

Depression: Repression & Expression (The Beautiful Thing III)

Matthew 26:1-30

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Prayer

Father, Do I have to do what you're asking me to do?
Because I don't want to do it...
Father, I hate this overwhelming sadness and stress.
I want to die...
Father, why do I feel so alone—even forsaken?
Help us to preach.
In Jesus' name, Amen."

Message

Kind of depressing huh?
You want to call 911 and have me committed... huh?
Something's wrong with me huh?

"A sad Christian is a phony Christian..." wrote one of my favorite authors, quoting an Arch Bishop.

Saint Paul commanded, "*Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice.*"

In John 15, the night He is betrayed, Jesus claims that He has spoken that His joy might be in us (John 15:11).

- And then he prays that his Joy would be fulfilled in us (John 17:13).
- And then, according to all the Gospels, He spends time alone in a garden with His Father (John 18:1).

[Peter begins singing]

*"I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses...
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear, The Son of God discloses.
And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own, And the joy
we share as we tarry there, None other has ever known."*

Maybe I need to spend time alone with my Father in His Garden.

Below is a picture of my Father



(I'm sorry it's grainy. It's all I've got now)

This is my Dad on the trail to Upper Cataract Lake in the Gore Range Wilderness area sometime in the early 70's

The Wilderness was our garden. And my happiest times, as a kid, were times alone with my father in our wilderness garden.



This is a picture of me—that my father must've taken.

This is the top of Peak One

[Picture of Peak One]

Peak One is the peak directly above our old cabin site in Frisco.

Well in our text this evening/morning Jesus goes to the garden and spends time alone with His Father.

He goes to the garden of Gethsemane and prays,
"Do I have to do what you're asking me to do?"

In just a few hours, he'll go to another garden,
 Where He will be nailed to a tree and from the tree He will pray,
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Isaiah and the Revelation, refer to the cross as a winepress.

- In a winepress, grapes are crushed.
- Grapes are depressed or compressed, until wine is expressed.

Gethsemane means “Olive Press” and John tells us that Gethsemane was also a Garden.

- In an Olive press, olives are crushed.
- Olives are depressed or compressed, until oil is expressed.

Our text this evening/morning immediately follows

1. The story of the Strange Woman who anoints Jesus with fragrant oil—that would be olive oil mixed with the most costly of spices. And then
2. The institution of the Lord’s Supper—which is communion.

And that’s what we preached on in our last two messages:

1. How the Strange Woman broke the earthen vessel, the alabaster flask, to pour the fragrant oil on Jesus’ head. And
2. How Jesus breaks bread calling it His body—His earthen vessel—and pours wine into a cup another earthen vessel.

Judas and the disciples think it’s all a waste.

But Jesus calls the woman’s deed a beautiful thing.

And Jesus is the Beautiful One and does the “beautiful thing.”

Broken alabaster flask and fragrant oil,
Broken body and Holy Communion,
And now Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane.



I took this picture about ten years ago in the Garden of Gethsemane.¹
The church of all nations is next to the Garden.

¹ Scientist say that some of these olive trees are at least nine-hundred years old and the root system may go back to the time of Christ.



This is a sign that hangs on the wall of the church next to the garden.

“Please: No Explanations inside the church.”

I took the picture cause I thought it was funny.

But now I suspect it's profound.

I can't explain what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane.

But it did happen and it's the Truth.

So think of me as a tour guide... I can't explain, but I can point and you can watch.

Matthew 26: 26-31

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 (which in Hebrew often meant all) ... 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.” [Same cup, but that day will be a wedding day...] 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...

Scripture makes it clear that it wasn't just Judas that betrayed Jesus.

The word translated “betrayed,” is also translated hand over or deliver. Saint Paul wrote, “I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that on the night Jesus was delivered, he took bread and broke it...” He's pointing out that coming to the table is confessing the sin of betraying Jesus, who, as Paul teaches is our Husband.

The name Judas is literally Judah, from whence we get the word “Jew.”

And let me remind you that a Christian is a Jew, wed to the King of the Jews.

In the Old Testament God refers to the Jews and Jerusalem as His Bride— who has made herself a whore. It's the Messiah's harlot/bride that betrays Him, and delivers Him up to crucifixion on a tree in the Garden.

