

The End Of Judas

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[0 : 00] Please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 27. Matthew, chapter 27. Today we're looking at verses 3 through 10.

I'll begin reading in verse 1, but 1 through 10. Matthew 27, beginning in verse 1. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate, the governor. Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

They said, What is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury since it is blood money.

So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the field of blood to this day.

[1 : 30] Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, And they took the 30 pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field as the Lord directed me.

Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we pray that you would be with us now as your word is open, that you would make it clear, that you would help us to understand.

We pray as well that you would help to apply this truth as we look at the end of Judas. Lord, we pray that you yet would teach us about our life and about our Savior. So be with us now in the opening of the word.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. So in this passage, we see the outcome of Judas. We've seen already his betrayal. We've seen his role in the past as a disciple.

But now we see the outcome or the end of Judas, which is death by suicide. And I think what we see here in this passage, and one thing we'll be looking at, is that while he regrets what he's done, he doesn't really repent.

[2 : 38] He doesn't turn to Jesus. And so what I want us to do is consider first what happened to Judas. Let's look at what's contained in this text. The end of Judas. Judas, then let's look at his regret, and we'll contrast it some with what true repentance looks like.

And then discuss briefly, how did this happen to Judas? How did Judas get to this point? So first, let's look at what happened to Judas. Well, Matthew is the only one that gives a gospel record of Judas' fate.

Luke, though, mentions it in the book of Acts, and it may seem a little different. Acts 1, 18 through 19, we read there, So how do we reconcile these two accounts?

They do seem a little bit different. They have obviously some overlaps and details. I think it's probably not all that difficult for us to understand what's being communicated. As we put these two together. I think it seems most likely that with Matthew's account that he hanged himself, that that is, in fact, how he died.

That he hanged himself. And then after dying, he was either cut down or after some time, if there's decay or whatever, if he fell down and when he did, he burst open and his insides came out.

[4 : 07] Some have even said it's possible he hanged himself on a cliff and there's some great distance that he fell and that happened. It may be, again, that some time had passed before he was either cut down or the rope broke or he decomposed in such a way that he fell and his insides came out.

And so, again, that wouldn't be contradictory to these two things. And the field was defiled by the hanging. And so the Sanhedrin purchased it for a burial place for strangers.

Again, it says he purchased for himself. This may be simply the fact that the money was his. Even after he threw it into the temple, no one else claimed the money.

It was really his money. And, in fact, it's probably pretty clear from what we read in Matthew that the Sanhedrin did not want to accept responsibility for the money. None of them would take the money because they knew what it was.

They called it blood money. They knew it was money that had been used to purchase the life of Jesus Christ. And so they couldn't put it into the treasury. They probably took the money and, much as we might do with a power of attorney today, they bought the field on Judas' behalf and gave it to a place, again, for burial of strangers since it's a defiled field with this dead body already in it.

[5 : 23] They put other dead bodies in it of those who had nowhere else to be buried. And so I think that's most likely what explains the two accounts and what happened to Judas and how he died, again, by hanging in some way.

Eventually his body falls. His insides burst open. The field's defiled. They buy it and give it over to using the money that Judas had acquired to betray Jesus.

They use that money to buy the field. They call it a field of blood, which almost has this double play on words because it's a place where Judas' blood was spilled, but it was bought with blood money, the money that they used to have Jesus betrayed and put to death.

I want to, and this is going to take a little while, but you know sometimes I go off on parenthetical chases. Let me put it this way. I'd like to take some time right now and discuss a difficult topic and make some application to this passage.

You know as we go through God's Word, we preach straight through books of the Bible, but God's Word addresses a broad range of topics, and when we come to them we really want to discuss them. And one that I'd like to talk about today is suicide.

[6 : 36] Obviously Judas hanged himself. He commits suicide. Now my next point I'm going to argue that Judas was not a Christian, and what he expresses in terms of regret is different than what we would say is repentance and salvation.

