

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DEC 12TH-13TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

LISTEN (MATTHEW 26:31-35)

"TONIGHT ALL OF YOU WILL FALL AWAY..."

After the disciples share a meal together, they head to the Mount of Olives, and Jesus gives them tough news: they'll all fall away because of Him. This is from His Word (Zechariah 13), which they would've known.

- Zechariah 12-13 is a beautiful text that prophesies of a conquering King, who must suffer and be pierced for our impurity.

"I WILL NEVER DENY YOU..."

Peter wasn't having it though. He completely disagreed with what Jesus said, even though Jesus quoted Scripture. Peter claimed he would "never fall away" or "deny" him. Jesus reminded Peter His words were the truth.

- **You see, if God says something, it's true. It doesn't matter how much we may disagree with it.**

"AFTER I HAVE RISEN..."

Peter argued with Jesus even though Jesus promised restoration. Jesus told them He was going to rise again and meet them in Galilee (Zechariah). Yes, there will be pain, but there is hope! Somehow that got missed.

- **We cannot pick and choose what God says. We must listen to it all for it to make an impact on our lives.**

LISTEN AND OBEY

Peter didn't listen because he didn't like everything that was said. **Instead of humbly responding he was self-reliant.**

- That's how we are too. Jesus says to pick up our cross, sacrifice, and make disciples. We want to, but on our terms. **Being a Jesus follower means we listen and submit even when we don't like it.**

GOD'S WILL (MATTHEW 26:36-45)

A MODEL OF OBEDIENCE

Jesus modeled obedience by investing in a few and praying faithfully just as He taught.

- **How do we know if we are obedient disciples of Jesus? We take time to pull a few other people aside, and model transparency and humble submission through prayer. Who are the people we are pulling aside to help grow?**

"I AM DEEPLY GRIEVED TO THE POINT OF DEATH."

Jesus didn't model obedience in some super-human way. Jesus was fully human like us and it was excruciating to walk the road of obedience. Jesus connects with our pain.

- **Christianity stands alone in that we believe in a God who feels our hurt. He is present with our grief and sadness. He knows the struggle of the will. Our God is not distant.**

YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN

Despite connecting with our human nature, Jesus still humbly submitted to the Father by praying, just as He taught, "your will be done." Submitting His will was the way to victory.

- **Obedience as a Jesus follower means we submit to God's will, not our own. So, we must seek His will through His Word and His Body (the Church).**

"THE SPIRIT IS WILLING, BUT THE FLESH IS WEAK."

Three times the disciples were sleeping, unable to pray alongside Jesus. Jesus recognizes we are going to make mistakes. That's why He taught us to pray, "forgive us our sins, as we forgive others, and lead us away from temptation."

- **We need to confess our sins and failures regularly. Confession causes sin to lose power and helps us to overcome.**

PARADOX (MATTHEW 26:46-56)

THE KISS OF A FRIEND

The kiss of Judas was a special kind of betrayal. It was the sign of allegiance and friendship, neither of which Judas had in mind. Yet Jesus called him "friend," because Jesus loved him. Judas was a tragic figure, but repentance was still available after.

- **It doesn't matter how bad you've messed up. Jesus loves you and offers redemption.**

"THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD DIE BY IT."

Early in Matthew Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount to "love your enemies" and "pray for those who persecute you." Peter forgot. We know from John that it was Peter who went for the head.

- That's the way of the world: strike back! Fight for your rights! **Jesus' way is so radically different: submit, forgive, serve, and love.**

"...CALL ON MY FATHER, AND HE WILL PROVIDE..."

Jesus knew true power does not come from this world. Following Jesus means living in peace, forgiving our enemies, and loving those who bother us, disagree with us, who hurt us, or even betray us. This can only happen through God's help within us.

- Who do you need help loving? Are you trusting Jesus or running from Him?

POWER DYNAMICS (MATTHEW 26:57-68)

CHIEF PRIESTS, SCRIBES, AND ELDERS

The ones in political power in Israel are controlling the situation and narrative. They do this by using manipulation, lies, and bullying. Have you ever experienced this?

- **We all want power and influence, don't we? We like control. But we confuse true power. To keep worldly power we must lie, blame, and gossip.**

"...THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER..."

The contrast in power dynamics is interesting. Jesus is in custody as a prisoner, vulnerable and weak. And yet He proclaims: **"I will be seated in the place of Power."**

- **Jesus stands before worldly power and confronts it. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus defeated the power of sin. If we submit, we get that power too.**

TRUE POWER

As Jesus confronts worldly power it spit on Him, slapped Him, and led Him away to slaughter. This is the remarkable way of Jesus: through humility and suffering comes true power. As His followers, we must rethink power and authority for ourselves.

- **Do we look out for our own benefit? Are we servants who look to empower others?**

BROKEN (MATTHEW 26:69-75)

"I DON'T KNOW THE MAN!"

Peter was a disciple of Jesus. He walked with Him, talked with Him, and learned from Jesus.

Then he ended up adamantly denying that he even knew Jesus.

- **Sometimes our lives are like that. We hang around Jesus, know about Jesus, but end up living in a way that denies Him. Are you an authentic follower?**

DENIAL

Peter is the one constant through this section. As we follow Jesus' final hours, we also follow Peter. He makes a bold claim to never deny, sleeps during prayer, tries to kill a man, cowardly hides, and now the climax.

- Peter denies he knows Jesus three times. He makes mistake after mistake, and it's painful. **Have you ever been there?**

"PETER REMEMBERED...AND WEPT BITTERLY."

Peter is a broken character, littered with errors. But his denials weren't the end. He remembered what he did and had a contrite heart. He went on to start a movement. **But it started with brokenness.**

- **Is our heart broken when we fail? Have we ever wept bitterly over the sin around us? It's there we find hope!**

UPSIDE DOWN

- Christmas is about two weeks away. We often forget it's a celebration of the God of the universe coming as a helpless baby. Jesus will come again in all His power and glory, but it started with humble submission. That's where we begin too.
- **We grow when we submit to Jesus. What do you need to submit to God today?**

OBEDIENCE BASED DISCIPLESHIP

- We must submit to listening to and obeying God's Word. **Do we believe it? We must submit to God's will over ours. Are we trying to fix situations with our own efforts? Are we vying for control and power? We must submit our brokenness to build for God's Kingdom. Are we building disciples or building our comfort?**

THE WAY DOWN IS THE WAY UP

- **What direction is your life headed?**
- "Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up, that to be low is to be high, that the broken heart is the healed heart, that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit, that the repenting soul is the victorious soul, that to have nothing is to possess all, that to bear the cross is to wear the crown."