

Matthew 26:36-46 | David Vinyard

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[0:00] I just thought that was interesting. I never thought about the scene that Jesus was in. and just at night, this machinery maybe off in the distance, these remnants of the olives that kind of run their economy in a lot of ways.

And just Jesus, as he said in that video, you know, about to be pressed. And you've got that very clear visual around him. Even to this day, as I was kind of doing some study, there's these olive trees that are still there.

Some of them are almost a thousand years old. But just this picture, this scene of where they're camped out, what's going on, what's about to happen. It's kind of a neat, I'm sure that's not a coincidence.

I'm sure Jesus set that up as just one more declaration of, look, I'm God. I can even weave this story together in a way that you would never expect. It's kind of remarkable, actually.

So anyway, that was a quick knowledge here. I realize this is a familiar text. I'm going to try and run through this with a decent pace. You know, we hear about Jesus being in the garden. We hear about this night before he's taken in the whole scene with Judas and the priests and the guards and all of that, right?

[1:05] That's coming up next week. But there's at least two things that I noticed as I was studying this text and thinking about, man, what is this preserved for? Is it just a narration? Is it just going from where we were in the upper room to Jesus' trial?

Or is there something for us? Is there something in the text that we can think, wow, you know, that is good to think about, to dwell on? So I've got two, and we'll keep them pretty simple.

The first one is the most simple. The first one is maybe the most basic observation from this interaction. But it's something that I kind of missed the first couple times going through it. And so I'll share it with you today. But as you think about what's happening, as you think about the verses that we read and Jesus' encounter in Gethsemane, there's sort of this subtle nod to the value of friendship.

This emphasis on the importance of Jesus' friends, being with him, supporting him, probably not doing a very good job, right? But either way, there's this quick call out to the idea that a true friendship is a great thing for a Christian, for a believer.

And I was just thinking about that concept. I don't think we would go so far to say that Jesus needed these guys, right? If anything, it was the other way around. But thinking pragmatically, we know, you think about verse like John 16, in this life we're guaranteed trouble, right?

[2:27] Like Jesus says to his disciples earlier on, in this world you will have trouble. Take heart, I have overcome the world. And just thinking about, I was spending some time thinking about Jesus in this environment and this encounter and this like going back and forth.

Even the Son of God, even for Jesus in that moment, there was value in friends. There was a value in having his guys there with him. I think he was hoping a little more from them.

I think he was expecting it to be a little bit more supportive, but it is what it is. And our text shows us that. If you look at verse 38, it says, stay with me. Watch with me. He's disclosing some really personal feelings.

They may not have heard him say that before. They may not have heard him admit some of those things that he shared in the garden. Sorry, in Gethsemane. But he discloses that with his friends.

And so it's just kind of an easy to overlook concept there at the beginning about just being, having his friends with him. Closeness is a supporting feature.

[3:30] And so I thought that was interesting. And I found a couple verses here. If you look at Galatians 6.2, you know, what does the Bible give us in terms of following Jesus' lead in that way or reinforcing that?

Right? And it is kind of a biblical concept or not kind of, it is. You know, how are we to interact? Is that a function? Is friendship or support something that we should aspire to? Galatians 6.2 says, carry each other's burdens.

And in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. That sounds a lot like what Jesus asked them to do. 1 Thessalonians 5 says, therefore comfort each other and edify one another just as you do.

For whatever reason, maybe it's just the society that we live in. You know, there's this, I feel this temptation to just individualism, isolationism.

Especially as a guy, maybe I'll just speak for the dudes. I think the ladies do this better than we do, to be honest with you. I think they're a little better friends to one another. No offense to my boys out there. We're all right, you know.

[4:32] But, you know, you check in on guys, it's like you get one of three answers every time. It's like, how are you doing, man? It's like, I'm good. I'm all right. I'm fine, right?

Like that's 99% of the time. Ask a guy later today how he's doing. You're like, I'm fine, you know. It's just the idea, though. It's easy to look past. And it's easy to miss this, but God has given us our friends, our network, our relationships as a resource.

And to be honest with or to fall down in front of. And to say, hey, stay with me here on this one. Pray for me on this one. This is not good.

