Prayer of Agony

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Preacher: Steven Miller

[0:00] Good morning, everyone. Thanks, Ed. I really appreciate that.! This morning our passage is Matthew 26, 36 through 56.

! I ask you to turn there in your mouth. I ask you also to stand for the reading of God's Word if you're able to. Let me pray for the reading of teaching.
Lord, thank you for your Word. Thank you for the guidance that you give us. Thank you that you stand with us in our prayers.
Thank you for the comfort that you give. Lord, I pray as we look at your Word, as we look at Jesus at a low point, and then the high point through prayer, pray that you would just guide and instruct us, pray that your Spirit would speak to us, and we would all look a little more like you after this. Amen. Alright, Matthew 26, 36 through 56. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, sit here while I go over there and pray.
[1:22] And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch with me.

And going a little farther, he fell on his face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping.
And he said to Peter, So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were had them. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to his disciples and said to them, Sleep, take your rest, lay it alone. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
[2:25] Rise, let us be done. See, my betrayer is at hand. While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and gloves, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, The one I will kiss is the man. Seize him. And he came up to Jesus at once, and said, Greetings, Rabbi. And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, Friend, do what you came to do.
Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus, and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand, drew his sword, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.
Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father if you will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so? At that hour, Jesus said to the crowds, Have you come out again?
Have you come out as against a robber with swords and gloves to capture me? Day after day, I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.
[3:37] Then all the disciples left and fled. This is God's holy and thoroughbred word. Please be seated. Layoffs in white-collar companies have been rampant in the 2020s.

I know a number of brothers and sisters in our church who have been in companies where they happened, and working ten years in tech, I've probably been through four or five myself, depending on how you can. Personally, I don't think I've ever heard a strong justification for layoffs as an

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employee that sits right with me.
No matter what the financials are or the company needs are said to be, the fact at the end of the day is that people lose their livelihoods with little say in the end. One of the worst industries for layoffs in recent years have been video games.
Reports say that one in three American game developers have been laid off in the past five years.
In the midst of all this, an old news story featuring Satoru Iwata, former Nintendo president, has been making the rounds.
Back in the early 2010s, Nintendo was struggling with sales with their new console lineup. Instead of layoffs, President Iwata and his team took a 50% pay cut in 2011, and then again in 2014, and opted to trust in the current team to pull through.
[4:53] The shareholders naturally had questions, and when they asked about why, this was his answer. If we reduce the number of employees for better short-term financial results, employing morale will decrease, and I sincerely doubt employees whose fear they may be laid off will be able to develop software titles that can impress people around the world.

And partly due to a lot of business decisions, Nintendo is one of the most successful game companies today, as my kids can also address when something goes wrong.
When things go wrong, studies show we humans are likely to blame anything but ourselves. This is what makes Iwata's response so strong. In a scenario where most executives choose to push consequences outward, one prominent business leader instead chose to take financial risks on himself.
And we'll see similar principles at play in our story today. The disciples are faced with a hard situation, and act like most of us will. Try to fight off or avoid a losing scenario.
We're also going to see Jesus fixing the hard situation, the hardest, in fact, in human history. And rather than exercise his rights or power to escape or defer the problem, we'll see Jesus pit a different path.
[6:16] We'll see him as the suffering king who reigns through submission. And the passage today breaks into two parts. First, we'll see Jesus in Gethsemane reigning in submission to the Father.

in trouble. Then, we'll see the suffering king in control, even in the importance of Jesus. Now, this passage starts out with Jesus and the disciples moving from the Last Supper to Gethsemane.
We know Gethsemane is an olive orchard simply because the word means olive press. And it's likely this garden is close to Jerusalem and a place that the disciples regularly go.
Otherwise, Judas wouldn't have been able to go out, gather a crowd, and then find them again so quickly any of those of the night. Jesus leaves both of the disciples in one spot and takes three with him to go pray.
These are the inner three disciples, Peter, James, and John. Quick reminder that this is Jesus' inner circle. These are the three that saw the transfiguration of Jesus.
[7:16] Peter seems to be involved in a little bit of everything. and he's walking on water and then he's sinking. And then he's being handed the keys to the kingdom and professing Jesus as Lord and then he's rebuking Jesus the next day.

