

Betrayed (Alone with the Father)

Matthew 26:20-56

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Let us pray. God, this has been a hard week. Sometimes it feels like you don't care. Why don't you hear my prayers? You don't answer. I can't sleep. You're holy and everything. (You save everybody else). But I feel like a piece of crap and everybody hates me. Amen.

Depressing, huh? Some people actually pray that way. What's wrong with it?

- It sure doesn't sound like faith, does it?
- You know Israel wandered in the wilderness 40 years because of her murmuring and complaints.
- Paul writes "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice."
- Throughout Matthew, Jesus has spoken "Blessings." Blessed means happy.

So Archbishop John Reia says, "A sad Christian is a phony Christian." A few years ago, in his newsletter, James Dobson wrote, "Of great concern, of course, is the state of the clergy itself Our surveys indicated that 80% of pastors and 84% of their spouses are discouraged or are dealing with depression."

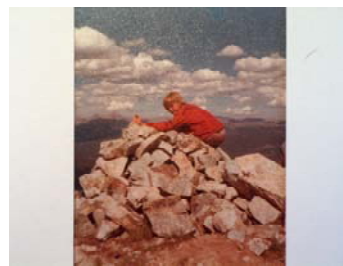
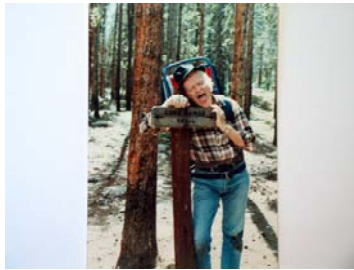
Jesus prayed that his joy might be fulfilled in us. Then He spent time alone with His Father in a garden.

[Peter sings...]

“I come to the garden alone,
while the dew is still on the roses.”

Maybe the problems with all these depressed pastors and sad Christians is that they don't take time to be alone with their Father. When I was a kid my greatest joy would come from times alone with my Dad. He was a busy pastor so time alone with him was precious.

This is a picture of Dad.



Some of our best times were alone together in the wilderness. It was our garden. This is me on Peak 1 above Frisco. We climbed it 3 or 4 times together. My greatest joy would come from time alone with Dad.

Have you spent time alone with your Father?
Maybe if you're sad, you're not with Him. Maybe all these

depressed pastors aren't with Him and so, aren't anointed, but powerless, faithless, and negative.

No wonder the church in America is shrinking. We need leaders full of faith—positive thinkers, possibility thinkers. People like that... People want to follow that. They won't deny that or betray that.

Well, 2005 is the first year in 13 years that Lookout Mountain Community Church hasn't really grown. Maybe we need to get happy, and I've been trying. Yet all year I've been battling sorrow. I don't know what's wrong with me.

Last year my Dad died.

Matthew 26, verse 20:

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another. "Is it I, Lord?" He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. [I wonder how many actually dipped their hand in the dish?—at least one.] The Son of Man goes as it is written of him but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!" [It's necessary.] It would have been [good] for that man [or perhaps the Son of Man, as some translations have it] if that man had not been born. Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."

“You have said so.” How did he “say so?”

By calling him “Rabbi” I guess.

Everyone else calls him Lord. Rabbi means teacher of the law. Teacher of the knowledge of good and evil—the law.

Like the fruit that grew on the tree in the Garden of Eden, soon we will see a garden and soon Jesus will be nailed to a tree, cursed for His bride’s sin—the sin of Eve. Many Jews believed that Jerusalem was built on the Garden of Eden (the mountain of the Lord). The same site upon which Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac, his son. Which appears to be, like, a violation of just about every ethical law we could imagine. It’s what Kierkegaard called “the categorical suspension of the Ethical.” That is faith.

Well, whatever the case, what do you call Jesus? Rabbi or Lord? If you call him teacher, I imagine you come for the sermon, get some knowledge, and then leave. If you call Jesus Lord, I imagine you came to stay and worship and commune with his body broken and blood shed.