Like, I mean, Jesus' words, we're going to look at it in a second. And he's hurting, right? For the Son of God to be saying those things and feeling his humanity, which is the second thing we're going to talk about.

It's a place, right? And he wanted them to pray with him. It's like, be with me in solidarity here. I need that in my friends. And so we could skip down to the next.

[5:36] I think I have Romans 12 as the next verse. But there's a lot more references in this, right? But just the idea of we are called to be that feature as believers for each other.

And I just wanted to challenge you with that today. I'm not saying anybody in the room is not a good friend. I'm just saying maybe it's more important than you think. Maybe it's something that is easy to overlook.

And I wrote this in there. I shared this with Dave. I wrote, to be a good friend and to invest in the value of friendships is to be like Christ. To lean on a friend, to give to a friend, to pray with a friend, I believe is what Christ would want from us on a perpetual basis.

And here's where it becomes maybe a little more difficult to do. Even when friends let you down. Even when you're unmatched. That's a weird thing to say, right?

What was the case for Jesus? Were these his equal peers? No. Nowhere near, right? Just a group of semi-unemployed question marks. Uneducated fishermen, right?

[6:45] The value of a friend was still there. And I think sometimes, myself included, I think I approach things like, well, you know, is that person, am I going to benefit if I invest time here?

Is that something, right? I don't think, I don't think that's, I don't think that's correct. I don't think that's the right perspective. I think Jesus has given us our engagements, our networks, our relationships for us to find obedience to those things.

So just a challenge there. Let's not miss that from this text. So that's the first one. I'm not doing great on time, but I'm going to keep rolling. The value of a friend, simple enough, practical enough, something you can work on, something you can lean into this week.

The second thing that I notice from this text is really all about the person of Jesus. And when I say the person of Jesus, I'm talking about just this unique glimpse into his humanity, his emotions, his struggle, things that we don't typically see.

We see the miracles of Christ. We see the perfect answer for these guys that bake up a riddle. We see things that like, wow, only the Son of God could say that. And here in this text, it's like, man,

that's relatable.

[8:03] That looks like a man in a lot of ways, right? So I've started a new trend. We'll keep this short, too. I've been using AI. I love it.

It's entertaining, but it's also kind of fun. At some point, I'm not even going to have to prompt this. But my new thing is I like to prompt AI to create an image of our text, right? The last one bombed. It wasn't even anywhere close.

Jesus had, like, gorilla feet, you know, jumping over the money tables. This one's a little better if you want to show this one. This is an AI image of our text today. I put it in. I prompted it.

And it spit this one out. I was like, that's pretty good, you know? It didn't quite understand the three cups. But the rest of it I thought was good. And so we're getting closer, right?

If you're a visual learner, like, trying to figure out what's going down, it's something like this. Not perfect, but it's getting there.

[9:00] It will be scary the better it gets. But so thinking about Jesus in this human state, the person of Jesus, the son of God wrapped in this flesh that we all wrestle with, and yet his willingness to endure what was before him, his obedience to God, this sleepless night of struggling through prayer and disappointment and everything else, I thought it was worth using whatever time we have left here, just thinking about the humanity of Jesus in our text and what it means.

So let me just quickly recap this scene as we cruise. Notice the verbs and the adjectives that are used as Jesus speaks and as it's captured. It says, he began to be sorrowful, troubled.

He said to them, my soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here. Stay with me. Watch with me. And then it says, going a little further, he fell on his face to the ground.

I mean, just down. Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will. I just couldn't, as I was studying this, I couldn't get past this idea that this is probably the greatest example of Jesus' humanity that we have.

Just this raw emotional response to everything. And you can just sense this breaking, this, this, he's on the precipice of everything that's coming.

[10:24] It's just, he says it in 41, right? He admits it. He says, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And you think about everything that's before him. We kind of talked about this, but the betrayal of a friend.

Being questioned and mocked by these deceivers and abusers of a people. He was going to be humiliated. He was going to be mocked. He was going to be tortured by the brutal. Rejected by people he came to heal and save.