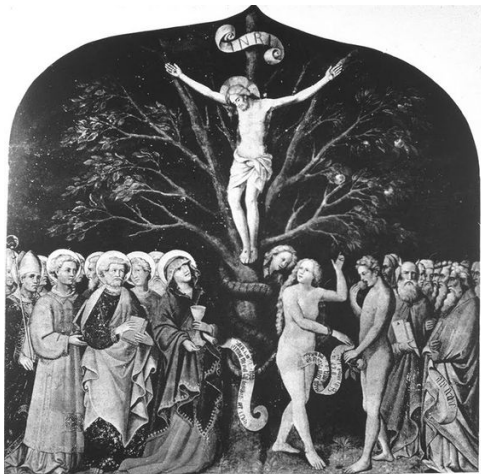


Figure 1 Image credit: Giovanni da Modena. Fresco from the Church of St. Petronio (Bologna, 1420)

She takes the Life of the *Eschatos* Adam on a tree in a garden...
Like Eve took the knowledge of the Good on a tree in a garden.
Love is the Good.

A harlot uses love, because she sees that love is good for something. . .
Like thirty pieces of silver or maybe making herself in the image of
God.

A harlot uses love and in the process crucifies Love and can no longer know Love.

A bride surrenders to love, because she trusts Love and allows herself to be known by love in a
covenant, through the sacrament that is communion.
She's known by Love, and bears the fruit of Love, which is Life—eternal Life.

A harlot trades love and so betrays Love.
The Bride surrenders to Love.

Verse 31: *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.'"*

Jesus is quoting Zechariah 13:7 which refers to the most astounding of days.
Jesus is saying, "This day is that day"

Zechariah:

12:2 On *that day*, He will "make Jerusalem a cup..."

12:10 On *that day*, says the Lord, Jerusalem... will "look on me, on him whom they have
pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child and... weeps for a firstborn."

13:1 "On *that day* there shall be a fountain opened for... the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to
cleanse them from sin..."

13:7 "Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered."

14:4 "On *that day*, his feet will stand on the mount of olives..."

14:6 "On *that day*, there shall be a unique day," ...an eternal day.

14:8 "On *that day*, living waters will flow from Jerusalem."

14:9 "On *that day*, the Lord will be one and his name one."

14:20 "On *that day*... there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord."

We are "The House of the Lord." Not a harlot, but a Bride.

Verses 31 and 32

...‘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.”

Peter is full of faith in himself . . .

Kind of like a big juicy grape or ripe plump olive.

But this night he will be crushed, by just one glance from the Lord.

He will see Jesus seeing him and begin to weep uncontrollably.

His *psyche*, his earthen vessel, will break and bleed a river of tears.

A fountain is opened in Peter that cleanses him from sin—

A fountain that transforms the old harlot into the bride.

Verses 33-38

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 (lupeo) and troubled (adema-neo)². Then he said to them, “My soul (psyche) is very sorrowful (perilupos—full of sorrow or sinking in sorrow), even to death...

Is Jesus Depressed?

- Now let me say, Psychiatrists and Psychologists have all sorts of definitions for depression, which I don't understand.
- They also provide medication for chemical deficiencies in the blood and brain, which I don't understand and don't want to invalidate.

But the first definition of depressed in my pocket dictionary is "pressed down."

And Jesus has literally fallen on his face, pressed down by sorrow into the ground—the *adamah*

The first definition of depressed in my *Collegiate* Dictionary is "low in spirit."

And Jesus seems to be rather poor in spirit...that is, breath... in the *adamah*. He is pressed down, poor in spirit, and mourning...

² Strong's lexicon says that this is the strongest of the three Greek words that mean depressed.

So? Is Jesus depressed? YES, I think Jesus is depressed.
Is he doing something wrong? NO, I think He is doing everything right.

Perhaps someone has told you that you were wrong because you were depressed . . . Well maybe you weren't wrong, but right...

I'm afraid that if we stumbled upon Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane we might call 911, have Jesus committed and highly medicated, so he wouldn't suffer such sorrow... and we wouldn't have to watch.

Jesus is depressed, but He's not wrong. He's right.
Maybe you're depressed, because you think you shouldn't be depressed.
Maybe you're repressed' cause you refuse to be depressed.

