

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

MATTHEW LESSON 8 (Chapters 26-28)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” (Mk. 15:13; Mt. 27:23). Welcome to our study of the Book of Matthew. This study enters into the last phase of the life of Jesus. Matthew 26-26 pictures the King on a cross. In Matthew 26 we are introduced to the events that will bring Jesus to the cross. In Matthew 26, in the initial verses, a woman has done something important for Jesus. She has taken a costly, fragrant oil, broken open the flask, and poured it on the Savior. But her action upset some of the disciples, who asked, “Why this waste? Why not give it to the poor?” Jesus then said, “You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. In pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” (vss. 11-13). I believe that it was this very event that pushed Judas to the point where he was ready to betray the Lord. Remember that Judas was the one who carried the money bag. John tells us that, at times, Judas even “dipped into” that money bag. We know that he had a problem with greed. It was this greed, power, and pride that caused Satan to use Judas. In Matthew 26:14-16, Judas goes to the chief priests and offers to sell out the Lord. The text records for us: “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” Judas sees this costly oil is wasted. He is greedy in his heart. So Satan uses that. As a result, Judas goes to the chief priests and asks, “What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you?” For thirty pieces of silver, Judas sold out the Lord. There is a practical lesson for us today. We must not sell out the Lord for anything. Judas did it for money. And there are a lot of people today who are selling out the Lord—whether it be compromising what they believe, doing things they know are not morally right, or just having a greed for more money. They are selling out the Lord. Some may be selling out the Lord for worldliness. John said in 1 John 2:15, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Some may be selling out the Lord due to sins of the flesh such as lust, desire, or passions—which are sins of the mind that cause a person to want more in this life and to have more pride. We need to be careful today that we do not sell out the Lord for something that we want—due to our own desires and passions.

As we think about the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus, in Matthew 26 we find Jesus in the Garden praying. He has asked His disciples to wait and watch while He prayed, but they could not stay awake, and they fell asleep more than once. In Jesus’ prayer, we see how Jesus was able to go to the cross. In Matthew 26:39 we find the attitude that Jesus possessed. The Scripture says, “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’” The attitude that Jesus had—although He did not want to have to endure the suffering of the cross with its pain and humiliation—was “It is not **My** will that is important, Father, but **Your** will.” That is what made Jesus such a strong Man of faith.

That is what ultimately made Jesus our Savior. And that is what will make us faithful children of God today. If there were an attitude that you could etch upon your mind, shouldn't it be these words?—"Not **my** will, but **God's** will be done." That is a motto by which every Christian should live. Whatever God wants us to do, that is what we should do.

In Matthew 26 we also are introduced to Peter's denial of the Lord. In Matthew 26:31-33 Jesus has promised, "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." Peter boastfully said, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." Jesus then promised Peter that before the rooster crowed, he would deny Him three times. That event is recorded in Matthew 26:69-75. Jesus has been taken captive. Peter is outside the gate and is warming himself by the fire. One girl comes to him and says, "Surely, you are one of them." But Peter says, "No, not me." Another girl sees Peter and says, "Surely, you are one of them; your speech betrays you." But Peter says, "Oh no, not me." Then, finally, Peter is asked about this again, and he denies it so vehemently that he begins to curse and swear as he says, "I do not know the Man." Then the text tells us that Peter remembered the words of the Lord, and went away and wept bitterly. Look at Matthew 26:75—"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly." Peter has always been an inspiration—a "hero of The Faith." One of the reasons for this is that we can all relate to Peter. Have you ever denied the Lord? Have you ever claimed to be a Christian, and tried to live the Christian life, but then done things that you knew were not right? If so, you have found yourself in Peter's place. Hebrews 10:26ff. says that if we live in sin, then we bring the Lord to open shame and crucify Him afresh. All of us can relate to Peter because we have all denied the Lord. But do you know what is great about Peter? Peter did not stay in that state of denial. In John 21, Jesus said to him, "Do you love Me? Feed My sheep. Do you love Me? Feed My sheep." Peter said, "You know I love You, Lord." Peter went on to write two epistles in the Bible—1 and 2 Peter. History records that Peter was crucified, not like the Lord, but upside down because he did not feel himself to be worthy to be crucified like Jesus. Peter was a man of faith who learned a lesson from his denial. We can learn the same lesson. If we do deny Jesus, we should not give up and "throw in the towel." We need to repent and go on to grow and learn from our mistakes.