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread , and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of

Olives. Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away [scandalizo—be scandalized, offended] because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' [That's Zechariah who also prophesies "on that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives half will move north and half will move south. The Mountain will move.] But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Peter declared to him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away. Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times. Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!"

Peter is a positive thinker. He has faith—not in scripture, not in God's Word which Jesus just quoted. He has faith in faith—his own faith. He's a promise maker. That's what a promise is: a declaration of faith in the faithfulness of your own faith.

[Peter sings...]
 I have decided to follow Jesus.
 I have decided.
 Though none go with me
 still I will follow.

Peter makes promises and oaths all over the place, this night. Soon he'll make a very different oath.

Jesus taught them, “Do not swear.” That means don’t make oaths.

Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane [Gethsemane means “olive press”. It’s where you get oil to anoint things (like the Messiah). Only God can make an olive. But the oil is extracted or revealed when the olive is crushed, pressed... like depressed. When “depressed,” the oil is “expressed.”], and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go yonder and pray.” And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

In the King James “very heavy.” Strong’s Lexicon says, “Of the three words used for depression in the New Testament this one is strongest.”

Depressed.

Now let me say, psychologists have lots of definitions for depression, and I don’t understand them. I also believe medication can be a gift directly from God. But by depression, Matthew at least means extremely sad.

Jesus had already wept at Lazarus’ funeral,
 even though He knew that He’d raise him.
 Jesus had already wept over Jerusalem
 even though He knew he’d raise her.
 Jesus said “Blessed are you who weep now.”

Maybe sorrow is not the exact opposite of joy.

He said “Blessed are those who mourn.”

That is, happy are those who grieve.

That is, express sorrow.

“He was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief.”

In the garden, He begins to be sorrowful and very heavy. Yet it was just a few minutes before that he had prayed that “His joy” would be fulfilled in them.

But now Jesus,

Messiah,

Anointed One,

perfect in faith,

is depressed.

Jesus was depressed!

And I don’t think it was wrong but right.

Perhaps my prayer wasn’t wrong but right.

People say, “I’m depressed—what’s wrong?”

Maybe it’s not wrong but right. Why do we immediately think people are wrong when they’re depressed? Maybe they are not wrong but *feeling* a wrong which is profoundly right.

Why do we immediately think people are mentally ill when they’re depressed? If Jefferson County found Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane they’d put him in a lockdown facility. They’d fix the whole thing, fix that whole crucifixion thing, then drug Jesus till he seemed happy. Fixed.

You know, maybe it's not the depressed people that are most mentally ill. Maybe it's those who never sorrow who are most mentally ill.

We live in a world
 where old men die alone in nursing homes and
 prison cells.
 Where little girls are raped, tortured, and offered to
 demons.
 A world where everything good gets crucified.
 A world where everything, *everything* dies.
 And yet almost everyone exists in denial—mentally ill.
 That's depressing.

In the garden, Jesus was depressed and He asks us to come with him, to watch and to wait.

Well, what was Jesus depressed about? At least that He was betrayed. Judas betrayed Him with a kiss, and Jesus called him friend.

It doesn't hurt so much to be betrayed by a monster. It hurts a lot to be betrayed by a friend. Jesus could have turned Judas into a monster, but He calls him "friend." That's grace. That's forgiveness, and it hurts.

Well, Jesus wasn't only betrayed by Judas. In Matthew 27:18 we read that He was "delivered" by the crowd and the Jewish leadership. "Delivered" and "betrayed" are the same word in Greek "paradidomai." So Jesus was betrayed by Judas, by the Jews, and by the Romans. Matthew 27:26, "Pilate 'delivered'(paradidomai) Him to be crucified."

Jews, Romans, Judas... they all betray Him. And He just said all His disciples—the 12, the church—would

be scandalized, offended by Him and scatter. His church would shrink to zero. This night—betrayed.

Anytime one of us in the church sins, don't we deliver Him (paradidomai) to be crucified? For He bears our sins. He didn't die for His own sins but ours.

When an unbeliever sins they may crucify him unknowingly, but we know. It must hurt to be betrayed by your bride, your children, your church.