And James and John, remember, were the two that asked to sit at the left and the right hand of Jesus. So it's pretty clear that they know their social standing within the circle at least to make that in the past. And so it's no wonder that Jesus brings these three close to him in one of his most difficult moments.
And commentators point out a couple things about Jesus' sorrow here. First, this is the first time in Matthew that Matthew, the author, has explicitly drawn attention to what Jesus has seen.
This is a rare time that Jesus' inner life is explicitly editorialized. Second, it's worth noting that the first words that Jesus uses to describe his sorrow are a paraphrase of Psalm 42.
Why were you cast down, oh my soul, is very similar in Greek. To, my soul, is very sorrow. But, Jesus goes even further in those words of lament and adds on the end, even to death.
[8:25] And now, I don't think he's literally saying he's going to die soon, though that is true, it's something that's coming. It seems more like he's saying the emotional weight of the scenario is so great that the turmoil itself makes him.

So, Jesus asks the Greek to remain watched. And at this point, Matthew starts intermedium the reactions of the disciples with the interactions of Jesus. And so, I'm going to split those out a little bit, and first I'm going to talk about Jesus' path in prayer, and then I'm going to talk about the

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disciples' reactions.
So, Jesus steps away to do his own watching and praying in response to his sorrow. Commentators hopefully point out that Jesus' prayer follows the pattern of the Lord's prayer. I actually have a slide for this part to make it a little more clear.
prayer. So, we'll see Jesus' prayer, my father, which is similar to our father from the Lord's prayer, relating as a child of God. Then he says, let this talk past the man, which is now to give us this day our daily bread, give me what I need in this moment.
But, only if it can possible, not as I will, but as you will, which is really similar to your kingdom come, your will be done. So, Jesus covers his own sorrow with the prayer he taught his disciples to pray.
[9:41] But the important part to this whole prayer is the copy. What is the copy? That's the thing that's overwhelming him. Is it just his forthcoming death? Is it the abandonment?

Is it the torture? Any of these things alone, I think, would cause any of us great emotional turmoil. But, the common instance specifically represents something, God's wrath.
When we talk about God's wrath, we're talking about God's just response to the wrongdoing that people incurred. There's a number of Old Testament passages that refer to the cup specifically in this web, and Jeremiah has a very succinct presentation of it.
In Jeremiah 25, 5-6, we read, Thus the Lord, the God of Israel, said to me, Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.
They shall drink and stagger and be crazed because of the sword I am sending among them. So the cup here is clearly symbolic, the wine of wrath.
[10:43] Whole nations of wrongdoers are made to drink of it. The immediately following verses to this passage are a long list of nations. Judah, Egypt, Uz, Edom, Moab, the list goes wrong.

The drunkenness symbolizes the instability and weakness brought on by the government, the sword in this case. So specifically, other nations conferring through war. God's judgment will come to those who oppose him.
This, then, is the burden that Jesus is taking on. Wrath reserved for nations full of people is coming on to one person, Jesus. Sometimes it's Christians, we think, and I know I think, Jesus died individually for my sins.
And we realize the individual burden he bears for us, and that's what we said. But, Jesus takes on the wrath of God for all who we need. For every tribe, every tongue, every nation, a great multitude, too vast account, is represented in the world.
This exponential multiplication of responsibility reminds me of how our students' responsibility naturally expand in our own lives. When you're a kid, you're responsible for yourself, sort of, but your parents are all taking on account and taking responsibility for you.
[11:58] But, then you grow up, and you age into adulthood, and you end up taking on more and more responsibilities. Homework, driving, work, housing, food, laundry, until eventually most of us are fully sustaining ourselves in some way or another.