Jesus had already wept at funeral of His friend Lazarus—He wasn't repressed
And Jesus had already wept over Jerusalem, His harlot/ bride . . .
Jesus had already said, "Blessed are you who weep . . . now."

Maybe sorrow is not the opposite of joy.
In fact, according to John, Jesus had just told the disciples that their sorrow would turn into Joy .
. .

If that's true, sorrow must be a component of Joy
And you can't get to Joy without some sorrow.

Jesus said, "*Blessed are to poor in spirit. Of them consists the Kingdom of God*" and "*Blessed are those who mourn.*"

That means, "Happy are those who grieve."

That is, "Happy are those that when depressed, express sorrow."

Kind of like an olive, when depressed, expresses extra virgin olive oil.

Extra Virgin! Listen up all ye harlots . . .

That's what they call it, "Extra Virgin!"

Jesus was depressed.

Isaiah 53: 4 *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...*
53: 10 *... it was the will of the LORD to crush him...*

Back to our text . . .

Matthew 26:37-39

And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful (lupeo) and troubled (ademaño). Then he said to them, "My soul (psyche) is very sorrowful (perilupos), 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..."

The Father is handing Jesus a cup.
This is communion in and through a cup.

Like wine is the communion of grapes . . .
That have been crushed and placed in a cup
Like oil is the communion of olives . . .
That have been crushed and placed in a bottle.

To drink from someone's cup is to experience what that person experiences.
To experience it with them is communion.

God the Father is handing God the Son a cup and God the Son is depressed.

Is God Depressed?

Well, in the Old Testament He certainly grieves and He certainly suffers.
He's a father that suffers His children. I'm a father and I choose to suffer my children. God makes his children with *adamah* and breath—His own Spirit.
He makes His children with His own body broken and blood Shed.
God is Love in Freedom and perhaps it hurts to make people who also love in freedom.

Whatever the case, Jesus drinks His Father's cup. On the cross, God the Father and God the Son experience the same thing—and will the same thing. So, any theology that explains the cross as the hatred of God the Father, as opposed to the *Love* of God the Son, is patently unbiblical. Jesus was drinking from His Father's cup.

And yet here, He does pray, *"Nevertheless not my will, but thy will be done."*

Now this should blow your mind . . .
In the Garden, the will of God the Son, is different than the will of God the Father... it's different, at least until He drinks the cup and cries, "It is finished."

But here He prays, *"Nevertheless, not my will, but thy will be done..."*
Jesus is surrendering His will to God's will...
Or maybe it isn't His will that he's surrendering?

Paul writes, *"He became sin for us... [sin is a bad will] "that we might become the righteousness of God [that's the Good Will of God]."*

It's as if Jesus, the Good Free Will of God, has entered into the earthen vessels constructed by the bad will, that is us. He's entered in to us, in order to confess our bad will, and will, what we could not will. He is a good free will given to us. It's as if there was some sort of communion at the table of the Lord—as if we shared a cup.

Such that, He actually took our bad will . . .
And actually gave His Good will to us.

"When we cry 'Abba Father,' it is the spirit himself . . .," writes Paul.
It is the Spirit of Christ in the dark garden, that is our heart,
It is the Spirit of Christ in our earthen vessels willing what we could not will—It's faith (Phil.2:13).

And like I said, I can't explain it... I'm just the tour guide.

Matthew 26:39-40

...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?"

Jesus wants them to watch . . . What's the point of that?

It seems to be good for nothing . . .

Leo Buscaglia used to tell about a contest he was asked to judge. The purpose of the contest was to find the most caring child. The winner was a four-year-old child whose next-door neighbor was an elderly gentleman who had recently lost his wife—his bride. Upon seeing the man cry, the little boy went into the old gentleman's yard, climbed onto his lap and just sat there. When his mother asked him what he had said to the neighbor, the little boy said, *"Nothing, I just helped him cry."*

That's good for nothing, just good. That's beautiful.

And it turns out that the beautiful is not nothing . . . but the Good in everything.

What if God is inviting you to help Him cry? That would be quite an honor . . .

Jesus will be denied and betrayed by Peter

And He's inviting Peter to help Him cry.

Jesus has an absolutely immense love for Peter.

He longs for Peter to know Him—in this Garden...

