

Matthew 26:1–25 | “The Glorious King Will Die?”
Preached on July 14, 2024 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles to Matthew 26, and we will be in verses 1–25 this morning. *[pause]*

Have you ever heard something that was utterly shocking because it seemed like it was impossible? *[pause]*

Imagine if you heard that an Olympic swimmer lost to an 8 year old in a swimming contest, and it's not like they let the 8 year old win, either. *[pause]*

You would be astonished, and it would be hard to believe. *[pause]*

Or picture hearing that someone with a Ph.D. in rocket science took a middle school level test and failed.

You probably wouldn't believe it at all. *[pause]*

This is because those things seem to clash with reality...

An Olympic swimmer losing to an 8 year old?

A person with a Ph.D. failing an easy exam?

It all seems unthinkable to happen to such people because of *who they are*. *[pauseeee]*

Well that's a little like what we find in our passage today. *[pause]*

Back in Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus told us all about how He will come on the clouds with power and glory, and He would cause all tribes of the earth to mourn. *[pause]*

He will come with the angels and sit on His glorious throne.

And that's not all, for He is the one who will be the ultimate judge, having the authority and right to send some people to eternal life and others to eternal fire. *[pause]*

And now, immediately after all of that high Christology of Jesus as King, Lord, and Judge, we hear how this great Christ is going to die. *[pauseeee]*

So the returning, glorious King and Judge will be delivered over to be crucified?!

It doesn't seem to make sense or match what we just learned.

It seems all incongruous with reality, like an Olympic swimmer being defeated by a child.

Yet it's true—the great King and Judge would go on to die. *[pauseeee]*

We are so used to knowing of Christ crucified that we forget how truly shocking it would be to hear this before it happened. *[pause]*

No wonder Jesus' disciples couldn't make sense of all of this "death-talk" in their minds, and why it was so hard for them to believe it until it happened. *[pauseeee]*

The one who would sit on His glorious throne someday is the same King who would hang on a cross. *[pauseeeee]*

Let's look at the passage together. *[READ]*

These verses emphasize Jesus' death, and the first thing that we see is that...

I. Jesus knew about His death and willingly went!

In these verses, we see that Jesus most definitely knew about His impending death before it happened. *[pause]*

The first thing we see is that He gives specific details about His death.

He says to His disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified." *[pause]*

Isn't that amazing?

Before He died, He knew both *when* and *how* He would die, and shared it with His disciples. *[pauseee]*

For us, our future death is a mystery.

We definitely don't know when, nor do we have any certainty how we will die.

Yet He points out that He's going to be delivered over to be crucified at Passover time. *[pause]*

That just goes to show us Jesus' supernatural knowledge.

He was no mere man, but the God-man.

He was God, who took on flesh, and dwelt among us.¹ *[pauseeee]*

We see that Jesus even knew that He would be betrayed, and He knew *who* would betray Him. *[pause]*

In verse 21 he states, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

And then when Judas asks Him if it is him, Jesus answers, "You have said so." *[pauseeee]*

Jesus has such great knowledge and control!

¹ A reference to John 1:14.

And if He has such knowledge of the timing and method of His death, do you really think that He doesn't know what you are going through? *[pause]*

Do you really think that He's caught unaware by your trials and hardships? *[pause]*

Do you really think that He's just as surprised as you about something that happened to you? *[pause]*

No, the Christ who knew beforehand about his betrayal and death, knows about you and what you face. *[pauseeeee]*

Now Jesus knew all of this and went forward, for His death was according to God's special, redemptive plan. *[pause]*

As Jesus says in verse 24, "The Son of Man goes as it is written of him."

His death would fulfill prophecy. *[pauseeee]*

Jesus' crucifixion was no accident or mishap.

It was no wrench in the plan of God, but the very plan of God. *[pause]*

Jesus came to die for us.

And we are eternally blessed that the Son of Man *went* as it was written of Him. *[pause]*

It all happened according to plan.

As Jesus points out in His Passover instructions in verse 18, "My time is at hand."

He had a redemptive work to do and at that point, it was time. *[pauseeee]*

Do we realize that this God and that this Christ is the same God and Christ that we serve and follow today? *[pause]*

If He could know, be in control of, and fulfill such things as the timing and method of His death, then why do we fret? *[pause]*

Why do we act like things are "out of control"?