My Dad was basically removed from two churches he loved. I know he felt betrayed. I felt betrayed. And it's not that they didn't pay him anymore. "Church" is never to be defined by paychecks. It's not that. It's that some left him when he was no longer good for something, only good for nothing—just good—beautiful.

Well, Dad was imperfect and many times pastors should be fired—but never betrayed.

I'm just saying Jesus must've really felt betrayed. How He loved them, but when He appeared to be good for nothing—just good, kalos, beautiful—they left Him. He'd been used. I think my Dad tasted his sorrow. We all can, for church is a place we often feel betrayed. For here we risk love, and yet we're all sinners.

Do you think it's a gift to taste Christ's sorrow?

Well Jesus must've felt betrayed by everyone—maybe even Himself. Galatians 2:20, "He delivered himself up for me" writes Paul. "He betrayed *himself* for me." "He who knew no sin became sin for me." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

He felt all my sin. When you see your sin, you see how horrifically you've betrayed yourself. I wonder if in that garden He was beginning to feel my sin, my sorrow.

We feel betrayed a lot.
 Sometimes it's real.
 Sometimes it's imagined.
 Sometimes we're innocent.
 Sometimes we're the cause.
 Either way, we feel betrayed.
 Either way, we're alone.
 And either way, He bears it.
 "He has borne our grief and carried our iniquities."

So whether you're Mother Teresa persecuted by pagans or a murdering crook who has drunk himself into oblivion, Jesus feels your sorrow even if you don't for your eyes are closed, and your heart is asleep.

He must've felt betrayed on behalf of everyone
 and betrayed by everything.
 When you die, your body betrays you.
 Your efforts, your work betray you.
 This world betrays you.
 To leave this world, it's necessary that it betrays you—that you die to it.
 Jesus must've felt betrayed by everything.

I wonder if He felt betrayed by God. Romans 8:32, "God 'gave him up' (paradidomai) for us all."

Do you ever feel betrayed by God? On the cross, Jesus bore your sorrow. He bore *that* sorrow.

In just a few hours He'll lift His head and cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

That's the first line of Psalm 22. This is a pretty good paraphrase of the first six verses:

God why don't you care?
 Why don't you hear my desperate prayers?
 You don't answer.
 I can't sleep.
 You're holy and everything.
 You save everybody else,
 but I feel like a piece of crap,
 and everybody hates me."

You know, maybe my prayer wasn't wrong, but holy. Holy... sacred in the right place, at the right time, in the right way—honest.

Well, the Psalm goes on to say (in verse 24), "God has not hidden his face from Him but has heard when he cried." Betrayed and alone, Jesus met the Father in the garden and on the cross. The next thing He says on the cross is, "Into your hands, I commend my spirit."¹

Footnote 1: In a garden Satan tempted man; and in a garden God tempted God. He passed in some superhuman manner through our human horror of pessimism. When the world shook and the sun was wiped out of heaven, it was not at the crucifixion, but at the cry from the cross; the cry which confessed that God was forsaken of God. And now let the revolutionists choose a creed from all the creeds and a god from all the gods of the world, carefully weighing all the gods of inevitable recurrence and of unalterable power. They will not find another god who has himself been in revolt. Nay (the matter grows too difficult for human speech), but let the atheists themselves choose a god. They will find only one divinity who ever uttered their isolation; only one religion in which God seemed for an instant to be an atheist.
 G.K. Chesterton

Well, I don't fully understand. But Jesus called to the Father from hell, and the Father heard him. Some say, "God can't look on sin." I think the truth is more like, "We can't look on God when we're in sin." Jesus was in our sin—the depths of human sorrow and blindness—and from there when all else betrayed Him, He called to the Father and met Him. In this is love—they are love.

It was necessary (it was written) that the Son of Man be betrayed. It is also written that His disciples be betrayed. Matthew 24:9, "Then they will deliver you up (betray you) to tribulation and put you to death."

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." [Watch with me. When things are painful or sad we usually close our eyes.] 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."

