

Jesus Death For The Hopeless Follower

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[0 : 00] Thank you, Dahl. Thank you. We're going to be looking at Luke chapter 22. So if you have a Bible, it would be really helpful just to have the whole thing open in front of you as we do that.

But let me just give you a taste of what happens in our house on a regular basis. My wife's name is Leanna, and Leanna will often ask me to do something. And she'll come back into her room and she'll say, did you do the thing that I asked you to do? That might be booking the MOT tests, that might be clearing dishes up, that might be putting washing out, that might be hoovering carpet, that might be booking the MOT test.

And to which I more often than not will reply, sorry Leigh, I forgot I was meant to do that. I forgot I was meant to do it and there's this sense that I've let her down in what I'm doing.

Some might argue that there is a high expectation put on me and there's a lot of things to remember to do around our house. And I can say that because I'm miles away from where she is just now. But often that is because I didn't fully listen to the instructions that I was given. I may have been remembering to do it but just putting it off or being distracted by most likely my phone or my children or just neglecting doing it because I was going to do it when I was heading out later.

And that sense of that I speak of there, I think we all have at some point that we have failed to do what we're meant to do. We've been told to do something and we've failed to do that very thing.

And all the way through this passage that we read, I think that's the feeling that the disciples had.

[1 : 32] When Luke writes this he wants us to know clearly they were told to do something and time and time again they messed up in what they were doing. And the message this morning is that despite our feeling like that, despite our feeling that we have messed up, that we've made mistakes, that in light of all of that Jesus still comes.

He takes the cup that we are meant to take and he shows his complete love and kindness to us in doing that. What we're going to see this morning is there's two kind of parts to all of this. If you look at the verses, verses 41 down to 44, that's like the centerpiece of our passage and it's looking at Jesus, looking at what he has done for us, looking at the agony that he goes through.

And then the rest of the passage I think is all structured in a way to show us what the disciples are like in light of that. So we've got two points. The first one is looking at Jesus in verses 41 to 44, kind of the centerpiece of these passages and then the rest of it kind of works like sandwiches, like bread coming in as we go through the passage and it shows us what his followers are like and who it is that Jesus takes these things for.

Well, hopefully, by the end is that Jesus, what he has done is he has gone to pour out his soul to the point of death for us and when we look at ourselves, all we see is people who are weak and shameful and presumptuous sinners and he still did that for us.

The hope this morning is that we will be able to praise the Lord Jesus for what he has done, for the cup that he has taken and the cup that we didn't have to do that. So let me read verse 41 down to 44 and just get us into these verses again to see what it is that Jesus does for us that shows us his love for us.

[3 : 19] Verse 41 to 44 says this, and he withdrew from them about a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done.

And there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him and being an agony, he prayed more earnestly and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground.

And I don't know if you noticed there in verse 44, the word that he's used is agony. And what if I asked the question, what is the agony that Jesus goes through? What would you say? What would you say is the agony that he goes through? Maybe it's the agony that terrifies him so much that he

sweats drops of blood that he's pleading with his father, that he needs an angel to come and strengthen him.

What is the agony all about? Well, some might think it is the agony and the kind of anxious thought of all the pain that he was about to go through. We know that death delaying practices.

When crucifixion was one of the most cruel and deliberately death delaying practices, it was the way to get the maximum torture inflicted.

[4 : 35] That might be what we think is the agony that he looks forward to that he's terrified of. Or it might be that it is the agony of the shame that it carries, that it was one of the most extreme cases that someone was crucified.

And so for Roman citizens, they were not crucified. There was too much shame attached to it. For Jewish people, we read in Deuteronomy 21, 23, anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.

So it may be that there was the oncoming kind of pain that he was terrified of, that he was an agony for. It may be the shame that was associated with it, that it was done deliberately publicly up a mountain just outside the city for everyone to see.

But that wasn't the agony that Jesus ranked back from. The way that the Gospel writers look here, describe the crucifixion is in really matter-of-fact terms.

All it does, it says in chapter 23, is that they crucified him. In fact, all the way through all four of the Gospels, all it says is that they crucified him. And we don't get any of the gory details. We never hear about the nails that are driven through his hands, though we might picture that.

[5 : 47] Do you know when Luke's narrative of the crucifixion, there's only one mention of blood that happens? And it's here in the garden and not at the cross. So it seems that Luke, the Gospel writer, seems that he has a point, and it's not that the agony was the physical torture that was coming, though that would have been an agony.