- Not just know about Him—like Adam and Eve knew about the good, when they took knowledge of the good...
- But know Him because He is known—like a bride is known by her groom.

Brennan Manning wrote of an old Hasidic rabbi, Levi Yitzhak ... who used to say that he discovered the meaning of love from a drunken peasant. Entering a tavern in the Polish countryside, he saw two drunken peasants sharing a cup. Each was protesting how much he loved the other. . .

Ivan said to Peter: "Peter, tell me what hurts me?"

Bleary-eyed, Peter looked at Ivan: "How do I know what hurts you?" Ivan's answer was swift: "If you don't know what hurts me, how can you say you love me... Peter?"

We are known and loved in the place of the wound; we are completed, where incomplete.

Matthew 26:40-41

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..."

I used to think that Jesus meant, "Pray that you don't watch dirty movies and drink too much beer..." But now I believe that Jesus meant, "Pray that you would not give into the temptation to look away... to not watch... the temptation to not watch the Lord suffer the sorrow of our sin."

Luke records that they "slept for sorrow." The temptation was to shut down, for it was more sorrow than they were willing to bear.

This week at our staff bible study Kathleen said, “Peter you wouldn’t believe the number of people that refuse to go and see a loved one who is dying . . . for they refuse to suffer the sorrow.” Kathleen is a hospice chaplain. She says that it breaks her heart.

Frances is a counselor, she responded saying, “Yes... and I believe that the whole reason there is a counseling industry is that people just won’t sit with each other in their sorrow. They won’t watch.”

Perhaps all sin and all temptation is really a refusal to watch Jesus suffer the sorrow of our betrayal—every sin is a betrayal of love. Jesus was not grieving the whip or the nails. He was grieving the pain of betrayal at the hands of those He loved. He was grieving the fact that his Bride did not know Him.

Peter, James, John, Judas and all humanity, couldn’t bear to watch.
And so Jesus was alone with His Father . . . just as His Father had planned.

As I mentioned, my times alone with my father in our wilderness garden, were the happiest moments of my childhood. My Father was the Sr. Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Littleton... And the most honest, loving, and Christ like man I’ve ever known. I never thought he was a great preacher, but I knew he was just like Jesus.

When I was nineteen, and my father had pastored that church for fifteen years, some people complained to the Denver Presbytery about a variety of issues, yet really one issue, that at the time, was dividing the Denver Presbytery (that’s the governing body of all the churches in Denver).

In the Denver Presbytery there was a division between the right and the left.
My father didn’t care for labels like “right” or “left”...but He did want to proclaim the Jesus he saw in the Scriptures.

To make long story, extremely short, my father was publicly tried by the Denver Presbytery, meeting in a big church in downtown Denver, and I watched. All sorts of people said all sorts of things, but the man who closed debate did so by saying, “You’ve heard some nice things about Dan Hiatt, but we have found that Dan Hiatt is a liar.”

Then they voted. Then they removed my father, and I watched. It’s perfectly legitimate to fire an employee for not doing their job, but I watched my father slandered and betrayed by people with hidden agendas. I watched my father suffer great sorrow or I should say, I thought I watched.

What I remember is anger in that room where I watched my father suffer. I’ve heard counselors say, that particularly in men, anger is just a mask for sorrow—sorrow that refuses to be suffered. It was around that time that I decided to go to seminary and prepare for the pastorate, rather than a career in geology.

About ten years later, I was the pastor of a little church on Lookout Mt. that was growing at a surprising rate. We had joined the Evangelical Presbyterian Denomination, which was a reaction to the old liberal and mainline denomination. It was the denomination on the right that my Dad helped start after being kicked out by the left.

One day, a woman approached me after the service and said, “God wants me to send you to the Toronto laughing revival.” I said, “Are you OK if I come back and say that they’re all nuts?”

She said, “Yes.” And, “Can I go to Niagara Falls?” She said, “Yes.” And, “Can I bring Susan?” She said, “Yes”... And so we went.

I saw God do amazing things to everyone else, including Susan . . . but not me. By the last day of the conference I had told God that I was leaving the ministry because He didn’t speak to me.

I had confessed watching bad movies and drinking too much beer...

I had confessed everything I could think to confess,

But not what I needed to confess because I didn’t know what it was.