His cup is wine and blood, mercy and fire. It's the love of God poured out:

- As the scapegoat, He'll bear our sins to destruction so we don't have to.
- As the spotless lamb, He offers His love to the Father—body broken blood shed, perfect love, perfect gift—which is to be in us, given through us—the living sacrifice.

Jesus prays, “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 heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

What a mind boggling prayer. Have you ever thought about it?

Jesus, the Messiah, didn't want the Father's will; yet He did want the Father's will. He's divided and tempted. I wonder if He's feeling our sin.

Whatever the case,

He surrenders His wants to His Father's wants.
His will to His Father's will,
perhaps our wants and will to the Father's will.
He is our high priest (Hebrews 5).

So...

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Three times He goes to pray —like the three times He was tempted by Satan, like the three times Peter would deny Him. He's in a garden... where Eden used to be. He's the ultimate Adam, and it's like He's taking the Fruit on His Bride's behalf at His Father's bidding. And yet He is doing what we all were or are supposed to do. That is, trust God

more than our knowledge of good and evil,
more than our shame.

In the garden long ago, they hid the wound, their shame. In the garden, now He exposes the wound—our secret sorrow.

On the cross he confesses the wound.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

It is what we all most deeply fear
but are too terrified to admit.

We don't want what God wants,
and we feel ashamed,
and fear we are forsaken because of it.

When we surrender our sorrow, our shame, our wound—
 our womb, it bears fruit.
 When we hide it, we remain barren.

Jesus prays three times
 confessing His heart,
 His will,
 His sorrow.
 It hurts.

 He sweats blood.
 Three times—yet each time it's like His will looks more
 like His Father's will, like He's "learning obedience,"
 through suffering in prayer.

He'd like Peter, James, and John to be with Him
 and "to see," but they keep falling asleep. Luke says it's
 from sorrow. They're shutting down, burying their sorrow.
 It's like a mini-betrayal. It's wrong. Real betrayal is always
 wrong.

It was the wrong diagnosis and yet the perfect
 prescription. Betrayed by everyone, Jesus communed alone
 with the Father in the garden of depression, Gethsemane.

The disciples didn't watch, and yet in the end they
 saw. He was teaching them how to die. Paul writes "We
 who live are always being delivered up (paradidomai) (2
 Corinthians 4:11) to death for Jesus' sake that his life may
 manifest in our flesh."

When this whole world betrays us, including
 ourselves, there is only one way to turn, and He meets us
 there. Jesus will help us speak to Him.

You know, I said I derived great joy from being
 alone with my Dad. Yet I've realized, I was most alone
 with him in sorrow. I mean when the world would betray

me, I'd fail, friends would mock me, and I'd hate myself. Then I'd crawl up on my Father's lap and surrender my sorrow.

I realize it's always been like that with my kids. Even, maybe especially, as they've gotten older. The world works for them, but when the world betrays them, when friends betray them, sometimes even when they feel I've betrayed them—but they confess their sorrow to me, then we have the sweetest communion.

I've told you how I remember bumping into my Dad in the dark in the middle of the night during that time he felt so betrayed. He was praying—he was alone with his Father in the dark. The dark night of the soul. The more I watched and waited, the closer to him I felt and the more beautiful he appeared, and the more my father was a picture of God my real Father.

When my Father died I think my soul felt betrayed.

You know, this whole world and all that's good is a messenger of our Father's love. Yet it can take the place of our Father. It can become an idol. So through this world—through mountains, family and friends and lovers—God tells us of His love and then takes those things away. That feels like grief. But grief surrendered is hope.

So our capacity for grief becomes a capacity for unspeakable joy. See, God is growing a longing within us for Himself. God took my Father last year; yet He's showing me that He is truly my Father. I've felt betrayed a lot this year. I've felt alone and yet so with God my Father. I wake up in sorrow speaking to Him, walking with Him.

Well, He's created a longing, and He's growing a great hope, but now it often feels like grief.

Sometimes our grief, sorrow, and sadness is so great we
 deny it,
 bury it,
 close it,
 refuse to see it.