That's not the agony that Jesus seems to be shrinking back from, this gruesome and awesome death. What Jesus speaks of is not the cross, but if you look down in verse 42, is the cup.

What he prays is this, he goes away at a stone's throw, he kneels down and prays saying, Father, if you are willing, he doesn't say remove this cross from me, it says remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. The agony that he goes through is because of a cup that is coming. And so the next question that we have is what is the cup? What is the cup that he is speaking about?

If you have a Bible, it's going to come up on the screen as well. We're going to back to the Old Testament to see what it is that Jesus is referring to. Jeremiah 25 verse 15 and 16, I'll read it from this screen. Jeremiah 25 verse 15 and 16 speaks of an anger that God has and that he's going to pour out.

[7 : 05] And this is what it says, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel said to me, take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.

When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because the sword I will send among them. The cup that he is speaking about, Psalm 75 speaks about it as well, is the cup of God's wrath.

The divine judgment that he has that is filled with wrath, that is for the wicked, that is, it speaks of glory being turned into shame. So the cup that Jesus asked to be removed is a cup of God's wrath, his judgment, that is to be poured out on sinners.

The agony that Jesus goes through as he's sitting in the garden and praying is the spiritual agony of bearing the sins of the world. Enduring the divine judgment for the which those sins deserved.

That is the agony that he goes through, not looking at the pain that is coming though that would have been an agony to behold, not the shame that is associated with it. And the cup which Jesus but is the agony of the cup that he has to drink.

[8 : 18] And the cup which Jesus our Savior drunk down to its dregs was upon the cross. That is when he takes the judgment of God that is deserved for all of us.

There's an old hymn that speaks of the agony that he goes through. And it says this, the whole entail of sin, that is the pains and agonies that would have taken the world and eternity to endure. We're all poured on him in one horrific moment. And again, the whole entail of sin, we're all poured on him in one horrific moment.

It's the agony that he almost kind of shrunk back from was that the human sin in contact with his sinless soul. And taking the wrath of God, he was to become the greatest sinner that ever was

standing before God answering for the sin of the world.

I mean, sit in that a little moment. Appreciate what it is that Jesus does for us. That he obediently willingly takes the wrath of the Father.

[9 : 31] So that you and me might never have to do that. I think what we see in the garden is the love that he has for us. The agony that Jesus faced that night.

He did so that we might never know the depths of the pains that he went through. And he didn't just take it because he had to. He took it willingly.

The wonder of the love of Jesus is this, that he went to death, not without fear, but he faced it terrified in agony.

Needing strengthening from an angel, he was terrified by what he knew and terrified by what he did not know. He took damnation lovingly and he did it always thinking about us.

What we see in this image is God's wrath being poured out on Jesus. We see his unmitigated, unrelenting love for his followers and his people. He went through all of this agony for us so that we might live.

[10 : 44] So that we might know the love that God has for us. God loved us so much that he sent his Son for us to go through this agony for us that we might know him.

I think what the garden and this prayer shows to us is the agony that he went through for us. So is his deep love. And we question that sometimes, do we not? We question, does Jesus really care about me?

We question, does he really know what's going on when he doesn't answer our prayers like we'd like? When things just seem to be getting really, really bad. But we see here, he asks for it to be removed but he says, not my will but yours be done.

And he carries on and goes and takes it. And so especially this morning as we look to take communion, I think we have to deeply understand the love that Jesus has for us.

And that's the first point but the second point is when we see what we are actually like. Because in verses 41 to 44 we see what Jesus is like and what he has done.

[11 : 55] In all of the other verses, we see the incompetency of his followers. We see just how incompetent they are, how utterly failing they are, how hopeless they are.

It only magnifies the love that Jesus has for us. Follow with me and we'll have a look at the disciples in these pictures.

In his darkest moments, we see that they are just like I am when my wife tells me to do things. They fail time and time again.

Time and time again they don't do it. What we see here is a portrait of what we are actually like.

Because I wonder if you are like me, sometimes when we think of how we are doing compared to other people, we always will put ourselves as the middle, we are the average.

There are people who are far better than us, there are people who are far worse. When we think of money, I like to joke with my in-laws about it, is that they will always tell me that they aren't that rich.

[12 : 59] They are watch online probably, they will always tell me they are not that rich, because they will tell me that there are people who are far richer than them and there are people that are less rich. And I will do the same and I will say, No, no but I am not that rich because there are people that are this much richer than I am and there are people that are much less rich than I am and we do this where we stand before God will say that there are people who are worse than me, and there are people who are better than me.