So I'm not arguing that Judas is a Christian, so please don't misunderstand me when we talk about this. But what I want to talk about is the subject of suicide, and is that even possible for a Christian? Can Christians commit suicide?

How do we understand suicide? This isn't to encourage it by any means, but I want us to talk about suicide. Now as I've already said, Judas was clearly not a Christian, but there is much discussion about suicide, and in particular if suicide eternally condemns someone to hell, which is the view, you know, of the Roman Catholic Church, and we live in a community that's, I think, the last I saw, 85% Roman Catholic.

So most of the people probably in our community believe this, probably have taught this. Recently, well, just last year, I had to talk with a neighbor family who had a suicide in the family, and they had been told by multiple people that their son, who had professed faith at one point, was in hell because he committed suicide, and they were coming to me, who isn't their pastor, to say, what is your view on this?

How do we understand this? And so this is a very relevant topic, and probably one that if you don't deal with personally in your family, you will end up having to help someone, maybe at work or someone, a friend that you know in our community, but again, there is a certain view in our society and in religion that would say that a person is eternally condemned for this.

[8 : 16] Let me say first, and be very clear about this, that suicide is sin. Suicide is sin because it's a murder of a person who's been made in the image of God, and God's word makes clear, even in the Ten Commandments, we understand that murder is sin, and we're not to murder people.

And so that applies even if it's yourself. You don't have the right to take your own life because you're an image bearer of God. And so murder is not an option for us, and so I think without any weakness, we can say that suicide is sin.

That's not an un sinful decision. It's a sinful decision. It should never be an option that we consider or pursue. Again, this isn't meant to encourage this. This is to say we should not pursue this.

It would be wrong for us to go that route. And I would even go further and say, if this is something any of you are ever thinking about, come speak to myself or one of the elders. We'd be glad to talk to you, to counsel you, to spend time with you.

But this is not something we should pursue. It is something sinful. But I feel very strongly on this, that suicide does not take away the salvation of a Christian. And I want us to talk about why that is the case.

[9 : 31] Well, I think most clearly we see this from God's Word. Romans 8, 38-39. Listen to the words here. I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, first, let's be clear that God's Word is clear, that Christians persevere to the end. A Christian who is saved doesn't lose their salvation for any sin they commit.

And I think it's really clear in this passage, Romans 8, that he goes to this list, and he presents alternates, neither death nor life. Those are the two choices, right?

Either you're dead or you're alive, right? Neither height nor depth, the two extremes. Things present nor things to come. Powers, which really is speaking of spiritual powers.

Demonic power. And then, in case he forgot something, nor anything else in all of creation. And what is contained in all of creation? Everything that is not God, right?

[10 : 48] Everything outside of God is created. God alone is the uncreated creator. You understand this. So, when he says, or anything that's in all creation, he's saying, there's nothing apart from God that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So, there's nothing you can do. There's nothing that can be done to you that can ever take away the salvation of a Christian. So, I think we have to be very clear in our theological understanding.

I know this is theology, and some people, theology doesn't matter. This matters. This is called perseverance of the saints. But this matters because it deals with questions like this.

And so, if nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God, can your sin separate you from the love of God? No. Now, again, I'm not pushing sin all the more.

That's not what I'm saying. But just understand, there's not a sin that a Christian can commit that would separate them from the love of God. You cannot lose your salvation if you're a Christian, no matter what you do. To say it another way, looking at a different perspective, God's Word is clear that there's an unpardonable sin.

[11 : 56] And we've taught on this already, but I believe very strongly that the unpardonable sin is basically a rejection of Jesus Christ that persists until you die. And it's a denial of the Spirit's affirmation that Jesus is who He said He is.

So you're blaspheming the Holy Spirit because you're denying His affirmation that Jesus is the Son of God. He is God incarnate. And so, if you live your life and you reject Jesus, there is no payment for that sin.

That's the one sin that will condemn you, ultimately, to hell. Now, if God's Word says there's one unpardonable sin, and it didn't mention suicide, right, we can already make an application or implication from that.