Don't we realize that as God's people, there is ultimately no situation or time that is truly out of control? *[pause]*

Let's start living more like our God truly is sovereign and knows all things! *[pauseeeee]*

Now it's one thing to know about something painful beforehand, but it's another to then go ahead with it willingly. *[pause]*

For us, it's not often that we willingly go *towards* pain and discomfort. *[pause]*

In our culture, we are all about avoiding pain and discomfort at *all* costs.

Just think about how every product is marketed as bringing you more convenience, more comfort, or a more carefree life. *[pause]*

Rarely do we hear, “This is going to cause you more discomfort, but it will be so much better for you.” *[pause]*

You market like that in our world, and you’d be out of business in no time.

Yet with Jesus, He knew what great pain, trouble, and hardship awaited Him, yet He willingly went. *[pause]*

He had time to escape, but He didn’t.

He had time to think of a plan to thwart His arrest, but He didn’t. *[pause]*

Jesus didn’t avoid death, but went willingly for us.

He knew that it would all be worth it.

The plan of God had to be fulfilled, redemption had to be accomplished, and forgiveness extended. *[pauseeee]*

Out of love, He stepped towards the cross, fully aware that crucifixion awaited Him.

And He did it all for us—what amazing love! *[pause]*

As one song called, “Love of God,” says, “It’s so good I almost can’t believe it. Far beyond what hearts could ever dream.

The God who set the galaxies in motion, would descend to give His life for me.”² *[pauseeeee]*

We also see in this passage that God’s purposes go forward even amidst great evil. *[pause]*

Here were men plotting evil, yet even their plotting would accomplish what God wanted. *[pause]*

In verses 3–5, we see the religious leaders of Israel plotting behind-the-scenes to kill Jesus. *[pause]*

These are supposed to be the most godly people of Israel, yet they are determined to kill, and to do it sneakily. *[pause]*

Their wickedness is seen in full color, and the contrast between them and Jesus couldn’t be more clear. *[pause]*

² “Love of God” sung by Brandon Lake & Phil Wickham.

He did nothing wrong, yet they are scheming together to kill, which is directly against God's Law.

And He submits to God the Father perfectly, while they fear men over God as is seen in how they are willing to kill Jesus, but afraid of causing an uproar among the people. *[pauseee]*

God's purposes go forward even amid great evil!

All of their evil scheming walked right into the hand of God. *[pauseee]*

Notice also that even the horrific betrayal of Judas fulfilled His Word. *[pause]*

Here was a man who had spent years with Jesus—seeing His life, ministry, miracles, and teaching.

He had all the evidence in front of Him of who Jesus was. *[pause]*

He was even someone who ate with Jesus, dipping his hand in the dish with Him, which showed in that day close association.

Yet even through all of that, Judas betrayed Him?! *[pauseee]*

His betrayal was sneaky, as He conspired behind-the-scenes with the chief priests to deliver Him over. *[pause]*

His betrayal was also for a cheap price, and it just goes to show Judas' greed and self-seeking nature. *[pause]*

Back in Exodus 21:32, we are told that the price of a slave who is killed by an ox was 30 shekels of silver.

So essentially, Judas betrays Jesus for the price of a slave. *[pauseee]*

His betrayal was utterly terrible, and Judas' hardened heart is seen by him being unmoved by all of the circumstances found here.

And his low view of Jesus is seen in how the disciples each ask, "Is it I, Lord?" but Judas can only ask, "Is it I, Rabbi?" *[pause]*

He can't call Jesus "Lord" because He wasn't Lord to Judas.

And though Judas got paid a price by betraying Jesus, it would be Judas who would pay the highest price.

For as Jesus says, "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." *[pauseee]*

Amidst all of Judas' horrible betrayal, though, the Lord was in control.

So even though evil men try their hardest, even their evil plays right into the good plan of God.
[pause]

What hope, comfort, and peace that this can give us! *[pause]*

The hardships we face are not unforeseen accidents.

The evil that the world does is not unexpected trouble.

But God knows and is in control, as is proved in the death of Jesus. *[pauseeee]*

We don't always understand how this can be, and we have our own pile of questions each asking, "why?", but we can rest assured that God knows and is in control.