Personal life, you're going to expand from this area. You get married, you have a kid, you have more kids. Now you're responsible for more than just yourself. or maybe you start a PhD, and then partway through you own a research product, and then you get the PhD, and now you're in charge of a lab.
You start as an employee at a company, you take on a bigger project, now suddenly you're ending the team. With all of these blessings come more stressors. Your day no longer just involves yourself, but affects many different lives of people who depend on you.
I think this is similar to what Jesus is experiencing. He's bearing a large little responsibility, the weight of nations. But he's going much further than what I just said.
Everything I just described is a good blessing in our lives. Jesus is only bearing judgment, only the negative aspect for all of these people, and so the weight is immense. Now, our culture tends to be uncomfortable with the wrath of God.
[13:10] God, the proposition is often like this. How is God, who is a God of all, sorry, how could a God who is love punch people?

And one of the points that people will often bring up against God's wrath is what's happening here. The Father is putting a nation's worth of wrath onto his Son. Is this some sort of cosmic child abuse at play?

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And I hear the concern. In fact, I've even seen Christian families take the principle of godly submission that's present in the Bible and what Jesus is doing here, and twist it in a manipulative way to get kids to listen to any parenting, even abusive parenting.
But there is a significant difference between horrible parenting and what's happening to Jesus here. Jesus, in full knowledge, is the one taking the cup and drinking.
He is an active participant. Note that even the difference between the language and Jeremiah, which I just read, and what Jesus says in his prayer. In Jeremiah, it says, make the nations drink the cup.
[14:17] In verse 42, Jesus' second prayer, Jesus is participating. He says, your will be done. Hebrews 9, 14, makes this point very clearly.

Jesus offered himself without lunch to God as a sacrifice for us. This is not a God of love, harming his son. This is Jesus, the God of love, taking punishment for us.
And I want to be clear, the cup of wrath that Jesus is talking about is not just some Old Testament thing for ancient eerie strength countries who practice child sacrifice. In Revelation 14, 10, it says that when Jesus returns to earth in glory, those who do not worship Jesus as God will drink the wine of God's wrath, pour full strength into the cup of his anger.
If you're here today and you're not a Christian, maybe you're interested in Christianity or a friend invited you, and Jesus is intriguing but not someone you personally know yet, I ask you to consider what this passage says.
God takes seriously the bad accents and words and even thoughts of every person. And I ask you to hear the good news too. God takes sin so seriously that Jesus, his son, took all judgment, all guilt, and all shame for your wrongdoings upon himself.
[15:39] For anyone who repents, turns away from the wrong things they've done, proclaims that Jesus is the king of all things, who suffered for his people, there is forgiveness for everything you've ever done, and a new life in his family in the church, the people here.

If that speaks to you right now and you have further thoughts or questions, feel free to talk to me after the service, or with our prayer today, who will be up after the service, or honestly any of our members here. We'd love to introduce you to this Jesus who actively died for you.
Now, we know what the cup represents, so we can take a look at the entirety of Jesus' prayers. And in these prayers, we see Jesus growing in submission to and confidence in the Father's plan of salvation.
commentators note the difference between the two prayers that Jesus offers in itself. In the first prayer, we see Jesus ask a more positive plan, if it is possible for the cup to pass, an open question, a sign of exploration.
In the second prayer, we see Jesus instead consider that if it is not possible, the realization becomes that he must take this cup in order to save his people.
[16:53] And in total, we see three prayers, a sign of certainty and confidence that this thing will be done. We will see this confirming pattern of three actions just a bit later. Peter is going to deny Jesus three times, making clear his betrayal.