In the afternoon, I went to a seminar taught by a Presbyterian. And then he told us to pray with the people on our right and our left. On one side of me was a very large Native-American Pentecostal man. On the other side was very little old Roman Catholic woman. They were like the full spectrum of the Church. The moment we began to pray, I heard a voice, audibly in my head.

It said, “*Peter you don’t love my bride very much do you?*”

And all at once, I knew that I had gone into the ministry because I hated the Church . . . because I had loved the Church, and felt betrayed by the Church, and so I had somehow vowed to fix the Church, so I wouldn’t have to suffer the Church, like my dad. And if I hated the church, in some way I hated myself, and my Dad, and Jesus who suffered for His Bride—the Church.

I heard the voice and what happened next is hard to explain . . . it was like a fountain welling up from somewhere deep inside of me—not weeping, but wailing. It was like a river, and I wasn’t controlling the river . . . In fact the tears didn’t even feel like my tears . . . I had the distinct impression that I was crying the Lord’s tears . . . or the Lord was crying my tears. It was the most healing thing, I’ve ever experienced.

There wasn’t an ounce of accusation in what the Lord had said (*And that was harsh!!*). He wasn’t blaming me, he was weeping for me and through me. I don’t know how long we wept, but I had fallen to the floor and when I finally opened my eyes everyone was gone and the hotel staff had rearranged the chairs around me in preparation for the next meeting.

Later that night, Jesus literally pinned me to the floor—the *adamah*.

He showed me, that He was everywhere in my life speaking . . .

That He had used my bad will to accomplish his good will...

That He had called me into the ministry and...

That He wanted me to stop doubting His Love...

And I experienced so much Joy that I literally thought I might die.

I had repressed the sorrow—for I didn’t want to share my Father’s sorrow.

I had repressed the sorrow . . .

Vowing to fix my father’s sorrow, so it would never happen to me.

I had repressed the sorrow, like a big fat angry olive—named Peter.

I had repressed until depressed by God . . .

And then I expressed sorrow that turned into unspeakable joy.

And yet, I suspected that God was not finished with me yet . . .

I tasted the Joy, but I couldn’t sustain the Joy.

And I was still trying to fix the Church.

Matthew 26:40-42

...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."

Jesus didn't want the sorrow . . .

- Some people, like me, hang on to sorrow and manipulate with sorrow.
- They define themselves as victims of sorrow and so justify themselves with sorrow.
- They find their identity in sorrow.
- They hang on to sorrow and ironically, refuse to suffer the sorrow.
- They may weep and whine, but they don't wail.
- They sip the cup, but never drink it to the bottom.

Jesus prayed, "*Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.*"

And He drank it—that means: *the only way out of sorrow is through the sorrow.* "Only grieving can heal grief," writes Anne Lamott.

"Sorrow will turn into Joy," says Jesus. But first you must suffer the sorrow.

"The Lord will wipe away every tear." But first you must cry them.

I'm convinced that the outer darkness, spoken of in Scripture, is populated with people that weep and gnash their teeth, but refuse to mourn and wail.

- They refuse to suffer the sorrow.
- They refuse to look on the one whom they have pierced.
- They refuse to see that with every unloving action and thought they have betrayed and crucified the Lord of Love.

They refuse to suffer the sorrow, for suffering is losing control...

They don't realize that Joy is also losing control... to Love.

Love is the communion between God the Father and God the son.

In 2007, I had been the pastor of Lookout Mountain Community Church for fifteen years—the same amount of time that my Dad had been the pastor of First Presbyterian. And my son was nineteen, the same age as me, when my Father was tried and lost the church. And I had fixed the church, so it would seem . . .

- In fact my father used to come to church and sit on the sofa in the entry way with his oxygen bottle.
- People would literally line up to talk to him, but he mourned the fact that I didn't have much time to talk with him.
- I admired my Dad more than anyone, but I think I resented my Dad for losing the church, and so I worked like a dog to fix the church, primarily by preaching... *As if*, I was fixing my Dad.... OUCH!

In 2007, we had grown from a few, into a few thousand, and built a multi million dollar campus on the side of I-70. Dad had been dead for three years and the strangest things were beginning to happen.

A few weeks ago, Kim Gold sent me something she heard in a dream and thought was for me. She heard, "The first fruits of the story is the narration." So, for the past two messages, I've been narrating the story.