He never wonders "why?" and in that knowledge we can rest. *[pauseee]*

So may we trust Him in every moment, remembering how even Jesus' death fulfilled God's plan.

And so we can rest in the control of God, and rejoice in the love of God that Jesus would *know* about His death and willingly *go* to His death for us. *[pauseeee]*

That leads me right into point 2...

II. Jesus' great sacrifice for us ought to lead us to sacrifice all for Him.

Have you ever heard the phrase, "a rose between two thorns"? *[pause]*

We usually use that phrase when we are talking about someone who is virtuous and good, but who is among people who are not. *[pauseeee]*

Well as you look at these stories, we find a rose among thorns. *[pause]*

At the beginning of our passage, you find the evil religious leaders plotting to arrest and kill Jesus.

And at the end of what we are looking at this morning, you find the treacherous Judas planning his betrayal.

But in between these evil men (who are like thorns) is a rose, who shines forth with godly beauty.

And it is the woman with the alabaster flask, who pours ointment upon Jesus' head. *[pauseeee]*

While the religious leaders are willing to kill Jesus in secret, this woman is willing to show great love and devotion to Jesus in front of others. *[pause]*

While Judas is willing to betray Jesus to gain money, this woman is willing to give up her money by sacrificing her expensive ointment for Jesus. *[pauseeee]*

Let me first recap the story...

While Jesus is at a house, a woman comes in with this alabaster flask filled with expensive ointment and pours it on his head. *[pause]*

Now to us, this sounds like a strange thing to do, for we don't do this for others in our day.

But in that day, it was a common occurrence to do this for a guest. *[pause]*

It showed great respect and courtesy to someone.

The ointment would refresh the person's dry skin, help them to smell better in a day when baths didn't happen as often as today, and would lead the person to look better, too. *[pause]*

Yet the disciples get upset at this, but they don't get upset at the fact *that* she did this, but at the fact of how *expensive* it was. *[pause]*

In Mark's parallel account, we are told that this ointment could have been sold for 300 denarii, which is close to about a year's worth of wages!³ *[pause]*

To put that into context, the average American salary is about \$59,000 a year, so that's like an ointment costing 50 to 60 thousand dollars in today's money. *[pause]*

That's crazy to think about, and that's why the disciples are shocked by this act, and say that this money could have been given to the poor. *[pause]*

But Jesus responds by basically telling them that they shouldn't bother this woman, for what she did was good and beautiful.

It was fitting, for He says, "You always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial." *[pauseeee]*

Jesus accepted the expensive act that she did for Him, for He is worth it. *[pause]*

He was not just some random Joe off of the street, but is the Son of God and the Son of Man.

And as Jesus points out, this act pointed forward to His death, as it prepared His body for burial. *[pauseeee]*

He and His death are of utmost importance, and Jesus wants us to see it! *[pause]*

He is worth that much sacrifice because of who He is and what He would do through His death. *[pauseeee]*

Why wouldn't the Messiah deserve such an extravagant display of devotion and care, especially since His death and departure were looming? *[pauseeee]*

³ See Mark 14:5.

You see, the disciples' problem was that they had faulty perception. *[pause]*

They had a faulty perception of who was in their midst...

They were just thinking of him as just an ordinary person, but He wasn't. *[pause]*

They had a faulty perception of the time at hand.

For they were acting like everything was just business as usual, when Jesus just told them that He would soon be crucified. *[pauseeee]*

Like the disciples, our view of Christ and our priorities are often askew. *[pause]*

We may not say it, but what happens when you see someone sacrifice so much for Christ?

Do you ever think, "What a waste?" *[pause]*

When someone leaves their family to move overseas to be a missionary, is there even a hint of wondering if it's worth it for them to do that? *[pause]*

When someone loses their job because they did the right thing instead of following their boss's orders to lie, is that unnecessary to you? *[pause]*

When someone gives up so much time out of their week to serve in the church, do you consider even a snippet of that time as a waste? *[pauseeee]*

The woman with the alabaster flask shows us that, like her, we need to have the right perception of who Christ is. *[pauseeee]*

This woman would have never given up such costly ointment if it wasn't for her seeing Christ *as worth it all*. *[pause]*

Do you have the right perception of who Christ is?