We “sleep for sorrow” as Luke puts it.
 That kind of depression is what Satan loves.
 It’s Hell—sorrow buried in a lie.

You know both Peter and Judas failed miserably and
 both saw their error.
 Both had immense sorrow.

Peter wept uncontrollably,
 and Judas hung himself.

Weeping is surrendered sorrow.
 I suspect suicide is a
 failure to weep,
 mourn,
 lament,
 confess to our Father.

Suicide, murder, rape, dissension, divorce, war...
 maybe it’s all a failure to surrender the sorrow.

It’s what scares me most in my wife and children.
 Years ago someone said something that really hurt
 Susan, my wife. I still remember sitting in my car as she
 made a vow, “They will never know how much they hurt
 me.” That terrified me. I think my deepest fear is that
 she’ll make a vow like that about me and bottle her sorrow,
 and then I’ll be cut off, and our marriage covenant will die.

So after we argue I'll try to help her speak. I'll say, "You think I'm a butthead, don't you? I was wrong, wasn't I? I am kind of a jerk. Say it." I help her speak.

You know God referred to Israel as the bride, and they fought and wrestled.² When she complained about God *away* from God, it was murmuring and dreadful sin. When she complained about God *to* God it was called worship. Written down, it became the Bible. Most of the Book of Psalms (which was the liturgy or song book of the Jews), most of the Psalms are songs of lament, and the Jews were required to sing them.

It's like God says, "Sing 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Sing it 'cause I know you think it. Don't bury your sorrow. Tell me your sorrow. In fact, I'll give you the words. No, I'll give you The Word." He'll pray it for you. He'll pray it with you. He'll pray it in you.

Footnote 2: You know Israel means one who wrestles with God. God wants a relationship bone on bone, body and blood, not pious, religious dribble. He reminds me of my son Coleman on vacation when he was little. I'd watch him in the rearview mirror of the van. He'd sit back there in his car seat, entirely bored. The other kids were in their own worlds reading books, listening to Walkmans, and so they wouldn't talk to him. He'd stare at the ceiling, look at the window, fidget, then look at his sister and just smack her.

A fight is at least a relationship,
and pain hurts less than solitary confinement—that's hell.

If Susan and I can't have a good passionate fight over our sorrows, if we can't make love that way, wrestle that way, we can't make love or wrestle the other way. If we can't trust each other with our sorrow, we can't trust each other with our pleasure. We can't commune in joy. But surrendering sorrow to the bridegroom, surrendering sorrow to the Father is scary. What if you're betrayed? It's losing your last little bit of control.

And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us full of grace.

Recently I asked a friend to pray for me 'cause I felt so on the edge. I didn't tell her any of this stuff. She wrote back, "This is what I'm hearing/sensing:"

Peter, you are going through a season of grief. The "edge" that you feel pushed toward is not related to your career or role... or anything else. It is the edge of your grief, the drop-off into what feels like a bottomless pit of sorrow. It is not bottomless. Jesus is waiting for you with His arms out to catch you. There is no job, no career, no accomplishment, even done for the purpose of glorifying God, that will fill the emptiness of this pit of sorrow. Only Jesus can fill it completely with the fullness of Himself and the Light of the presence of God the Father. Your heavenly Father wants to hold you. You keep wiggling away and getting busy, afraid if you stay in His arms long enough, you will feel the horrific pain of that empty pit. It's not empty!! Jesus is waiting for you.

Jesus is waiting for you... I believe Jesus is waiting for you in a garden, the garden of the olive press, Gethsemane. He is the Word, and He's there to help you speak to the Father. He's our high priest.

I've been grieving a few things this year, some sermons that feel like they died or weren't received. I've really been grieving the suffering of my friend from the coven—tortured, abused, thrown in the box with a corpse. I've been grieving my father's death.

After he died, I spent a few hours with his corpse but couldn't weep. But this week, I spent some time face down on my office floor. I pictured myself carrying my father's corpse into a garden and laying it at the feet of Jesus, and then we wept and sobbed and spoke our heart.