In Matthew 27, we are introduced to Jesus being bound by evil men. In verses 1 and 2, Jesus is taken by the scribes and Pharisees (the religious leaders). His hands are bound, and He is taken away to be put on trial—and ultimately to be crucified. What is so interesting is that in Matthew 27:2, evil men bound the hands of Jesus. Did you know that **we** can do that same type of thing today? If we are not careful, we, too, can bind the hands of Jesus. Jesus' hands were bound. He allowed it to happen. He could have changed those events because He had the power to do so. But He did not. Today, if we are not careful, we, by our actions and deeds, can bind the hands of Jesus. We bind the hands of Jesus when we do not give as we ought to give. Jesus' ultimate goal was to spread the Gospel, and He wants us to do the same. We can bind the hands of Jesus when we do not live like we ought to. If our way of life contradicts the Christian lifestyle, then we are binding the power and ability of Jesus and the Gospel to save.

As we examine the next few verses, I want us to examine what happened to Jesus as He went on trial, and ultimately went to Golgotha to be crucified. In Matthew 27:15-21, we learn that there was a custom for a notorious criminal to be released at this time. Barabbas was such a man. He was a criminal, and the Roman leader was willing to release Jesus instead of Barabbas. But the people cried out, "Let Him be crucified. You need to release Barabbas, not Jesus. Jesus needs to be crucified." So, Jesus took the place of Barabbas. He was crucified, and He died—not for His own sins, but for the sins of the world.

Notice what happened to Jesus. First of all, Jesus is scourged. Notice the words of Matthew 27:26, which relates to events that took place in the Praetorium. "Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified." Sometimes, if we are not careful, we can read those words without really understanding what happened to Jesus. Scourging was not something to be taken lightly. A scourging was carried out with something like a cat-of-nine-tails, which was a stick with nine or ten different strands coming off of it. And in those strands were pieces of metal, glass, or very sharp rocks. The whip (known as a flagrum) was then taken, and the prisoner was beaten over, over, and over again across his back and thighs. It is very likely that by the time the beating was complete, you could have seen Christ's ribs. His flesh was marred and laid open. He was bleeding in a very bad way. Jesus' scourging was a very difficult thing for Him to endure. But He did that for you and for me. Notice what happens in Matthew 27:29, where Christ is humiliated by having a crown of thorns placed on His head. "When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'" Have you ever seen a bush that has extremely long thorns in it? They took one of those bushes and wound it up into a crown, which they then imbedded into Christ's head. You can imagine how painful that would have been. It would have been very humiliating to Jesus, and that was meant to mock and persecute Him even further.

But not only was Jesus scourged, and not only did He have a crown of thorns placed upon His head, but one of the most humiliating things that could ever occur happened to Jesus, as we see in Matthew 27:30. People actually spit on Jesus. The text says, "Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head." Have you ever had anyone spit on you? Nothing is more humiliating in all the world than to have someone walk up to you and spit in your face. Jesus endured that, even though He had the power to kill His enemies if He had desired to do so. He could have destroyed the Jewish nation. But Jesus even endured people spitting on Him because He loved us so much. That text also says that after the people had spit on Jesus, they took a reed and struck Him on the head. Remember that Jesus was wearing a crown of thorns. Those thorns were probably already stuck in His flesh. But the people took the reed and hit Him on the head, pushing those thorns into His head even farther. You can imagine the pain that Jesus would have felt as a result.

A little farther in the text we read that the soldiers put a robe on Christ. Then, in verse 31, we are told that they removed the robe. Look at Matthew 27:31—"And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified." After the blood on Jesus' back had dried and stuck to the robe, they ripped the robe off of His back—which would have caused the pain to start all over again. Those wounds that might have received some comfort as a result of the blood having dried were then re-opened. That is what Jesus endured for each one of us. Then, we see ultimately in verse 35 that after Jesus had suffered so many things in the Praetorium, He then was crucified. Crucifixion was a horrible way to die. Jesus was taken and laid down on the beam that would become the top part of the cross. His hands were then nailed to it, and His feet were nailed to the bottom part of the cross. The cross—with Jesus on it—then was placed in the ground. And Jesus hung there, suffering and in agony, until He died. Many suspect that the ultimate cause of death may have been strangulation. A person on a cross eventually came to a point where he could not longer push against the nails in his feet, causing him to choke on his own blood. What a horrible, horrible way to die—to strangle to death on your own blood. That is the way that Jesus very likely died. We are not told for sure, but that could very well have been the case. Whatever the case, crucifixion was a horrible way to die.

After this, some other events occurred that were related to Jesus' dying on the cross. In verses 41-43, we are told that while Jesus was on the cross, the religious leaders began to mock Him.

“Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, “I am the Son of God.”’”