What we see here in these verses is that all of us are utterly hopeless, utterly failing in our following of God. And so what we see in these verses is the absurdity of the followers of Jesus.

And we see the first one in verse 31 to 34. We see Peter, as he stands up, he kind of says that he's gonna stand up for Jesus. You probably have a friend just like this, I have one.

And Jesus says, you are gonna betray me, Peter. And Peter stands up, chest puffed out, and says, verse 33, Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.

I am ready to die for you, he says. To which Jesus responds, I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day until you deny me three times.

[14 : 09] And so the question is, how does Peter fare in this task? Does he stand up to prison guards and tell him that he loves Jesus and he follows him? Do they stand up and say, I am ready to die for you, Jesus, in front of everyone?

Absolutely not, because the way that this sandwich works is you have verse 31 to 34, and then you have verse 54 to 62, and they hang together, because he says he's not gonna fail him.

Where does he succumb to this? By a warm little fire, with a little girl standing there, who interrogates him, says verse 55, when they kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down, Peter sat down among them, then a servant girl seeing him as he sat in the light, looking at him, closely said, this man also was with him.

And he comes along, woman, I do not know him. Then again, we have number two, who comes along, a little later, someone else said to him, you are also one of them, and Peter said, man, I am not.

And then verse 59, and I think that the timestamp is deliberately put in. I wonder if Peter, as Luke was writing this, stands over his shoulder and says, you need to show them how ridiculous I was. [15:25] Because it tells exactly what happens, an interval of about an hour went by, so you can only imagine that Peter is standing there, staring into the fire, thinking I've denied Jesus two times, I need to stand up to him next time.

He has an hour as he mulls through all of this. And then verse 59, certainly this man was with him, for he too is a Galilean. But Peter said, man, I do not know what you're talking about.

What we see here in the followers of Jesus, the people who were closest to him, is their disloyalty, is their betrayal, it goes as he that he was like that, that he stood up, and part of us can sit and think, how ridiculous is he that he was like that?

That he stood up and said, I'm going to stand up for you. And yet this is a portrait for all of us, is it not? How many times have you been asked what you're doing on a Sunday morning, what you did at the weekend?

And you could so easily tell them you went to church. Or how many times have you been asked, or people have been speaking about the Christian faith, and they ask you directly, or they just talk about it around you, and you want to say something, but your tongue kind of swells to three times the size, and you just kind of stutter and mumble, and kind of fall flat on your face.

[16:41] We might not be denying Jesus in the face of death in prison, but we certainly are not the most loyal of followers, when the sweats come on, and the heat of the question arises.

We feel like utter failures, and completely lacking in our ability to follow him. That's just the first sandwich, look at the second sandwich, it kind of comes in, the next one comes again, the next we have verse 35 to 38, and then verse 47 to 52, they kind of hang together as the steps come in. What happens in verse 35 to 38, Jesus tells them that he's going to get arrested. Then verse 47 to 52, Jesus is arrested. And I think what we're going to see in this is just the disorder and chaos of the followers of Jesus.

That as he's arrested, verse 49, those around him, one of them says, Lord shall we strike with the sword, and without even giving an opportunity for a response, lops off the ear of one of the guards, one of the servants.

We might not see just the chaos of it all, the kind of asking of a question, the unthinking striking of the sword. And all this kind of speaks to the idea that there's a surprise, that Jesus didn't know what was coming.

[17:59] That they want to follow Jesus all the way to death, and yet as soon as the first difficulty comes up, they react instinctively, they're volatile, they're not following as they should.

And can we not relate to this? I mean, I doubt you have lopped off anyone's ear with a sword. But there have definitely been times I imagine, because I can see it in my own life, where I want to speak up for Jesus to only end up hurting someone in the process.

Or I want to show the kindness of Jesus to someone, and only make the whole thing worse as I do it. I want to speak truth, but I speak it at the wrong time, to the wrong person, not being fully aware of the circumstances and putting your foot in.

I don't know if that's something that you can relate to. Where you're trying to do good, but you mess up, I think of a kind of pastoral sensitive situation that I was involved in a number of years ago, and I was trying to show support and love to this person, and ended up telling them something they actually didn't know already, which only made the situation worse.

They brought more pain, they felt hurt and rejected. There are times where we as followers of Jesus, even in trying to do the best things, like this disciple, end up making the whole thing worse.

[19:23] And then the final step in, verse 39 and 40 and verse 45 and 46. If the first one is about the betrayal of the disciples, if the second is just about their volatility, the third is just their inability to

do anything that they're meant to do.

