it's not...

It's not surprising to say Judas was not praising the Lord. By no means. It's also interesting, but not surprising, that Peter whips out a sword.

And takes a swipe at the chief priest's servant, Malchus. Of course... I shared this when we were in California, but as I'm like thinking through this, it's just amazing to think that he only cut off his ear.

[15:11] Like, how do you swing a sword at someone and only hit a ear? It seems really, really hard to do. I kind of give the analogy of like... It's like if you're shooting a free throw on basketball and you completely airball the shot, that's like really hard to do.

If you're trying to make the basket, it's really hard to just completely airball. It's amazing that Peter took a swipe and only took off his ear. Bible commentator Warren Wiersbe said, had Jesus not healed the ear, the ear of Malchus, there probably would have been four crosses on Calvary. Peter would have been right there with them. But to paraphrase, Jesus says, what are you doing? Put that thing away. He who lives by the sword dies by the sword. Don't you know that I can call upon my Father and have 72,000 angels delivered to me?

And I don't... I'm not saying... And I don't believe Jesus was anti-sword in some way. It's kind of interesting. Jesus knew that Peter had a sword. In fact, Jesus had just, you know, talked to them about this topic just moments before.

When he said, hey, to the disciples, if you don't have a sword, go sell your cloak and go get a sword. And I think, Teddy, you and I talked about this. It's kind of funny, the response. Like, hey, Lord, we got two swords.

[16:33] He's like, okay, enough. Perhaps Jesus was preparing them for spiritual warfare. Maybe it was a physical sword for protection or self-defense. I don't know. But in this case, bottom line is Jesus didn't need it.

He was on a mission to fulfill his Father's will. And there's no need for Peter to make a Trump-like assassination attempt. There's my joke for the day. Just taking that ear off.

But that's all. All right, continuing in 54. But how then should the scripture be fulfilled that it must be so? At that hour, Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out against a robber with swords and clubs to capture me?

Day after day, I sat in the temple teaching. You do not seize me. But all this has taken place that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Verse 54. But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled? Jesus could have easily said, you know what? There's got to be a better way. We're going to do something else. We'll figure something else out.

[17:39] But he chooses to obey his Father's will to continue on in his life's mission, bearing the sins of the world on the cross. He chose to be obedient to the Father's will.

If there's one main challenge I would leave for you from these first ten verses, as believers and followers of Christ, will it be the sword or the cup?

Will we resist God's perfect will? And will we swing the sword of what we think is best? Or will it be the cup of God's perfect will?

The cup that usually involves some suffering, but suffering that leads to God's glory. Thankfully, for those of us that pursue the cup, to pursue his will, we can be comforted by the fact that the Father loves us.

He is most wise and knows how much we can take. Again, just kind of thinking back to Cynthia's story here, like, I think Vivian, you and Cynthia drove to Iowa after last Sunday and got sick.

[18:51] Cynthia got sick, pretty sick, from what I hear. And so kind of the decision was, do I go to Columbia? If so, like, in this state of sickness, and to think that the Lord provides what is needed to follow through with his will.

And he did that, and he was faithful in that. Paraphrasing a quote from the book, The Hiding Place, which I shared the Sunday after our brother Frank passed away, Corey Ten Boom's father would say to his young daughter, when you get on a train, I don't give you a ticket until you are ready to get on it.

God does the same with the hard things in life. In other words, God doesn't give us a burden or a future suffering until the very moment we need to face it. He knows exactly how much we can handle.

He provides the strength and grace for each moment as it comes. And this was a lesson Corey Ten Boom held on dearly to as she took the cup and endured horrific experiences of Nazi concentration camps.

And so this applies to us as believers and followers of Christ. Do we choose to take the cup or the sword? And that looks so different for each one of us. If we are going to him in prayer saying, Lord, what is your will for my life?

[20 : 06] What would you have for us? We've got to be ready for that answer. Because that answer may be something we are not super comfortable with. It may be far-fetched.

It may be wild. It may not be even just on our radar at all. What will the Lord have us to do? Are we seeking him in that? What is the burden that he would have for us?

And then when he makes that clear, will we obey and take the cup or will we swing that sword and try to do it our own way? Just to read these last 11 verses a bit more quickly, and I want to make one significant point before wrapping things up.

Verse 57, if we want to just read these last few verses. It says, It says, And the high priest stood up and said, Have you no answer to make?

What is it that these men testify against you? But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, I adjure you by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.

[21 : 50] And Jesus said to him, You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment? And they answered, He deserves death.

They spit in his face and struck him and some slapped him, saying, Prophecy to us, you Christ. Who is it that struck you? If we read the other accounts in the other Gospels, we see that they take Jesus, again, think timeline-wise, it's either super late on Thursday, maybe creeping into Friday morning, and they take Jesus to the high priest.

And actually, before they take him to Caiaphas, the high priest, they take him to the former high priest, which is Caiaphas' father-in-law, Ennis. And these high priests were both Sadducees.

They didn't believe in the resurrection, the spirit world. They just stuck to the five books of Moses. It's also interesting to note the Sadducees ran the temple business, the very temple business that Jesus overthrew a couple times.

[23 : 09] And so I'm sure they were happy to get their hands on Jesus. But by this time, they see him. It's likely past midnight, very early on Friday. And the next morning or so, the priest assembled the Sanhedrin, which is a group of elders and priests and scribes.

And it's meant to be a bit of a court. But as you can kind of see, it's a kangaroo court. There's inconsistencies in testimony.

There's accusations that aren't concise. One message seems to kind of come through, which is this man said that he was going to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.