In 2007 some folks complained to the Presbytery about my preaching. Like my dad, I wanted to preach about Jesus from the Scripture. But now the complaints weren't from the "left," but from the "right." For I had become convinced of what I know that my father had hoped:

That God would not endlessly torture some...

And Scripture revealed that God just might save all . . .

He is that good and that powerful.

It was September 9th, 2007.

- My father had been dead for three years.

- I had preached the message and people were coming forward for communion.

- Suddenly Susan grabbed my arm and she said,

"Peter, I just saw your Dad. He was standing in front of us.

His eyes were like fire. And he was young and so excited.

He had a bowl in his hands and he leaned forward saying:

"Susan and Peter, do not be afraid to drink from the cup that the Lord has for you." And then he vanished.

In the next few weeks, everything that happened to my father happened to me.

October 6th I was tried. And November 17th, I was defrocked. You know . . . I can't wait to get to heaven, sit down with my Dad and say, "Oh Father, I'm sorry for how I refused to watch, but now I know... you. I love you."

Matthew 26:42-44

Again, for the second time, [Jesus] 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.

Jesus was alone with His Father . . . according to His Father's plan.

You know, each of us has a unique and secret sorrow, that conforms to the shape of our lives in this fallen world. No one knows or can know your sorrow, except Jesus... And if you see Jesus, you've seen the Father.

Your sorrow is an invitation to commune with God in the Garden of Gethsemane. And if you surrender your sorrow—no matter the reason for the sorrow—it's not your sorrow, but His sorrow, and you "share in the fellowship of His sufferings."

One night during this time, at a session meeting at the church, all the elders took turns telling me what they thought my "issues" were. I still don't know what is right, and what is wrong with me. They couldn't seem to agree and it really doesn't matter . . . but I felt like a whore that had

just been raped, for I had invited the raping. I went down to my office in the basement of the church, curled up in a ball, and lay on the ground in the dark all alone . . . but so very not alone.

I know this is weird, but when I struggle with depression, I picture myself on the floor of my old office and I picture the arms of my father wrapped around me (like they used to be wrapped around me when I was six or seven years old). And I believe they are the arms of God. And I feel happy. Isn't that strange? Maybe it's holy.

Matthew 26:45-46

Then [Jesus] 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."

His betrayer is Judas and Judah and all the sons and daughters of Eve...
His betrayer is Us, the Church, His Bride.

You know the *left* tends to believe that . . .

We don't need to be saved from ourselves and our wicked desires.

And the *right* tends to believe that . . .

Only a few are saved, who basically save themselves . . .

Or few are saved, because Jesus chose to only die for a few.

Almost ten years ago, the Church put me on trial demanding that I publicly confess that:

#1 God was not able to save all. And

#2 God took pleasure in damning some.

I've been horrified and I've been angry . . .

I don't think I'm angry now . . . but sad, so sad.

I think I've been afraid, to weep for the Bride—

Weep and wail for her, for she does not see her Groom.

The name Jesus literally means, "*Yahweh* is Salvation."

"*Yahweh* is helper" . . . our Husband.

We don't have faith in the Covenant Love of our Bride Groom and so we sell ourselves to buildings, programs, legislation, laws, the striving of our own flesh, and the principalities and powers of this world.

We play the whore just like Judas, Judah, Jerusalem and our mother Eve.

The Bride betrays her Groom... and traps herself alone in darkness.

I need to acknowledge the sin, but no longer blame her, or be angry at her.

I need to weep for her and remember I am her—dearly beloved by my Groom.

Matthew 26:46 -49

Rise, let us be going; 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 clubs, 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!”³ And he kissed him. [kataphileo—“to kiss affectionately”] He kissed him affectionately. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.”

Jesus received Judas’s kiss and called him *friend*.

- His kindness will judge Peter, that very night, and make him new.
- And His kindness will judge Judas after Judas has damned himself, for “His kindness leads us to repentance,” writes Paul.
- His kindness opens a fountain on Mt. Zion and makes all things new.

On the tree in the Garden He expresses our deepest sorrow crying,

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

Yet God hasn’t forsaken us, we have betrayed, and forsaken, God.

He confesses our greatest sorrow, then, delivers up His Spirit.

He expresses oil and wine, spirit and blood.