Let me say it a different way. I've already acknowledged that suicide is sin, but you have to understand as well that it is a sin that the blood of Jesus is sufficient to cover.

In other words, Jesus' blood can cover the sin. So when we make statements like, well, if someone commits suicide, then they're eternally damned to hell, even if they were previously a Christian, what we're saying is that this action by man is so powerful that Jesus' blood can't cover that.

[13 : 12] God cannot pay for that sin. And I think that is a gross misunderstanding of the power of man and the power of God. And so we have to understand that the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cover all our sins.

past, present, future. Again, that doesn't mean that we should just go on sinning because Jesus' blood covers it. We should not. But when we do sin, we have an advocate on our behalf with God the Father, don't we?

We have the blood of Jesus that covers us from all our sins. Let me just take a biblical, historical example. You have a man like David who didn't commit suicide but who commits murder after he obviously is walking with the Lord.

He has a heart that loves God, delights in the Lord, and yet he has Uriah killed. I mean, he essentially commits murder himself and he's guilty before God.

And God doesn't cast him off, which, interestingly enough, I believe is David's fear because of what he's seen happen with Saul already. He prays in Psalm 51, take not your Holy Spirit from me.

[14 : 27] But God doesn't. There's consequences for his sin. But God forgives him. And so, here's an example of a Christian who commits murder who God forgives.

Again, you understand God's Word doesn't condone it, neither am I condoning it and saying, oh, it's okay to commit murder. It's not. But it's also, we have to understand that Jesus' blood covers our sin.

None of your sin is okay. And yet Jesus' blood covers it. And then let me say as well that as we talk about this, we have to understand if we hold this and we understand this rightly, this also means that some Christians have committed suicide.

We just have to acknowledge it's happened. And I believe, even though that has happened, that they are with the Lord today. Let me give one example.

I heard, and I don't remember the pastor, and I probably wouldn't name him if I did, but I did hear of a Reformed pastor who committed suicide. And sometime afterward, they discovered that one of the side effects of the medication he was taking for something like blood pressure was depression, severe depression, and suicidal thoughts.

[15 : 36] And it came on after taking this medication. It seems likely that a side effect of a medication he was taking ultimately resulted in him feeling these thoughts and actually killing himself.

That does not condemn him eternally to hell. And I think even to proclaim such would be a cruel misunderstanding of the Word of God. But let me just be clear as well that we live in a fallen world. You guys understand this. One of the consequences of living in a fallen world is sin, disease, and all the outworking of life in a fallen world.

Some of you started your garden every year. I tell you, those briars and thistles, right? It's part of the fall. But what's so interesting to me is that in our culture, and let me be more specific, probably more in the church, we can accept that our gardens are going to have weeds and thistles, our bodies will have cancer and other diseases, but we can't acknowledge that our brain can be diseased.

That there are legitimate chemical imbalances that happen in people's brains because of the fall, not because of their control. And that there are some people who physically are tormented with depression.

[16 : 55] There have been great Christians like David Brainerd and William Cooper who God has used powerfully who struggled with deep, dark depression, probably more than Luther to an extent.

And God used them powerfully. But I want you to understand that if that happens, genuine clinical depression, I think it's a part of the fall. It's not just, oh, a person thought they were sad and were looking for an easy way out.

That may be the case at times. I don't know. But we also have to understand that some people have this like they have cancer. And so, I think we have to be understanding of this and at the same time say, that doesn't mean it's okay.

But I think we do need to understand that that doesn't mean that someone's eternally condemned. And that changes how we bring comfort to a family. We don't mourn as those who have no hope. We have to understand that this happens.

And I think as well, we need, if we're aware of this, we ought to seek to be a help to people who are struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts and not, it'd be a stigma. Or think that they're somehow sinfully rebelling against God.