A few years ago Susan and I were praying for our friend. She'd been

betrayed by her father,
betrayed by her family,
betrayed by lying demons,
betrayed by herself.
And she felt betrayed by God.

As she told her story, I felt betrayed by God.
(The sorrow was more than I could handle.)

I remember she was lying face down on our floor in agony, moaning "I want to die." Everything was confused and to me she seemed utterly abandoned. I didn't know what to say.

Finally I said, "Pray these words." They were the only ones that seemed appropriate. I said, "Pray 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" She prayed, and then she saw Him. She was crucified with Him, and she rose with Him. In all her sorrows, Jesus had been holding her heart.

And you see, these words weren't her words or my words. They were His words.

She was united with Him in a death like His and
united with Him in a resurrection like His.

To surrender your sorrow is to
acknowledge your sorrow
and so feel your sorrow.

But if you surrender your sorrow to Jesus, it's not
your sorrow, is it? It's His. So if you still feel it, either:

- 1) You haven't really surrendered it, and it's still
yours, or
- 2) It's His, and you're feeling His sorrow. And then God
is no longer alone in your sorrow, you are alone with
Him in His sorrow. You are feeling His sorrow,
weeping His tears, and sharing His sufferings... almost
as if you are His body (body broken and blood shed).
His body made in His image, which is mercy.

What does he do when He's betrayed?
He forgives.
He bleeds mercy—the beautiful one.

One of my favorite memories of alone time with my
Dad was a summer day in the early 70's. We were climbing
Peak 1 above Frisco. Peak 1 comes to a little point—it's a
lightning rod. We were almost to the top, and it was
gorgeous awesome, but a storm came up. The rocks were
crackling. Our hair was standing on end. Lightning was
crashing all around. The weather had betrayed us.

My Dad was a safety freak, always lectured me on
safety and the danger of lightning storms. Well, I was
grieved and troubled beyond belief. I thought for sure Dad
would say, "Hightail it down the mountain and run for the

woods.” But he looked at me with these wild eyes, lightning crashing all around, his hair standing on end, and he said, “Peter... we can make it!” We can make it...

That was the day I learned from my Dad that there are some things so beautiful they’re worth dying for.

God the Father and God the Son were almost to the top of old Mount Moriah. Lightning was crashing all around. Jesus was sweating bullets. But He looked in His Father’s eyes. They were wild. His Father said, “We can make it. Let’s do the beautiful thing. Let’s forgive them all. Let’s show mercy.” So they climbed the mountain, hung on the ancient tree, and made all things new. You and your sorrow, too. But you must surrender it.

You can’t go around that cross. You can only go through it. Don’t worry. He’ll help you.

For on the night that He was betrayed, *that* night, He took bread, and He broke it saying, “This is my body, given to you. Take and eat. My body.” And the same way after supper, He took the cup, and He said, “This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you.”

So if you want Him, we invite you to come forward, tear off a piece of the bread, dip it in the cup. The black cups are wine; the purple cups are juice. They’re both blood. And as you come forward, would you worship Him? In other words, would you refer to Him as Lord? Amen.

Don’t leave.

Some of you feel betrayed. Some of you feel depressed. Some of you feel wounded. Jesus took His

sorrow to a garden and turned it into prayer. Jesus is a prayer on our behalf.

Picture Him in that garden. You're on the edge of the garden. Can you imagine the garden?

Now where's your sorrow? Is it a person? Is it a dream? Is it a failure, a betrayal, a tragedy, a sin?

Pick it up. Don't be afraid of it. And walk with it into the garden and lay it at Jesus' feet. Give it to Him.

Now speak to your Father. He'll help you speak.

Lay the corpse at Jesus' feet. Let go. Surrender it to Him. Do you not know? He can raise the dead, and He will.

And so, Lord Jesus, we thank You. Psalm 22 ends with this line, "He has done it." You have done it. The battle belongs to You, Lord Jesus, and yet You invite us, Your bride, Your children, Your body to come to that place with You. And Lord God, Your scripture says that in heaven the angels will, like, bug us. They'll be asking us, "Were you there? What was it like? You were with Him in the garden? You were with Him on a cross?"