But in this act of three, we see Jesus fully submitting to the Father and fully owning the work to come. Now, we've seen Jesus in his prayer, submitting himself to the Father and building confidence and certainty to do his life.
What about the disciples? Well, we've been bouncing around, so let's go back and reread verses 40 to 41. Verse 40 says, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, So, you could not offer me one hour?
Watch and pray, but you may not enter into temptation. The spirit in he is will, but the flesh is weak. Okay, there are some passages in the Bible I relate with, and this is one thing.
I'm a light sleeper, but I fall asleep everywhere. I don't sleep on planes, cars, my work desk. My work desk, when I'm calls the customers, we have videos of kids screaming around me or stacking toys on me while I'm napping on the couch.
[18:03] I can easily imagine sitting down to pray, but it's late at night, we're exhausted, and, wait, is Jesus back already? Oh, it's been an hour? But Jesus comes back and emphasizes the importance of prayer, once again stealing a line from his own playbook in the Lord's prayer, keep us from temptation.

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What's the temptation to sin here? When I first read this passage, I assumed that the sin was thoughtlessly, because Jesus is looking for prayer support from his best friends. Hey, guys, I'm literally about to die a double death for the sins of the world.
Could you spare me one prayer? However, when Matthew says the flesh is weak here, commentators note that flesh does not mean something morally wrong. This isn't Paul, right?
Paul in his letters often uses flesh to indicate sin. Instead, in Matthew, it seems much more likely to indicate just the natural difficulties of being human. This has already been a long back to the disciples.
The Passover meal that ate likely started after sundown, so now it's really late. Jesus is going to die, and Jesus is left and is at least up the sun in the various. Their spirit is willing to follow Jesus in this act, but their bodies are just mortal and more.
[19:18] So the temptation and the topic of prayer is likely the same as Jesus' prayers, to be ready for the hard time that is in it. The disciples will also be faced with a scenario where falling away from God's will will be very easy, and they need to pray.

This also makes sense of why Jesus needs to pray. He's human as well. His flesh is also moving. And after the prayer, we'll see the stark contrast in how the disciples react and how Jesus reacts to his arrest.
Jesus, after prayer, is about to take full control of the situation, while the disciples, after an app or two, are about to flounder through a fighting light mode. That's it.
Prayer is preparation for trials. It reminds me of something a few of us in the church that does this journey, which is wake up early, drive down to Harvard Stadium, and run the stairs.
For those that don't know, the Harvard Stadium is an outdoor one, like a coliseum with one open end. There's 37 seconds, over a thousand stairs, and they're almost twice the size in the whole step.
[20:22] And the exercise between there is to go up and down, almost all of them. For those that are excited about this, it's cool. It's gorgeous, it's a sunrise, it's a strong workout, come with the group sometime.

For those who think that sounds terrible, you're also correct. So for me, I've gone a few times. I can do the full round of stairs in about 50 minutes, which is fine, and I've never improved my time ever because I've gone to this for out.
In contrast, Sean, our pastor, has been going weekly, and he's told me after months, he's down from the 50 minutes, even some of our long distance runners in this church.
Now, I do not expect myself to improve without going regularly, and neither does anybody else. We all know it takes preparation. Practice restraining the muscles necessary to endure and then go faster.
Prayer is the same here. Jesus has run the medical stairs, and the disciples have stayed home and slept in it. We should not expect them to perform well at this upcoming challenge.
[21:29] One commentator, Dr. Grant Osborne, says on the difference between flesh and spirit here, for Jesus, the spirit has made the flesh strong, and for the disciples, the flesh has made their spirit be.

And this is a great reminder for us of the importance and power of prayer in our own lives. One of my favorite parts of community group over the years is seeing things we pray for get answered. In the last year or smaller, we've seen a healthy new baby corner, multiple new jobs acquired, including one just a few days ago, a couple near misses from financial stresses, at least a couple friends led to saving faith in Jesus, and multiple healings, all made possible through praying, we end, we go.
But we've also seen those prayers sustain and grow people through those hard moments. Job searches are wrong, recovery from injury is tedious, financial distress is very concerning. God has grown all of us in patience and perseverance, even as his answers and prayers themselves.
In the last few years in my own personal life, I've started noticing that I have roughly two bodies, things that I pray for and things that I don't regularly pray for. For example, for years as an adult, I did not have a regular prayer habit for my studies or my career.
First, I rarely prayed about college, and then I rarely prayed about grad school, and then I rarely prayed about work. I've been thinking of so many stressful situations in those years that I did not handle well, because I let my class make my spirit.