[18 : 01] It may just be that they need help. Now, that was my side application. But I think it's relevant as we come to passages like this that we discuss these things. Let's move back to Judas for a minute and talk about what we see in Judas.

And my second point really in the message is that regret versus repentance. What is the difference and what do we see in Judas? Well, verse 3 tells us that Jesus' condemnation brings a positive response in Judas.

Now, I went back and I read verses 1 and 2 because I think it's relevant to the story. In verses 1 through 2, we see, again, the public religious trial. Remember last week we talked about there were three parts of religious trial.

We see the public religious trial. And in the public religious trial, Jesus is publicly condemned to death. And so Judas either witnesses this, he's aware of it, but for some reason, whatever the reason, when he's aware that the trial has ended and Jesus has been condemned to death, things

sink in with Judas.

He realizes what happened. Verse 3, then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind. It's something about seeing the condemnation.

[19 : 20] I don't know what Judas expected was going to happen when he betrayed him to the Sanhedrin. What did he think was going to happen? But when he sees it's going to end in death, he now regrets what he's done.

He changes his mind and he tries to return the money that he's paid. I don't know what he expected here. Maybe it's just he felt guilty and wanted to rid himself of any association with the guilt.

Obviously, I don't guess he thought that the returning of the 30 pieces of silver were going to somehow undo what's been done. Never mind. I'll take it back. Keep your money. I'll keep my testimony. It's too late at that point as they acknowledge to him.

And it's also significant that in verse 4 he acknowledges that he sinned. I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. He acknowledges that he sinned. He also acknowledges that Jesus is innocent.

We'll come back in a little bit and look at the innocence of Jesus in this.

But he acknowledges that he sinned. And so, he changes his mind about betraying Jesus. He regrets doing it and he acknowledges that he sinned. Is that repentance?

[20 : 27] Is there a change in him? Well, I don't think that's what it is. I don't think Judas' response ended in repentance.

He seems to have felt guilty for what he did. Maybe he even feels shame or feels ashamed of what he's done. But it doesn't seem to end in repentance.

Now, there's a few reasons I come to this conclusion. One is, the Greek word that's used here for change of mind, we would expect would be *metanoia*, which is what's generally translated as repented.

But Matthew intentionally chooses a different word for change of mind to make sure or make clear to the reader, even though he changed his decision, he regrets what he's done, it wasn't a repentance change.

And so, I think the Greek wording even is significant that Matthew's trying to point out to us or make a distinction. He may have changed or felt guilty for what he did, but he didn't repent of what he's done.

[21 : 30] William Henderson says, a basic change of heart and mind he did not experience. But the feeling of guilt and fear of what might be the result for himself made it impossible for him to face the future.

Which, Henderson's getting even into why the suicide? Well, he understands what he's done. He knows Jesus to be innocent. He's betrayed him to death. You have to wonder to some extent, like the demons even, does he understand that Jesus is the Christ even though he's not willing to bow the knee to him?

Even though he's not willing to worship him or follow him, does he know Jesus to be the Messiah, God incarnate? And now he's betrayed him to death, what is there left for me?

And even then to the question of how can I ever face the future? How can I go on living knowing I've done this? I would go further and say that repentance would have resulted in seeking forgiveness and mercy.

Not just for Judas, but for all of us, what does repentance look like? Repentance is going to Jesus Christ. It's going to him. And interestingly enough, Judas goes and maybe tries to make restitution or change the situation with the Sanhedrin, but he doesn't go to Christ for forgiveness, for mercy.

[22 : 53] Another way of saying this is knowing that you're a sinner is not enough for repentance if you don't go to Jesus Christ. There will be plenty of people who will acknowledge that I've sinned, that I've done wrong in my life, but they don't go to Christ for forgiveness, for mercy, for salvation and grace.

And their end is no better than Judas's. In their end, they're condemned much as I believe Judas was. So we can say regret and guilt for sin is not the same thing as repentance.

This will be relevant probably for us as a church oftentimes in terms of church discipline.