They began to mock Jesus and make fun of Him. Jesus was on the cross—dying for the very people who were mocking Him. They were looking up, laughing at Him, and mocking Him. How difficult do you imagine that it was for Jesus to remain on the cross when people were doing such things? Jesus ultimately **did** stay on the cross, of course, because that was the plan and what He wanted to do. Sometimes, people can say evil, ungodly things about Christ. Yet Jesus still died for them, which teaches us about the ultimate love of Jesus, even for sinful people.

In Matthew 27:50, the Bible records for us the death of Jesus Christ. Notice the text, which says, “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.” This was the ultimate fulfillment of God’s plan. From the very beginning of time (2 Tim. 1:8-10), God had planned for Jesus to come to this world and die for all people. At the moment of His death, then, He was fulfilling God’s scheme of redemption. Because of His death (and, ultimately, His resurrection—which would come later), Jesus died as a sinless sacrifice (1 Pet. 2:22). Because Jesus died as a perfect, sinless sacrifice, salvation would be available for all people. In verses 51-54, at the death of Jesus, there were going to be proofs of Jesus’ deity. The veil of the temple was torn in two. People were coming up out of their graves. The soldier at the bottom of the cross proclaimed, “Truly, this **was** the Son of God.” It was proven by God that Jesus was divine, and that His death was ultimately planned by God.

But the grave and death could not contain Jesus Christ. In Matthew 27:57-61, we see Jesus being buried in a new tomb—the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Christ was buried, but the grave could not contain the Savior. From Matthew 28:1 we learn that on the first day of the week, Jesus arose out of the grave. He had been in the grave, but, as was prophesied, He came up out of the grave—which is the same hope that Christians have today. This is the hope that each of us has, in order to encourage us to live faithfully before God in view of the Judgment Day yet to come. The resurrection is something that ought to encourage each one of us. Our spirit is not going to die at the grave. We **will** live beyond this life—somewhere! John 5:28-29 teaches that, one day, all who are in the grave will come forth—“those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” Christians will arise out of their graves at the Second Coming of Christ so that they can be with Him for all eternity. The text of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 tells us that we will meet the Lord in the air, and “thus, we shall always be with the Lord.” This is a very encouraging point because, if we have lived our lives faithfully, then after death it will be worth it. And, if we have family members who have died as faithful Christians, at the resurrection we will be reunited with them. We then can be with them and with God for all eternity. The resurrection is the great hope that Christians possess.

In Matthew 28:11-15, we see that Christ’s resurrection creates a great stir among the soldiers and among the religious leaders. The soldiers are thus bribed by the religious elite to say, “His disciples came and took the body.” We know that was not the case. The disciples could not have rolled away the stone covering the entrance to the grave because there were soldiers guarding it. The soldiers would have been put to death if that had happened. Thus, the soldiers were bribed to say that the disciples took Christ’s body. In truth, however, the stone was not rolled away by human hands. Jesus came out of the grave because death itself simply could not contain Him.

In Matthew 28, as the Book of Matthew closes, Jesus gives His disciples some final commands, as well as a final charge for each one of us today. In verses 18-20 Jesus said,

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

These were the lasting words of Jesus for each of His disciples today. Just there were disciples in the first century, so we are His disciples today. If we are going to be faithful to the Lord, we must take this final charge very seriously. What task has God left in our hands to carry out? What is it that God expects of us today? The Lord wants us to spend our time spreading the Gospel. The Lord wants us to be dedicated to making converts for Him. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said in essence, “I have the authority, and here is what I want you to do. Go and make disciples of all nations.” In Mark 16:15, Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Thus, Christians have a charge to take the message of Jesus far and wide. I am reminded of the words of Colossians 1:28 where Paul said, “Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Peter addressed this idea of evangelism when he said in 1 Peter 2:9 that we are to “proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness.” We have been taken out of sin; we no longer live in the world. We have the benefit of the blood of Christ cleansing our spirit. We therefore need to be teaching others about the Gospel. Woe unto us if we have an opportunity to tell someone about Jesus, but we fail to do that. May we always take seriously the command to teach others the Gospel of Christ.

What practical lessons do we learn from the crucifixion of Christ? We cannot read the story of the crucifixion of Christ without being impressed with the love of God. God loved His own creation so much that, even though He knew that people would ultimately crucify His Son, He still sent Jesus to die for those people. Even though each one of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to die on our behalf. Remember the words of John 3:16—“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” This brings to mind the words of 1 John 4:8—“God is love.” God loved us so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross for each and every one of us. This teaches us just how much Jesus was willing to suffer so that we could have the hope of eternal life. And it ought to impress upon our minds the seriousness of becoming a Christian. When we study Matthew 27, and when we think of all that Jesus went through for us, it should help us understand just how serious a thing it is to become a child of God.