Is He worth giving up your money for?

Is He worth giving up your time, comfort, or job for? *[pauseeeee]*

This lady sacrificed a lot of money by doing this for Jesus. *[pause]*

She could have thought of hundreds of other ways to use the money that this ointment could have sold for.

She could have probably even tried to justify each of them in her mind, yet in devotion, she was willing to sacrifice so much for Christ. *[pause]*

It's not that she was giving something to Jesus that would last a long time, either, for she was doing something that was temporary.

But she saw it as worth it, for Jesus was worth it. *[pauseeee]*

While Judas thought about what he could *get* from using Jesus, this woman thought about what she could *give* to Jesus.

And I fear that we lean way too much on the side of what we can GET from Jesus, while paying little regard for what we can GIVE to Jesus. *[pause]*

Of course we receive so many blessings from Him, but we should never be about *using* Jesus to get, get, get.

No, our mindsets should be continually about, “What can I give to my great Lord today?” *[pauseeee]*

It wasn’t just a financial sacrifice here, either, for the woman.

This woman also sacrificed *socially*. *[pause]*

The disciples became angry at her act, and looked down upon her for something they thought was so wasteful. *[pause]*

In Mark’s account, we are told that they actually scolded her.⁴ *[pause]*

She didn’t have to do this, and risk being scoffed at and looked down upon by the people who saw her do it.

Yet Jesus was worth it all. *[pause]*

He’s worth every scoff, every act of derision, and He’s worth it even if others look down upon us and think us crazy. *[pauseeee]*

He’s worth it because what truly matters is how Jesus views us.

He disagrees with their wrong assessments, and calls our devotion to Him “beautiful”, no matter how many people call what we do “wasteful”. *[pauseeee]*

He sees what we do, knows about it, and remembers our acts of service. *[pauseeee]*

Your devotion to Christ is not wasted.

He doesn’t forget or ignore what you do for Him, for just look at how He makes it clear that this woman’s act will be remembered.

He says, “Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.” *[pause]*

⁴ See Mark 14:5.

And look—right now by reading and talking about what this woman has done, we are showing that Christ’s words came true.

We are fulfilling His words once again. *[pauseee]*

We serve a Lord, who doesn’t ignore or forget about our devotion to Him.

Rather, we serve a Lord, who recognizes and acknowledges what we do for Him.

Who is better and more worthy of following with our lives? *[pauseee]*

To put it plainly, this woman recognized the importance of Jesus and His death, and so responded with devotion. *[pause]*

His great coming sacrifice led her to sacrifice in return. *[pause]*

This all goes to show that...

Jesus willingly died for us, so He deserves our complete devotion!

Jesus knew about, was in control, and willingly died for us.

What a sacrifice! *[pause]*

He was hated by the religious leaders, who looked for ways to kill him.

He was crucified, which is a horrific way to die.

He was betrayed by one of His disciples, just imagine! *[pause]*

And yet, even though He knew all about this beforehand, He went forward, doing it for us, so that we could be forgiven, freed from sin’s enslavement, reconciled to God, and have a home in Heaven. *[pauseeee]*

In light of His great sacrifice for us, any sacrifice on our part for Him in return is *miniscule*. *[pause]*

Even a year’s worth of wages given up in a moment isn’t close to touching His costly sacrifice.

Yet in gratefulness and gratitude, love and devotion, we give Him our all. *[pauseeee]*

How do you show sacrificial love and devotion to the One who sacrificed His life for you? *[pause]*

I want you to reflect upon your life right now and think about that question...

In what ways and areas of your life do you sacrifice to Jesus in devotion to Him, and in response to His great work? *[pause]*

Is it lacking in some way?

Do you cling too tightly to your money, resources, or time? *[pauseee]*

Think about what ways you could show your devotion to Christ. *[pause]*

Could you use your time and gifts to serve Him by serving others? *[pause]*

Could you use your money in some way to aid His mission to go forward? *[pause]*

Could you use your resources in some way? *[pause]*

We don't do this simply because we are guilted into it, but like the woman in the story today, we do it willingly and eagerly, out of love and devotion to Jesus, who has done so much for us.

And the amazing thing is that when we sacrifice for Him, our acts of sacrificial love point to and reflect Jesus' great act of sacrificial love on the cross.