Sometimes people get called in their sin and they feel bad that they got called. You understand feeling bad that you got called and wishing you wouldn't have done it even because you got called is not the same thing as repentance and changing and going to the Lord for forgiveness.

And the reality is that in those situations, had you not gotten called, you'd probably still be doing it. But we understand there's a difference. In Judas's encounter with the chief priest and the elders of the Sanhedrin and in his hanging himself, what I believe is going on is Judas is attempting to make atonement.

Judas is trying to pay for his sins. How can I make up for what I've done? Well, I can give the money back, I can acknowledge he's innocent, and I can kill myself. But you guys understand that doesn't work, does it?

[24 : 42] In many ways, what Judas is doing, I would argue, is the opposite of repentance. Repentance looks to Jesus Christ and says, I've sinned and I can't pay for it.

I need the blood of Jesus Christ to cover me for my sins. And I believe what we see Judas doing is acknowledging I've sinned and then how do I pay for it? That's not repentance.

repentance. No one can pay for their own sins. True repentance looks to the atonement that's already been made in Jesus Christ or for Judas, looks to Christ who's in the process of making atonement for sin.

And the reality is that for those who will not put their trust in Jesus Christ, God's word is clear that it means an eternity in hell. And an eternity in hell is not enough to make atonement for your sin.

And if you can't do it in an eternity, there's no hope for any of us in this life that we're going to make atonement for our sins. There's nothing we can do. We've talked about before, we know that there are people who say, well, my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds.

[25 : 58] 51% is not the passing grade for God. Right? We have to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect. And how many of us are perfect?

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So what hope is there? Our hope is in looking to the perfection of another. Jesus is perfect righteousness and obedience.

And for the atonement that He makes for our sins. His blood that covers all our sins. And again, that's not what I see happening in Judas. But I want to encourage you today that our only hope is to look to the finished work of Jesus Christ.

To hope in what He's done. Even as we sing, what can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Nothing can for sin atone. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. So a little bit later as we sing that hymn, think on that. Do we really believe that to be true?

[27 : 02] Or do we imagine that there's something else that can wash away our sins? There's something else that can make us whole. That there's something else that can atone for our sins other than the blood of Jesus.

Do we really believe that there's nothing but the blood of Jesus? Thirdly and finally, I want us to consider briefly, how did this happen to Judas?

Judas? How did Judas get here? How did Judas go from being a disciple, a follower of Jesus Christ, to being the one who betrayed him and ultimately to such despair that he commits suicide? Well, I think we see things get progressively worse for Judas. Or in other words, we can see ways that he slips and heads down a road that he never recovered from.

First, we know that there's greed and a love for money. And I think we have to conclude with that there's a love for the world because I think those two can never be separated.

[28 : 02] There's a worldliness in Judas. There's a love for money and the things that money can buy. We're told in the gospel that he was embezzling money from the joint money that Jesus and the disciples kept for their expenses.

He was stealing money from them. And then we have that classic example that we looked at a few weeks ago where Mary preparing Jesus for burial breaks some perfume, some ointment over Jesus that's worth close to a year's wages.

\$30,000, \$40,000 in today's money maybe. And remember, Judas is upset. And God's word makes clear to us it's not just that he's upset that this was a poor use of something so valuable.

His argument is why wasn't this sold in the money given to the poor? And chief on the list of the poor is who? Judas. Right? We're told he said this because he had control of the money bag and he used to take from the money bag.

So man, we put a whole year's salary, \$40,000 in there or whatever. We put some serious money in there. You guys aren't going to know if I'm pulling a little bit off the top here and there. And so Judas, we see, is upset for that.

[29 : 16] And you understand that that greed then influences how he judges things. Mary comes and offers this sacrifice, this great financial sacrifice to prepare Jesus for burial since there will be no chance of preparing for burial because he's going to be resurrected.

They couldn't do it on the Sabbath and by the time the Sabbath is over he's resurrected. And so this is the one chance of preparing for burial and Mary does what's right. Judas opposes it, opposes what's right and what's good to Christ because why?