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[22:57] The last couple years though, I started praying for work more regularly, and goodness, this is being recorded, and I'm a manager at my company, so I'm not sure I want to share too much, but I've seen so many things resolved this past year, so many issues, just work out, so many tough situations are to teach, and I wonder if God's changed me too, because the part of my work hasn't necessarily become any easier, but some of my responses seem to change for the best.

Now, I'm definitely not bragging here, I just spent the first part talking about how I barely pray for very important things for a large time of month, but I'm encouraging you to stop and think, are there areas in your life you're not praying about?
A job? A relationship? A project? A family member? A financial need? A physical family? I'm actually really encouraged by what Rona and Lauren shared this point as well, and I think that helps you be willing to pray for us because of the part that you're going from.
Remember, the flesh is weak. I think it's incredibly easy to not pray about something, and it's incredibly hard to pray about something, but assuming that you'll be prepared for trials without prayer is like me assuming I'm going to cut my stairs time and half without practice.
So start eating today a quick prayer, or ask others to pray for you after you. So, after the final time to pray for Jesus and the final time sleeping for his disciples, Judas comes and we see the suffering king now in heaven.
[24:23] Verse 47 shows us Judas arriving, leading the way of an armed and seemingly ready-to-be violent mom. Judas likely kisses and calls Jesus rabbi in verse 48 as says to identify him, you know, picture maybe a dark room with some bubble cakes for people so that they know exactly who they're coming to see.

In this context, calling Jesus rabbi sound irreverential, but it's actually an implicit denial of who Jesus is. And all the rest of his disciples consistently call Jesus Lord, even Peter who is about to be praying.
Jesus actually responds in kind. He calls Judas friend, which seems familiar, but it's actually a pretty alienated word. The word friend here is basically someone who has a relationship, but is not holding up their end of the bargain.
friend. We've actually seen this word used in a couple parables already, and I have a slide for a cross comparison. Friend shows up in Matthew 20, the parable where the master gives the same wages to everyone, regardless of if they work the whole day or just evening.
When the workers from the whole day complain, hey, we're going to pay the same amount as the people who overwork a part of the day, the master specifically says, friend, I do who you know about.
[25:42] And in Matthew 22, when everyone is invited to the wedding feast and the king catches someone without a wedding garment, he calls him, friend, how did you get in here without a garment? Right before you take some of the best.

So right after Jesus kisses him and identifies him, note that Jesus is the one who takes control. It's kind of all of it. Jesus basically says to Judas, okay, you can betray her now.
Judas, with the money in the bag and the mom behind him, still is taking orders from Jesus. And we're going to see Jesus take this same path as everyone in this passage. Jesus may be the one taken away, but he is fooling by his power and is in his own hand.
So after this, a disciple lunges out and cuts off the servant, the high priest's here. This is the fight part of the fight or flight reaction of the disciples. They clearly are not going to Jesus or themselves be taken away, so they react quickly when the suddenly sees Jesus.
But a servant seems like a random action. Was the disciples attacking the person nearest to them or maybe flailing around with the sword? Note that it says the servant of the high priest.
[26:49] Given that the mob is organized by the chief priest and Pharisees, this guy is likely the representative of the high priest and thus actually the one you target the mob. I'm picturing the disciples trying to end this quickly, striking the leader to stay on the group.

Again, note that Jesus specifically takes control of the situation. We have an entire mob, arms to the teeth, watch the people that come to arrest draw a sword and their leader take a brutal inquiry. You'd expect an instant call of arms, perfect opportunity. The boss is hit, cut down the traitors, taking them alive. But there's no retaliation. Jesus steps in and he's the one who rebuked the disciples here.