Oh, Jesus, You have joined us with You in a death like Yours, surely we will be joined with You in a resurrection like Yours. We are Your bride, and with us You share Your glory. We praise You, Lord God. In Jesus' name.

Now before you go, Jesus said this, "You will weep, and you will lament, but your sorrow will turn into joy."

I think that means that our capacity for sorrow becomes our capacity for unspeakable joy, and that kind of turns everything on it's head, doesn't it? And so maybe

you're thinking to yourself, "Well, golly. I wish I had more sorrow."

Well, good news. This world is full of sorrow. You can weep Jesus' tears all over the place. Paul said, "Weep with those who weep." So you can go weep with them in hospital beds through HIV Care Link, with the persecuted church on the other side of the world, with your wife, your husband, your kids. But when you do it, believe the Gospel. We weep, but not as those who have no hope. We have hope, and hope will not disappoint us. In Jesus' name, believe the Gospel and live the Gospel. Amen.

Oh, let me say this, too. This is important. If you'd like prayer, I think it's important that you just stay here and pray. And so when the service ends, if you would try not to talk real loud or yell in here. You can do that outside or downstairs. If you'd like prayer, members of the prayer team will be down front, pastors in the back. They'd love to just pray with you, maybe even anoint you with oil, here in the olive press, and help you surrender your sorrow to Jesus. We need each other for that. So, continue to worship Him. In Jesus' name, worship Him.

Relevant Texts and Quotations (from bulletin)

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. . . . Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

Genesis 3:6, 3:23

And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. . . . "On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. . . . "On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. He will not put on a hairy cloak in order to deceive, but he will say, 'I am no prophet, I am a worker of the soil, for a man sold me in my youth.' ¶And if one asks him, 'What are these wounds on your back?' he will say, 'The wounds I received in the house of my friends.' "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me," declares the Lord of hosts. **Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.** . . . On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. . . . On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. . . . And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction.† Jerusalem shall dwell in security. . . . And on that day a great panic from the Lord shall fall on them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of the one will be raised against the hand of the other. Even Judah will fight against Jerusalem.

From Zechariah 12-14

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Hebrews 5:7-9

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:45

And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but 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." [*The Son of Man doth indeed go, as it hath been written concerning him, but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is delivered up! Good it were for him if that man had not been born. ~ Young's Literal Translation*] Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so." Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same. 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." And taking with

him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

Matthew 26:21-37

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. . . . Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Matthew 5:3-4, 5:11

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept.

John 11:33-35

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it.

Luke 19:41

Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."

Matthew 26:38

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Romans 12:15

We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.

Matthew 11:17

Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

James 4:9-10

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

2 Corinthians 7:10

“But please, please—won't you—can't you give me something that will cure Mother?” Up till then he had been looking at the Lion's great front feet and the huge claws on them; now, in his despair, he looked up at its face. What he saw surprised him as much as anything in his whole life. For the tawny face was bent down near his own and (wonder of wonders) great shining tears stood in the Lion's eyes. They were such big, bright tears compared with Digory's own that for a moment he felt as if the Lion must really be sorrier about his Mother than he was himself. “My son, my son,” said Aslan. “I know grief is great. Only you and I in this land know that yet. Let us be good to one another.”

C. S. Lewis, The Magician's Nephew

Thank you, Father, for these tears that have carried me to the depth of your love. How could I have known your fullness without the emptiness, your acceptance without the rejection, your forgiveness without my failure, our togetherness without that dreadful loneliness? You have brought me to Gethsemane, and oh, the joy of finding you already there! Amen.

Bonnie Barrows Thomas

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 [sick].”

Matthew 26:39-41

And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness [sick].

2 Corinthians 11:28

Despair differs from what we usually call sickness, because it is a sickness of the spirit.... God can only be met by way of despair. Alas! So many live their lives in denial, decapitated from eternity. So many are not aware of their true destiny, defrauding themselves of this most blessed of all realities.