He hoped to financially gain from it. And then we see as well that he sided against Jesus with those who were evil, those who were in opposition to Jesus.

He betrays Jesus to the Sanhedrin. You know, it's interesting as we look at this that he goes to them and he confesses this. Look at verse 4. He went to them, he gave them the money, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

They said, what is this to us? See to it yourself. And so he's befriended, he's left the disciples, he's left Jesus behind, he's befriended the Sanhedrin. Maybe he's hoped to curry favor with them by this offering of Jesus.

[30 : 33] And then when he realizes things have gone bad, he goes to them and what sympathy does he get from him? We don't care. So what? You messed up. You did what we wanted to.

You served our purposes. Which I think really gives us a great idea of the Sanhedrin. They cared nothing for Judas. Why did they, why did they work with Judas? Because Judas did what they wanted him to do.

They cared for Judas only in so much as they could gain from it. They could get what they wanted out of it. I think, unfortunately, this is how many many in the world, maybe to some extent there's a way in which all the world works its way that for believers, it's about what can I get out of it.

And I think we're taught here some of the foolishness of Christians today who think we can befriend the world. It's going to go okay for us. We can live like the world or we can live like them or we can try to impress them or gain favor from them.

But when it gets down to it, there's no help to be offered if there's nothing we can give them. So they care nothing as well for the truth. Jesus actually admits he's innocent.

[31 : 41] You know, there's no moment where they say, really? You lied to him? He's innocent? Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, wait a minute. Let's retrial the case. Let's stop right here.

I know we just condemned him to death, but if he's innocent, we don't want to condemn an innocent man to blood, to death. You guys know all about today how there's people who, there's people in death row and there are people who are going and they're trying to find DNA evidence to see if there's innocent people there that we can rescue them off of death row.

The Sanhedrin just got evidence. Jesus is innocent. We don't care. They're not looking to change because it serves their purpose. And so in the larger story and what is being communicated to us here, we've seen over and over again that Jesus has been shown to be innocent.

And it's affirmed here. And when we see the response, the religious, the religious leaders in Jerusalem are the ones who are being treated as wicked. They're the ones who are wicked or evil. Jesus is the one who's innocent. And so we're taught, I think, to be careful in whom you place your trust and to realize that, use a slippery slope analogy, that's how sin works.

[32 : 57] Sometimes we think, oh, this is just a small sin. But I think probably when Judas first stole the money, he thought, no big deal, I could use this to buy something. I need a little help paying the rent. I don't know what his argument was, but he had a reason for it originally, I'm sure.

But by the end, he found himself opposing God and the kingdom, which my guess was never his intention at the beginning. And finally, he betrays Jesus to the point that he facilitates Jesus' death. As we talked about, he understood that what he did was wrong, but he didn't repent. And I want to communicate to you all that there's hope for Judas up until the point of death.

I think none of us are so lost that there's no hope for repentance. Judas has betrayed the Son of God, God incarnate, to death, and had he repented, there's salvation to be had.

Jesus' blood can cover that sin as well, but he doesn't. And so in the end, I think he's condemned. Let me close just making a few final applications for us.

[34 : 06] One, I think we see the sovereignty of God in all of this. Even Judas' betrayal of Jesus to death, God's sovereign over because it's God's plan, it's God's purpose to bring Jesus to the cross.

Look at verses 9-10. This is speaking of Judas' death and the buying of the field and the naming of the field and all this. And it says, Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah,

saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him, on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field as the Lord directed me. And so, two things here. One is, this was prophesied beforehand. God's not surprised. Jesus wasn't taken off guard.

Oops! I thought I was going to conquer Rome and it didn't work out. No. This was the plan. Jesus, excuse me, God the Father had prophesied this through Jeremiah.

Zechariah has very close parallel to some of the things that are being said here as well. And so, God foretold this was going to happen. And then we see at the very end of verse 10, as the Lord directed me.