And so he's standing on the edge of that just thinking, gosh, it's almost too much for me, right? And you think about that prayer.

Three separate times at least it's recorded. Potentially more if he's up all night. But God, if there is any way, if there is anything else, please have it. Please.

But your will remain. Amen. Amen. The more I study this text, the more I appreciated that this is preserved for us. And it's not because we have a small God by any means.

[11:28] It's not because this is all of who Jesus is. But that relatability, the weakness of our flesh, the lows of our humanity, I've seen it in my own life, right?

I never appreciated someone going through a health struggle until I was dealing with something. And then I'm like, man, I know how that feels. Or relationships or parenting. Like, this facet of what's preserved in Jesus' life is super powerful, in my opinion.

You know, when we see that wrestling, that struggle, those pains, it's like, man, we've been down something of a similar road. And I think that is just a beautiful capture for us, right?

And maybe you've been to a point like this. Maybe you're seeing that picture thinking like, gosh, I've fallen on my face once or twice. I have been broken. I have struggled through something.

I have dealt with things that have kept me up through the night, that have robbed my sleep or my joy or any of that stuff. And you're thinking, you know, does anybody understand that?

[12:32] Does God understand that? Does the Savior know what that's like? He does. I think because Jesus had to experience this world that's full

of loss and mistakes and pain and hurt, and he had to look at it all and not just think about it, but understand what he's about to do to undo it, to offer it, to offer a way around the failures of man.

What a mountain. What a forecast. And so just thinking about the humanity of Christ, thinking about what he's going through.

And when we're there, right, I mean, those troubling seasons, they can be exhausting. And I was just, I spent some time just thinking about this whole equation. We're like that, or at least I am sometimes.

You think, like, when you're deep in that spot or whatever it is, you're like, God, I know you see me. Is there any other way? Is there something else?

Like, there has to be some other way. Does it need to happen like this? Do I need to be in this spot? Here's the point. I'll keep cruising if I can.

[13:44] Hopefully we find comfort. Hopefully we find peace knowing that Jesus has experienced the depths of humanity. The states and the emotions and those struggles that we find day to day, he is not a stranger to them.

And yet Jesus was still willing to carry on to endure that mission so that we can find peace. 1 Peter 5, 7 reminds us to cast our cares on him because he cares for us.

I just, I couldn't get past just that powerful picture of just Jesus facing brokenness, staying up all night, understanding, living through that, and carrying on.

It's really an amazing thing. Now, there's obviously a lot that's going to come. I'm not going to get into any of the what is Jesus going through the next day, the next hour, everything that's happening. But there's one sort of facet as we study this text. Gosh, I'm not doing very well. Something that stood out to me. Last thing, and I'm going to wrap this up quick. Why?

[14:57] Why was Jesus in this state? Was it just what he was looking ahead to physically? Is that what caused him all of this distress?

Was it just that, you know, this dismay came because he knew he was going to get whipped? Or he knew, like, what is it, right? I mean, Luke, the similar passage in Luke, I don't know if I have this one up there. It talks about, Jesus says, he was in agony and he prayed more earnestly and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.

We've heard that text. Modern doctors have an answer for that. They say only through extreme strain can the little blood vessels in your skin burst and cause your sweat to look like blood, right? What could cause that anguish? There's a ton of opinions online about that. Commentaries left and right. What is it, right? I thought about it for a few weeks.

I've been thinking about that topic, that concept. And as relatable as this state is for Jesus to us, there's one piece of it that I don't think we can really relate to.

[16:06] And it's the part that I really think got him. There's a clue in how he prays. If you notice the words that I shared earlier, he refers to the cup. And so just doing a little digging, I'll put the references on screen.

We don't have to read them, but that phrase, that cup, take this cup from me, is this cup, right? Almost exclusively in other parts of the Bible, in the Old Testament in particular, it's referring to God's wrath and judgment.

So if you look, and you can just cruise through some of these. In Psalms, it talks about the cup foaming wine. He pours it onto the wicked. In Isaiah, he talks about the cup of his fury, the dregs of the cups of trembling.

In Jeremiah, he talks about, again, the cup of his fury at my hand. There's a bunch of references to this. And it's always a metaphor for God's righteous wrath, God's judgment.