Jesus received Judas’s kiss and called him *friend*.

He did the beautiful thing.

In the Garden *depressed*, He did not *repress*, but expressed the beautiful thing. Depressed, He didn’t repress but expressed, and I’m impressed.

As I told you last time, when I was tried, for some reason, I prayed, “Father forgive.” Susan saw me on a cross and saw Jesus come take me down. I thought it was a curse, but it was the beautiful thing.

Some of you, like Frances Forgione and Kim Gold, came and wept with me and then y’all carried me downtown.

One day, Frances and I found a place to meet down by the capital. I called my mom and said, “Mom, our new church is going to worship Sunday nights in the sanctuary at Central Presbyterian Church.” She paused for a moment and said, “Peter, Don’t you know what that place is?” I said, “No... what do you mean?” She said, “That’s the room in which you saw your father tried on the floor of the Denver Presbytery.” Then suddenly it all came back to me—the carpet, the pews, the cross and all the details of that sanctuary.

For a year, God had me stand in the very spot my father stood, when I repressed my sorrow and turned it into rage. He had me stand in that spot and preach the Gospel.

I’m saying that you, the Sanctuary, are the beautiful thing.

But God is still expressing the beautiful thing.

We are like this blank canvas. [Peter holds up a blank canvas.]

³ Judas calls him Rabbi, not Lord.
He wants knowledge of good and evil.
He does not want to be known by the Good.

God does not paint by numbers and lines, so I really don't know what God is painting, but I believe He is painting us—*with* us. I can't give you lines and numbers, because beauty is expressed—like oil from an olive that has been depressed. It's expressed when we have suffered our sorrow in the Garden with Him.

Beauty is not constrained by laws and the energy of human flesh.
Beauty is the expression of Love through vessels of mercy.

Paul writes, "*The Love of Christ constrains us...BECAUSE we are convinced of this, that one has died for all.*"

Jesus is calling us to watch with Him in the Garden of the Olive Press.
And then *do* and *be* His beautiful thing.

One of my favorite memories of my dad happened on Peak One above Frisco.
I was alone with my dad and we were about a hundred yards from the top.
A storm was brewing and the top of Peak One is shaped like a lightning rod.
My dad was an obnoxious safety freak and so I was sure we'd turn around.
Lightning was crashing all around. The rocks were literally sizzling and popping with electrical charge. I looked at my dad. His hair was literally standing on end, but he had this wild look in his eyes. He said, "Peter... we can do it. We can make it!" And we did. That was the day I learned from my dad that there is a Beauty worth dying for.

God the Father and God the Son were almost to the top of Mount Moriah, now called Mt. Zion or Calvary. Lightning was crashing all around. Jesus looked in His Father's eyes. They were wild and filled with fire and His Father said, "We can make it. Let's do the beautiful thing. Let's forgive them all." So they climbed the mountain, drank the cup, hung on the ancient tree, and made all things new including you and your sorrow, too.

But you can't go *around* that cross. You can only go *through* the cross.
You must choose to suffer the sorrow, before the sorrow is turned into joy.
You must choose, but don't worry, that's why He came . . .
To give you His choice—His good free and beautiful will.

Communion

And so He took bread and broke it saying, take and eat. This is my body.
And He poured the cup saying, "Drink of it all of you, for this is the blood of the covenant which is poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins"

If you're in the Garden of Gethsemane, you're in a very holy place—watch Jesus. If you're depressed—watch Jesus and commune with Jesus.
And you won't repress your sorrow, you will express the beautiful thing.

Benediction

There's this really great story from the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Digory has taken some fruit from a tree in a garden, and he has plunged Narnia into chaos. He took the fruit in order to save his mother's life, but his mother died and he feels terrible about his mother's death and all the darkness in Narnia. He weeps and suddenly realizes Aslan the lion is standing there, right

behind him. He turns around with tears running down his cheeks and he is shocked to see that Aslan also has tears running down his cheeks. But Aslan's tears are bigger tears—almost as if Aslan were more sorry than Digory. Aslan puts his face right down near Digory and looks into his eyes and says, "Digory, grief is great. As of now only you and I know this in this world. Let us be good to each other."

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.

So, by way of benediction, believe the Gospel and be good to each other.

Quotes for Reflection

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

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*