Becoming a Christian is not a flippant thing. Obeying the Gospel is not something to be taken lightly. The sacrifice of Jesus cost God a great deal. When we decide to become a Christian, then we need to take that very seriously. Too many times, Christianity is approached in a joking manner. “Sure, I’ll become a Christian—because my mom and dad did.” Or, “because it’s the popular thing to do, I’ll do it.” We need to realize what it cost God for us to be able to become Christian. And we need to understand what it really means for us to become Christians.

Today, I want to ask you: Are you a child of God? Are you a Christian? Look at what Jesus did for you—so that you could have the hope of eternal life. The text of 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Isaiah 53:5 says that He was “wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and

by His stripes we are healed.” Jesus suffered in our place, and died so that we do not have to die eternally. Why not take advantage of the sacrifice that Christ made? In Acts 16:30, an important question is asked. The Philippian jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” This is a question that can be answered from the Scriptures. If you are not a child of God, what must you do to be saved?

You first have to hear the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” You have to have the faith to listen to God’s Son. In Matthew 17:5, the voice of God said from Heaven, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” Having studied the Word of God, you then must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. You must believe the words of the Bible and take them to heart. In John 8:24 we are told that we must believe Jesus. Jesus said, “if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Believing alone, however, is not enough to save a person. Yes, we must believe and be convicted that Jesus is the Son of God. But we also must do other things that the Bible teaches. Please understand that there are many in this world who teach that all you have to do to be saved is “believe.” The only time where the phrase “faith only” occurs in the Bible, however, God says the exact opposite. In James 2:24 we read, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.” We are not saved by faith alone. That is not what the Bible teaches. Yes, we must believe. But we also must repent. In Luke 13, some Jews had come to Jesus, and they wanted to tell Him about certain people who had had some very bad things happen to them. There were people who had their blood mingled with sacrifices. There were others who were walking down the road and had a tower fall on them. They asked Jesus, “Were these people worse sinners than anyone else?” Jesus said to them, “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3). So, we must believe, we must repent, and we also must confess Jesus as the Son of God. In Matthew 10:32-33, Jesus said, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” Romans 10:10 says, “For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” After a person confesses Christ, he then must be baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. Throughout the New Testament, we are taught that baptism is essential for salvation. Listen to some of these passages. In Acts 22:16, Paul was told, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins.” In Acts 2:38, Peter said, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Jesus said it so plainly in Mark 16:16—“He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” When Nicodemus came to Jesus and wanted to know what he needed to do, Jesus said, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5). A person cannot get to Heaven, Jesus said, without being born of water and the Spirit. Peter said in 1 Peter 2:21, “Baptism does also now save us.” Are you a child of God? Have you taken advantage of all that Jesus did? If not, I would urge you today to take advantage of the sacrifice of the King on the cross.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR MATTHEW LESSON 8 (CHAPTERS 26-28)

1. What event occurred in Matthew 26:6-13 that gave Jesus an opportunity to teach His disciples about His impending death?
2. According to Matthew 26:14-16, what action did Judas take shortly after the events of Matthew 26:6-13?
3. According to Matthew 26:15, what price did the chief priests pay for Christ's betrayal?
4. What important point is contained in 1 John 2:15 that Judas Iscariot missed?
5. What attitude was expressed by Jesus in Matthew 26:39 that we, today, also should express in our lives?
6. What significant event in the life of the apostle Peter is recorded in Matthew 26:69-74?
7. According to Matthew 26:75, what was Peter's response to his own actions as recorded in Matthew 26:69-74?
8. To what significant event in His life was Christ referring when He said in Matthew 26:31, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered' "?
9. According to Matthew 27:2, what action was taken against Jesus after Judas betrayed Him?
10. According to Matthew 27:15, what unusual custom did the Roman government have that factored in to the crucifixion of Christ?
11. Matthew 27:16 refers to a "notorious prisoner." Who was that prisoner, and what happened to him?
12. According to Matthew 27:26, what action was taken against Jesus prior to His crucifixion?
13. According to Matthew 27:29, what action was taken against Jesus prior to His crucifixion?
14. According to Matthew 27:30, what humiliation did Jesus endure prior to His crucifixion?
15. According to Matthew 27:41-43, what did the religious leaders do to Jesus while He was dying on the cross?
16. Why, according to 2 Timothy 1:9, did Jesus not come down off the cross alive?
17. According to Matthew 28:1-6, what happened to Jesus after His crucifixion?
18. What hope do the events of Matthew 28:1-6 offer for Christians today?