Even in Revelation, if you want to skip to that one, John speaks of the judgment coming to those who have worshipped the beast. And they say, they will drink the wine of God's wrath, which is mixed full strength in the cup of his anger.

[17:09] And I don't really think there's any bit of coincidence in that, as Jesus is praying that same prayer, looking up, thinking it's not just... Maybe the last point is said this way.

Jesus was not a coward. He was not afraid of the Roman soldiers. He was not intimidated to answer questions in the court. He was not worrisome of his own life ending. He knew that's why he came. He wasn't nervous about not seeing his friends and family. He was going to see most of them again. And he was no stranger to being accused falsely or to being mocked.

Right? I don't think those are the things. Even being publicly shamed and having to parade naked through the streets and being physically exhausted, I don't think that was it. I think this extreme state of just falling to your face, I need you to pray with me, help me here, had everything to do with looking ahead, never having this separation and experience from God and saying, oh my gosh, that's what's coming for me.

I've got to do it. And so, as fun as it is to talk about friendship, it's almost equally challenging to think about all that he went through that we can't even understand.

[18:27] But I'm reading this text, I'm studying, and just thinking about Jesus, who had never been at odds with his father, facing that down, almost hitting his breaking point. And I don't know what that's like.

I don't know that relation to understand. But I do believe that is what brought him to that state at Gethsemane. And so, here's the irony, and I think we'll close with this.

For we who believe, right? For we who understand why he came. For we who have our faith and our trust in Jesus' work. Everything he was about to do that we're going to study the rest of the time in Matthew.

We transition from this state of fear, this state of sorrow, to this place of friends with God. It's phenomenal, right?

It's the gospel. It's the good news. While otherwise we would be terrified of the wrath of God. Just like Jesus is thinking about, right? We have nothing to fear.

[19:24] It's a phenomenal translation. It's beautiful. And I think, I found this quote from a commentator, Dr. Carson, on this whole thing. He writes, just as Jesus' death was unique, so also was his anguish unique.

And here, this next thing is the key. He says, and in response to this unique anguish, the sinner may simply offer a humble, quiet worship. Just thank you, God, for doing that.

It's the only suitable response. It's just a quiet and humble worship. All right, we're going to skip to this. We'll close with this. You okay if we don't do a song?

I'll just pray for us. Do you want to do it? Okay. Here's my, I usually write down a list of questions to challenge myself after a passage.

I don't always share them. I'll share these ones, and then we'll pray. In light of Matthew 26, thinking about all of that's happening on this night and what Jesus is about to pour into, just here's what I was thinking. The Spirit was kind of hitting me with this, this thoughts to take into the week.

[20:29] But how often do I forget or minimize what Jesus went through for my sin? What lesser things pull me away? How great is it to have been spared the wrath of God as a believer?

To have a heavenly citizenship, as it says in Philippians 3. How wonderful to be called a friend of God. How wonderful to not fear the righteous judgment of a holy God.

How beneficial is it to know that there is no struggle or pain that my Savior hasn't felt? And lastly, what type of friend am I?

Do I honor the sacrifice that was given for me? Am I sleeping on the needs of my friends? Am I selfish? Or am I aware? Am I supportive?

Am I available for those that God has put around me? Let's close with that. Hopefully, you've been encouraged. God, thank you for today. Thank you for just a raw example, just a powerful emotional context of something that we really can't fully appreciate.

[21:38] I thank you. I thank you that you went through it. I thank you that the plan for salvation, as brutal as it was at times, as painful and emptying as that process was, and just knowing it as the all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe, I thank you that you carried on.

I thank you that we have this understanding that much like the disciples, we fall short. We sleep. We take timeouts.

We struggle. And God, I just thank you that we have such a great example of a perfect obedience to the will of God. I thank you for that. I pray that we would be challenged enough to take that into our week, that we would understand, as Jeff shared, just the different opportunities, the different occasions that we can lean in, that we can be better, that we can serve, and that we can just appreciate all that you've done for us, God.

I thank you for those things this morning. Amen. Amen. Amen.