And so kind of getting to the point that I want to make here is, this is interesting. Caiaphas and the others could have taken this a few different ways. He could have addressed the fact that, hey, you claim that you're going to destroy this property and that threat is going to, you know, land you in jail. Here's the punishment. He could have gone to the fact that, hey, you are working. You are performing healing on the Sabbath. That is against our law.

[24 : 26] We're going to pursue that and that punishment. You insulted us by calling us a brood of vipers. We don't like that. That is the punishment we're going to take. But really, just to give them, they had a clear understanding of what the main issue was.

The main question is, and a question that we should all be asking, Jesus, are you the Christ? Are you the son of God?

That is the bottom line. Do you see my point here? Like, they could have, like, attacked him on all these other things, but that was the main issue. I think, again, even in Acts 4 or 5, Caiaphas says the same thing to Peter and John.

By what power or by what name do you do this? The main issue was that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah.

He claimed to be the son of God, and he was. And that did not sit well with them. They were expecting much more. They were expecting a physical deliverance.

[25 : 38] Are you the Christ, the son of God? I know it's a simple, but it's a very profound thing to ask with huge implications. If this is God's son, he is the Messiah.

He is the one they'd been waiting for. And Jesus gave a simple yet profound answer. Yes. I am. And with that, he was given the death sentence.

I love this because it really encapsulates the gospel. We aren't saved because we come to church here.

We aren't saved because we, you know, go on mission trips and go to retreats and go to prayer meetings, and we're involved in a youth group. We are saved because of Jesus.

That is the bottom line. We are saved because Jesus is who he said he is. He is the Messiah. He is the son of God. To go a bit deeper, he was perfect.

[26 : 39] He was crucified on a cross. He was buried, and he rose again. He paid that punishment. Because of him, we are saved. Because of him, we can have a personal relationship with God.

I just want to finish with a story, one that I think many of you guys know. But this happened over the summer.

I think it was over June, middle of June, June 12th. The story came out. It was that plane crash that happened in India. I don't know if you guys heard that story or read about it.

Shortly after takeoff, this plane, you know, goes up. It loses speed. It loses altitude. And it crashes into a hospital. And 242 people on that plane died.

And the number of people in the actual building died as well. The amazing thing is there were 243 people on that plane. So one person made it out alive.

[27 : 38] That man, I'm going to butcher his name, Viswash Kumar Ramesh. Call him Mr. Ramesh. He was sitting in seat 11A. And somehow he was spared in this crash.

He told reporters that, you know, as the plane went up, it felt like it lost power. It crashed. He looked around. He saw people burning to death around him.

And somehow he makes it out of the door. He's got some scratches. He's got some bruises. But that's about it. It's really amazing.

There's even video of him walking through the street amongst the chaos of everything that's going on. Like walking through the street like on his phone, stumbling towards an ambulance.

Pilots died. Flight attendants died. Passengers died. His own brother died. But he escaped with minor cuts and bruises. It's an incredible story.

[28 : 40] The part I want to highlight is he told reporters afterwards that when he made it out of the plane, one of the first people he called was his dad.

His quote was, he said, I told him, the plane has crashed. I don't know where my brother is. I don't see any other passengers. I don't know how I'm alive.

How I exited the plane. The plane crashed and he has no idea how he survived. It makes no sense to him. When later interviewed in the hospital bed, do you know what Mr. Ramesh didn't say?

He didn't say, well, you know what? I actually paid really close attention to what the flight attendant said at the beginning of the flight. And when she went through her little spiel about how to exit the plane, I took good note of that.

And that is how I survived. Mr. Ramesh didn't say, you know, I ran some statistics on all past plane crashes and I knew seat 11A was the safest one to sit in.

[29 : 47] And so by that, I sat there and we were all good. And that's how I survived. He didn't say that. His life was spared for nothing that he could have done.

And I think about how just that pertains to us in the gospel. Sometimes I'm like, Lord, why me?

Why am I saved? It's almost inexplicable other than the fact that I can point to Jesus. That is the only thing. Because Jesus is who he says he is and because my trust is in that, that's it.

That's all I got. I didn't do anything else. So the final point I'd just like to make is it's all about Jesus. When in doubt, bring it back to him.

He is the differentiator. He is the reason for our salvation. He's the source of our salvation. He is the one in whom we can have a personal relationship with. He is the one who can radically change our lives.

[30 : 53] The musicians want to come up. But this morning, I would just ask that you consider God's word this morning and reflect on kind of those two main points. One, will it be the sword or the cup?

When the Lord gives us direction, will we obey his will, which may result in some pain and suffering, or will we try to swing the sword and do it our own way? And the second is to keep our focus on the Lord.

He is the differentiator. He is the reason. I just want to close with 1 Peter 2, a couple verses from there, and then I'll pray, and we'll sing our last song.

1 Peter says, If when you do good and suffer for it, you endure. This is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an

example, so that you might follow in his steps.

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

[32 : 10] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. Let's pray.

Lord, just thinking about that last sentence, by your wounds we have been healed. And that is, there could not be a truer statement. Lord, by your wounds, by you giving up your life, by your sacrifice, we have been healed.

We have been healed. We have been healed from eternal separation from you. But salvation starts the moment we believe, Lord, and that relationship with you, that indwelling of the Spirit, gives us an opportunity to walk with you.

Lord, that is an exciting thing. And so we say thank you for that, Lord. Just may we seek your will. May we seek what you would have us to do, how we can walk with you, how we can take the cup figuratively.

What is it you would have us to do, Lord? May we just seek you in prayer, and remember you are the one. You are the author and the perfecter of our faith. In your son's name, amen.