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He gives a few reasons for this review. First, the inherent truth that violence begins. He warns them, this pattern of following, it may seem right in this moment, but it is inherently self-starved.
This is totally in line with Jesus in Matthew so far, flipping the script entirely on the palliation. He's made statements such as, love your enemies, and don't resist the one who is healed.
[27:51] Jesus is not saying, hey guys, fools are cool, but this is a special moment, so let's this one fly. He's giving a cautionary statement against violence that is in line with all those teachings so far.

For a second reason not to resist, Jesus assures the disciples that there's a fact, no need for force. Do you think I cannot appeal to my father and people at once send me more than 12 legions of angels?
Now, there's an interesting number stuff here. 12 legions is probably about 60,000 angels, depending on the count of legions at the time. So at first this reads like he's saying, okay, we've got the mob, 100 people guys, but I've got tens of thousands of angels who were good.
But I want you to think for a minute, how strong are angels compared to humans? Who would win this fight is a plot exercise that is beloved by internet forums and YouTube alike.
Who would win Batman versus Superman, 100 men versus one world? And I joke, but the Bible is seriously interested in asymmetrical power stories to specifically prove that God gets the victory.
[28:57] It's tiny David versus large life. It's Gideon with his 300 men versus an army of thousands. But again, note that these are all human versus human conflicts.

There's a few times when angels fight humans. Sorry, let me rephrase that. There's a few times when a single angel completely obliterates humans. Listen, for example, to 2 Kings 1935.
And that night, the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the canopy of the earth. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.
So one angel wiped out the day. One angel keeps all of humanity out of the garden after the fall. One angel kills all of the firstborn in Egypt. In physical warfare, there is no amount of humans stand a chance to get even a single angel sent in this door.
In this case, Jesus is saying, I have 60,000 angels in my heart. Jesus is in control here. Third, Jesus mentions that everything happening is in order to fulfill scripture.
[30:02] And he'll say that to the mob again in a minute. Keep in mind, I'm not quite sure what properties Jesus has in mind here. a couple of close ones to exactly what's happening are Isaiah 53, 12, which we read a little bit of earlier, where Jesus is numbered with the lawbreakers, he's being arrested, and died for our sinners.

Or Zechariah 13, 7-9, where the shepherd is struck and the sheep are scattered. The disciples are about to run away. But this is likely just the sense that everything Jesus is doing is a fulfillment of all God's promises.
And this scene is just one small part. Finally, we see Jesus in charge of the crowd as well. In fact, he sort of blocks them. He's been out invisible plenty of times, teaching in the temple during the day.
Why not arrest the non-fair to be such a criminal? But even their cowardice plays in the fulfillment of the scripture. The disciples clearly do not understand even after all.
If they can't fight back, what can they do? In the end, they do the opposite of what Jesus asks. They leave, and they leave. instead of remaining and watching. And that makes the question, what should the disciples have done exactly?
[31:12] What would it look like specifically to resist temptation in this scenario? And we already know the answer. Some of you, when I was talking about the cup earlier, were probably thinking, wait, we've talked about the cup before.

In Matthew 20, remember, James and John, the two of the three in a circle, asked if they could sit in the left and the right hand, and oh, Jesus was thrown in heaven. And listen to Jesus' response. in Matthew 20, 22-23.
Jesus answered, you do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They said to him, we're able. He said to them, you will drink my cup, but the sit at my left and my right hand is not lying to me.
the cup for Jesus specifically, clearly means more than what it means to the disciples. Jesus will bear punishment due to his people, and he will do it by submitting the Father's plan.

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But it's also clear that his followers were called to take the cup as well. In this case, the disciples could have stayed with Jesus rather than fighting it or clean. What would they have faced? Trial? [32:15] Mockery? Maybe even death? It's obviously kind of hard to say. They don't seem in any actual dating period in the encounter as the crowd never acted out and only ever seen this Jesus. But this is still what they should have been praying to prepare for.