[35 : 21] So, the Sanhedrin, who we've already argued are the evil, wicked ones in the story, they're in opposition to God and they put the Son of God to death. And yet, God is directing even their steps.

So, they name the field what they name it. They buy the field. They bury people there. All this was according to God's plan and His direction. And so, again, we're reminded of the sovereignty of God in this.

Which is huge as we move toward the cross. Jesus isn't the victim. This is God's plan. I almost want to say, Satan's the victim.

He's the one who loses the battle here. We're the one who receive the gain. Even though the Sanhedrin think they're the ones who are receiving the gain. We're the ones who receive the blessing through salvation. Secondly, I told you we'd come back to this, but we see the innocence of Jesus.

The disciple who betrayed Jesus acknowledged he was innocent or sinless to those who would kill him. So, the one testimony, remember we talked about the testimony they finally condemned him for is that he said he destroyed the temple, which meant his own body.

[36 : 31] That's no sin. And the one person who's accused him of doing wrong, who's betrayed him, has now acknowledged he was innocent. And we see further on that Pilate does the same thing.

This is from John 19, 4-6, but the government or the civil trial of Jesus, Judas, excuse me, Pilate went out again and said to them, see I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.

So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, behold the man. When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, crucify him, crucify him.

Pilate said to them, take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him. So we see Pilate, we see Judas, both confirming they can find no guilt in him.

He's an innocent man. Think about it as well, Judas had been with Jesus almost every hour of every day for three years. There's a few times where Jesus goes off with three disciples, or goes off on himself on the mountain to pray, but other than that, they've been traveling together, living together for three years.

[37 : 41] How long would it take you guys, you probably don't know the answer to this, I can answer it pretty, how long would it take you guys if you decided you were going to come live with me and travel with me for a few years to have something of which you could accuse me of?

You wouldn't make it to the day, right? I'm a sinner. Your pastor's not perfect. Don't expect me to be. All of us sin. Right? There's not anybody that we can hang out with for three years and not find them to be sinners.

I don't think Caleb and Pamela are back yet from their honeymoon. They just recently got married.

You know, sometimes when you get married you think that the person you're marrying can do no wrong. Right? How long did it take after you're married and live together that you realize, wait a minute, I didn't know that this was true about them before we got married.

Right? We all begin to see, and it's good for our sanctification, right? Our spouse, we begin to see in our spouse their sin, and we show it to them, hopefully graciously, kindly. And they'd show it to us and hopefully God uses that to sanctify us.

But Judas was with Jesus for three years and at the end of three years he can say, he's innocent. There's nothing in him. There's no sin in him.

[38 : 49] There's nothing that can condemn him. And if anyone could come up with a charge against Jesus, it was Judas. Right? They go to all these false witnesses to come up with some charge and there's Judas who ultimately proclaims him to be innocent.

That's his final confession. He's about to go hang himself. His final confession is that Jesus is innocent. And as I've said already, I think this is one of the major overarching points to this section of Matthew as we come nearer and nearer to the cross.

Almost every section we've looked at there's been some affirmation of that. One, that God's sovereignly leading us to this point. But two, that Jesus is innocent. He's not deserving of what it is he's facing that he's innocent.

And then three, this is my final application. Just want to question you all and put this before you. Here's Judas, a man who walked with Jesus for three years, who was a disciple of Jesus outwardly, a follower of Jesus but not one inwardly, spiritually.

And you guys remember we looked at it last week or the week before, we looked at the fact, maybe even a few weeks ago, that Jesus tells the disciples, one of you will betray me.

[39 : 59] And there wasn't one disciple who said, it's Judas. You can just tell. He's obviously not a Christian in this group. Right? He deceived those around him. To some extent, I imagine he deceived himself.

And so the question for all of us, I think, as we look at this section, is to ask ourselves, are you sure that you're a follower of Jesus Christ? Are you sure that you're a follower of Jesus Christ?