Look at verse 39 and 40, and you could pay it to verse 45 and 46. Verse 39 and 40, and he came out and went as was accustomed to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him, and when he came to the place he said to them, pray in prayer, verse 45, enter into temptation.

And then after Jesus' prayer, verse 45, when he rose from prayer, he came to his disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow. And he said to them, why are you sleeping?

Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation. And the hour of Jesus' need and the agony, he comes back to his followers who are fast asleep, totally unable to do anything that he says.

They can't even stay awake for him. Is this not just like us? Now, there are not times where you have vowed really hard to read your Bible every day, to pray just a little bit more, to meet up regularly, maybe in prayer groups, to start reading books with people, or even just be better at doing that within your own family.

[20 : 46] And within a week, not even under any pressure, just the way that life has gone, we see our own inability, that we fall flat.

And just like the disciples, we're fast asleep, struggling even to stay awake through all of this. As we read this, we're many just see that all of us are utter failures, that we're hopeless, even with our best intentions.

All of us struggle to live up to the standards of our wives, or our husbands, or friends, or our family, but before our holy God, we have all totally and utterly failed. As we thought of the ineptitude of the followers, we are Peter who kind of struggles to do what it is he's meant to do.

We're the hapless followers who act rashly and sensitively to the fact that we're not in the midst of it.

We're rashly and sensitively, we're the sleeping followers as our savior goes through the trials and the difficulties and deep grief.

And this morning, it's important to focus on, because we're many sitting that, we're many sit in the pain of that, the sorrow of our soul, of our own inability to do these things. But we're also meant to rise out of it.

[22 : 02] The communion table, the Lord's table, is a table that shows us that there is a joy in what went on that night, a joy for us because of what Jesus went through.

He says in verse 37, he was numbered among the transgressors. That we see this right in the middle of the verse is that Jesus is right among sinners. The beauty of this passage is we come closer and closer to the middle of it is that the main person in view is not us but him, because he took the cup for us.

The joy of the communion is that he took the cup that we can have this one, that we might never know the wrath despite our failings. We might never know what it was to have gone through what he went through that night and on the cross, despite all of our failings.

When we take communion, we're drinking of the cup of forgiveness. We're going to feel the weight of our sin, but also the joy that we drink this cup and not the other one.

The joy that this shows us, the love that Jesus has for us, that when we fall down, he picks us up.

That when we weep and despair at our own sin, it is his shoulder we cry on.

[23 : 28] That he heals the wrongs that we might have done knowingly or unknowingly. He took our grief, our sorrow, and he took it willingly. He's not surprised by your sin.

He knows what we are like at our very worst. Getting ready to take communion as we're sitting here for us. He dies for us not as we were sitting here in church getting ready to take communion as we're sitting here taking prayer meeting.

He dies for us at our very, very worst, knowing what we were like, knowing how sinful we were, knowing how helpless we were, how far short of his standards.

There's not something you can do as a sinner, that as a Christian, that will ever make Jesus kind of double back in thinking he needs to return what it is he has bought.

He saw us at our very worst in our helpless state, in our utter incompetence. And the communion table is the evidence of that for us. In his prayer that night, we see the love that God has for us.

[24 : 35] In his death, we see the love that Jesus has for us. And in the meal that we have, we see the love that he has for us that he went through all of this for me and for you.

When we drink the communion table, we are not meant to drink of the cup, thinking of ourselves and wallowing in the sin that we have committed. I mean, that only just shows kind of our self-absorbed minds that we would want to do that again.

We are to sit in the sorrow and the sin of what we have been like. But we drink it knowing that our Savior loves us so much knowing all of that, that he would want to have a meal with us. That he would want to drink with us and eat with us. If you trust in the Lord Jesus, you are deserving of eating of this bread and drinking of this cup of forgiveness because the cup of wrath has been drunk on your behalf.

Jesus knew exactly what we're like. Jesus knew what his followers were like and he went through all of that, which shows his great love for us. Let's pray. Loving Heavenly Father, we have thought this morning of the depth of our sin, of how incompetent we are in following, of how hopeless we are when we try in our own strength, of the times that we are in the midst of sin, of the times that we fail time and time and time again.

[26 : 22] And we pray, Lord God, that we would make every effort to walk away from the sin that hold on to us. But Lord God, help us to see what it is that Jesus has done for us.

The freedom that is bought at the cross, that we are able to wallow and then rise with joy. Because the wrath that was deserved for us has fallen on him.

And the joy and inheritance that is his is now ours. Help us this morning to trust fully in the Lord Jesus and all that he has done for us.

Amen.