The strength to drink the cup. And the three eventually end up doing it anyway. James is executed an axe, Peter later on, and John is exiled for the end of his life. In fact, the early church fathers specifically described Peter's martyrdom as drinking the cup of Jesus.
This is our counterintuitive call, in the face of difficulty to stay with our suffering king. But what does that look like for us? Maybe someone here, or a few people here, there may be legitimate risk of hostility from a foreign nation or even from your own family.
I suspect, though, for most of us, unless something changes drastically, the United States is a legally safe place, if not an empowering place, to practice Christianity. You may not always feel it here in Boston, but I have other friends who look in other cities in the U.S.
where there's a truth on every block, as they describe it. Does that mean we're exempt from bearing the cup? Well, when Jesus is discussing blessings in exchange for difficulties earlier on in Matthew and the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, blessed are you when others revile you and persevere you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
[33:39] And I think we do face this kind of resistance, the reviling and uttering evil parts, in our post-Christian culture. I like to talk to one pastor to find post-Christian culture. Post-Christian culture wants the kingdom without the king.

People long to the morals, the ethics, and the justice that Jesus brings, but want to shrug Jesus entirely. So, when we add spiritual conversation to something that could remain secular, we often get pushback.
Ross doubt that a journalist in the New York Times highlighted an example of post-Christian secularization in 2019, when the table of Notre Dame burned down. At that time, he wrote, there's a palpable desire to claim the still-smoking Notre Dame for some abstract idea of liberal monarchy, to imagine how a cathedral might be reconstructingly somehow more secular and cosmopolitan, more of a cathedral for our multicultural times.
This seems strange, since as Ben Sixthman, another journalist, noted, it never crossed anyone's mind to suggest that Mecca, the Golden Temple, can lose their distinctively Islamic and secret characteristics, to accommodate people of different things.
But an ancient, famous Catholic cathedral is instinctively understood as somehow the common property of an officially post-Catholic world, especially when the opportunity suddenly arises to wednesday.
[34:57] And I think we all feel this extends somewhat to our personal lives. There's plenty of social situations where discussing Jesus would fit naturally. What am I interested in? What's my hobby? What did I do last weekend?

The only thing that makes giving the spiritual answer in this scenario difficult is the unspoken cultural expectation that the abstract values of Christianity are finally discussed, justice, spiritual exploration in community, but not the specific content, Jesus' prayer, attending worship.
And honestly, I'm proud of the brothers in this church that have faced ridicule for being open and specific about their faith in Jesus. I know a couple brothers who have been explicit about their beliefs to their bosses and co-workers, and have received either subtle pushback or even mockery in the tasks of God.
I know another brother who used to attend our church that lost friends because of sticking to principles of his faith. Those friends wanted him to specifically break with some of his own personal beliefs to support activities that they were doing, and when our brother wouldn't compromise, he lost the friendships.
We even got a prayer request from a sister in the church in Slack literally right around the time I was iterating on this part of the sermon. I'll keep her anonymous to recording, but last week she requested prayer and boldness for sharing her faith with an atheist friend.
[36:14] This atheist friend has apparently specifically cut out Christians from her life and Christians get too explosive about their faith. I think it's a big step for our sister to pray for boldness and evangelism like that and an admirable example of standing with Jesus.

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Now, isn't this a big thing for Jesus to ask all of us to give up work stability, relationships, social standing? Remember, it's not that Jesus hasn't already done for us in South.
He didn't have to take the punishment and treatment, but he chose to take the cup so that he could stand with us. May we all have the same grace as Jesus in the basics of the Bible. Let's pray.
Lord, we thank you for the reminder for the word of how you've given everything for us. And I pray that you would encourage specifically those who have given away social stability or standing or finances, whatever it might be for you.
And I pray that you would strengthen the rest of us in the rest to stand with you even when times are different. Jesus said, amen.

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