This is James Montgomery Boyce. He says, this is a warning to us that it is possible to spend much time in Jesus' company, hearing the best of sermons, and even witnessing an abundance of miracles, and still perish.

It is an encouragement to do what Peter, aware of his own weakness, urged his hearers to do.

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.

For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way, there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And so, we ought to be encouraged from what we see in this story to make our calling and election sure.

[41 : 10] Are you sure that you're a Christian today? Do you know for a fact that you're a Christian? Have you seen your sin? And have you felt the guilt of that sin?

And if you have, where did you go with that? Have you gone to Jesus? Have you taken it to the cross? Have you looked to the blood of Jesus to cover you for that sin? Have you sought forgiveness and mercy from Christ?

Or have you hoped to deal with it yourself or maybe even hide it? I think we should remember as we move toward the cross that the point of Jesus is going to the cross is to die for sins.

And we could probably say with Paul, of whom I'm chief. Right? And so, there's not one of us who doesn't need for our sins to be covered. Mercy, forgiveness, and salvation are found only in Jesus Christ.

And so, as we continue in the book of Matthew and see Jesus going to the cross, think on that. Pray over that. Look to Jesus and find forgiveness and mercy, grace, and salvation in Him and in His finished work of the cross.

[42 : 18] Let's pray together. Amen. Dear Heavenly Father, we ask that You would be with us now as we contemplate, as we ponder Your Word, as Your Spirit continues to apply it to our heart.

Lord, we pray that we'd be like Peter who also sinned in denying Jesus Christ, but who goes to Jesus and seeks forgiveness and finds it in Christ and ends up being a pillar of the church.

And Lord, that we would not be like Judas who, though he knows his sin and his guilt against his innocent or the innocent Lord that he yet doesn't repent.

He takes his own life to avoid dealing with what needed to be done. Lord, we pray that You would work in our hearts that we would be reconciled to You through the blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Lord, we think as well of that subject we touched on today as well with suicide. Lord, we pray that You would work in those who are depressed, that You would bring them out of it, that You would help us to care for those in our congregation and love them and seek to minister to them and not just ostracize or judge or think worse of them because of their frailties, their struggles.

[43 : 33] Lord, that we would help, that we would serve them and Lord, that You would work to bring them out of that, that it would not be the end that Judas faced. And Lord, we pray more than just a physical end of suicide.

Lord, we pray as well that there would be none in this room who would face the spiritual end that Judas faced of an eternity in hell. Lord, we pray even now that You would pluck out of the fire those who have not yet repented, that You would save them and that they would trust in Christ.

We pray this all in His name. Amen. Amen. Our closing hymn is 307. As we attend there, the words of Pastor Chad echoing in our mind.

Lord, what is Your hope in? What are You trusting in for Your salvation? God has decreed and planned from all eternity to send a Savior and His blood washes us from every stain.

Let's stand and sing number 307, Nothing But the Blood. God has decreed and washed away by sin Nothing but the blood of Jesus What can make me whole again Nothing but the blood of Jesus O precious is the hope that makes me white as snow No other found I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus For my blessing is the hope nothing but the blood of Jesus For my pardon is my fee

[45 : 35] Nothing but the blood of Jesus O precious is the hope that makes me white as snow No other of God I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus Nothing but the blood of Jesus Nothing but the blood of Jesus Nothing more and the blood of Jesus Nothing but the blood of Jesus Not of the blood that I have come Nothing but the blood of Jesus O precious O precious is the flow that makes me right as flow.

No other count alone, nothing but the blood of Jesus. This is all my hope and peace, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my righteousness, nothing but the blood of Jesus. O precious is the flow that makes me right as flow.

No other count alone, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Now my lips have overcome, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Now my lips have reached my home, nothing but the blood of Jesus. O precious is the flow that makes me right as flow.

[47 : 31] No other count alone, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Now may the Lord be peace himself.

Give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with you all. Amen.