Soren Kierkegaard, The Sickness Unto Death

But what I've discovered since is that the lifelong fear of grief keeps us in a barren, isolated place and that only grieving can heal grief; the passage of time will lessen the acuteness, but time alone, without the direct experience of grief, will not heal it.

Anne Lamott, Traveling Mercies

You can't ask Christ to come into your wound while you remain far from it. You have to go there with him. That is why we must grieve the wound. It was not your fault and it did matter. Oh what a milestone day that was for me when I simply allowed myself to say that the loss of my father *mattered*. The tears that flowed were the first I'd ever granted my wound, and they were deeply healing. All those years of sucking it up melted away in my grief. It is so important for us to grieve our wound, it is the only honest thing to do. For in grieving we admit the truth—that we were hurt by someone we loved, that we lost something very dear, and it hurt us very much. Tears are healing. They help to open and cleanse the wound. As Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*, “The tears. . . streamed down, and I let them flow as freely as they would, making of them a pillow for my heart. On them it rested.” Grief is a form of validation, it says the wound mattered.

John Eldredge, Wild at Heart

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 heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

Matthew 26:42-46

To whom do you vocalize the most intense, irrational—meaning inchoate, inarticulate—anger? Would you do so with someone who could fire you or cast you out of a cherished position or relationship? Not likely. You don't trust them—you don't believe they would endure the depths of your disappointment, confusion. . . . The person who hears your lament and far more bears your lament against them, paradoxically, is someone you deeply, wildly trust. . . . The language of

lament is oddly the shadow side of faith.

Dan Allender, quoted in The Bible Jesus Read by Philip Yancey

This Godward direction of lament is what makes it holy, what makes it powerful—ultimately, what makes it a bold step of faith. Faith is evidenced in the fact that the lament is directed toward God. It is not neat or tidy. It can be harsh and abrasive, unnerving and bitter. It is not even always true. But it is a sacred act because it takes God seriously.

Winn Collier, Restless Faith

Would we willingly join God's grace in relinquishing attachments to the beliefs and images of God that give us comfort, security, and meaning, even if we recognize how they restrict and restrain us? If we are honest, I think we have to admit that we will likely try to sabotage any movement toward true freedom. . . . To guide us toward the love that we most desire, we must be *taken* where we could not and would not go on our own. And lest we sabotage the journey, we must not know where we are going. Deep in the darkness, way beneath our senses, God is instilling "another, better love" and "deeper, more urgent longings" that empower our willingness for all the necessary relinquishments along the way. This transformative process—the freeing of love from attachment—is akin to the ancient biblical concept of salvation. Hebrew words connoting salvation often contain a root made of the letters *y* and *s*, *yodh* and *shin*. One example is the Hebrew name of Jesus, *Yeshua*, "God saves." This *y-s* root implies being set free from bondage or confinement, enabled to move freely, empowered to be and do according to one's true nature. In contrast to life-denying asceticism that advocates freedom *from* desire, Teresa and John see authentic transformation as leading to freedom *for* desire. For them, the essence of all human desire is love.

Gerald May, The Dark Night of the Soul

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:46

It is written, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." No; but the Lord thy God may tempt Himself; and it seems as if this was what happened

in Gethsemane. In a garden Satan tempted man: and in a garden God tempted God. He passed in some superhuman manner through our human horror of pessimism. When the world shook and the sun was wiped out of heaven, it was not at the crucifixion, but at the cry from the cross: the cry which confessed that God was forsaken of God. And now let the revolutionists choose a creed from all the creeds and a god from all the gods of the world, carefully weighing all the gods of inevitable recurrence and of unalterable power. They will not find another god who has himself been in revolt. Nay (the matter grows too difficult for human speech), but let the atheists themselves choose a god. They will find only one divinity who ever uttered their isolation; only one religion in which God seemed for an instant to be an atheist.

G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? . . . You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. . . . Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

Psalms 22:1a, 22:23-24, 22:30-31

Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Matthew 26:56b

Brother will deliver [betray] brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Matthew 10:21-22

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Romans 6:5

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