

INTRO: “History is not the story of heroes entirely. It is often the story of cruelty and injustice and shortsightedness. There are monsters, there is evil, there is betrayal. That’s why people should read Shakespeare and Dickens as well as history – they will find the best, the worst, the height of noble attainment and the depths of depravity.” That’s a quote from the historian David C. McCullough. People who are new to reading the Bible often expect to find the heights of human moral attainment; but if they stick with it at all, they become a little confused and disappointed to find how often the depths of depravity dominate the narrative. I have a good friend who started reading his Bible for the first time last year. He started in Genesis, and now he’s almost read through the whole thing. But when he got to the end of Genesis, we had coffee together to talk about what he’d been reading, and he said, “I don’t think I approve of any of these people, except maybe Joseph, he was a good guy.” And that, of course, is just the point. God doesn’t approve of us. There is only one who has earned God’s approval, and when he came, we betrayed Him.... We read the story of that betrayal this morning in Luke 22:39-62. Yet oddly enough, we learn that God Himself is actually the one who is ultimately behind Judas’ betrayal. God actually planned that Jesus’ closest friends would betray and deny Him as a means of accomplishing His purpose to save people by the shed blood of Jesus. **Jesus endured our infidelity to Him so that God might be glorified in His fidelity to us.** So this morning we’re going to ask 3 questions of Luke 22. How did Jesus endure (22:39-46)? Why did Jesus have to endure (22/47-53)? And What has Jesus endured from us (22:54-62)? God ordained it. Jesus endured it. Jesus suffered it. God sanctified it.

1. HOW DID JESUS ENDURE? God’s strength in Jesus’ endurance (22:39-46)

Jesus endured by seeking God’s wisdom and strength in prayer. It was the Father’s strength that empowered the Son’s endurance. Words for “pray” and “prayer” occur 5 times in these 8 verses. V.40, “*Pray*”; v.41 “*he knelt down and prayed*”; v.44 “*he prayed more earnestly*”; v.45 “*he rose from prayer*”; and v.46 “*pray*”. The paragraph is bracketed in vv.40 and 46 with Jesus’ command to His disciples, “*Pray that you may not enter into temptation.*” Even Jesus Himself had to pray. Church, that should humble us. The Son of God Himself was not so arrogant as to think that He could do God’s will without praying for strength from God to endure in doing it. Jesus Himself did not obey His Father with an independent, can-do spirit. He obeyed with a Spirit of dependence on His Father to give Him all that He would need for doing all that God had commanded. Jesus needed the strength of His Father. And if He needed it, than how much more do we? And this is true for us both as individuals and as a congregation. We cannot go prayerless, church. Jesus could not do it, and we should not think that we can either. Both private and corporate prayer have to be priorities for our life together as a church. Part of Christ-likeness is emulating Jesus’ prayer life, and His attitude of dependence on His Father to accomplish the Father’s will. We are not stronger than our Master. Christian, do you pray? Are you growing in your private prayer life? Are you growing in wanting to be with God’s people as we pray together?

Often, one of the reasons we don’t pray is that we feel we don’t know what to say before God. We stumble and mumble our way through our prayers, and none of us likes doing what we feel we’re not good at, and so we do things that feel more productive and encouraging to us. But Jesus gives us words to say and categories to pray. Notice what he tells the disciples to pray there in v.40, “*Pray that you may not enter into temptation.*” That’s a petition from the Lord’s Prayer. He says it again in v.46. Now notice, that’s a pre-emptive prayer isn’t it. “*Pray that you may not enter into temptation.*” There’s good reason for Jesus to command them to pray that particular prayer at this particular time. He knows what’s coming. He knows they are about to be tempted into denying Him, abandoning Him, failing to suffer with Him. He knows the weakness of their souls, and He knows there’s danger coming, and so He warns them to strengthen their souls by praying that they might not enter into that temptation once it comes. Oh Christian, do you feel the weakness of your own soul? “Prone to wander, how I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. Here’s my heart, Lord, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.” We need God’s grace to keep from denying Jesus in the hour of testing. And you cannot imagine that you would need God’s strength to keep you from denying Jesus, just ask Peter. Jesus commands us to pray that we won’t enter temptation. Do you pray this? If you find yourself entering temptation and failing, maybe it’s because you have neglected this petition of the Lord’s Prayer. We should be praying this for ourselves, our families, and for our fellow church members. The Lord’s Prayer is corporate. “*Lead us not into temptation.*” Pray it for others.

Jesus commands them to pray, then he goes and models it for them in v.42. *“He knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’* There it is again, the Lord’s Prayer. *“Thy will be done.”* Jesus openly lays His request before the Father, ‘remove this cup from me.’ But it’s sandwiched between two statements of submission to the Father’s will. *“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”* That is how to pray. And this is a true modeling of ideal discipleship, not just telling His disciples what to do, but showing them how to do it, modeling it for them. This is why I sometimes model part of the pastoral prayer on the Lord’s Prayer, to give you an example of how to pray the Lord’s Prayer in your own words. When we disciple other Christians, we’re ideally not just telling them what we think they should do. We’re modeling obedience for them, training them in how to do it by letting them observe us doing it. It’s like a physical trainer modeling for someone the proper form for a push up or a sit up. Part of making disciples is showing them in your own life what a particular spiritual discipline looks like when you do it. This is one way that the Wednesday night Bible study can be helpful, because it’s modeling how to ask the right questions of any biblical text so that you can become a better student of the Bible yourself, and then take those skills and teach others how to read and study their Bibles.

In v.42, when Jesus prays *“remove this cup from me,”* the cup is not just the suffering of physical crucifixion. He is not agonizing simply over the nails piercing His hands and feet, or the public shame of crucifixion, although it certainly includes that. The cup is an OT image of God’s wrath and judgment. **Ps 75:8** *“It is God who executes judgment.... For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs.* Again **Isa 51:17** God speaks to Jerusalem, *“you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of His wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering,”* And **Jer 25:15** *“Take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. They shall drink and stagger...”* (cf. Ps 11:6; 116:13; Ezek 23:31-32; Isa 51:22). What made Jesus sweat as if he were bleeding was the prospect of enduring God’s judicial anger over all the sins of all God’s people for all time. Jesus believed in **propitiation**, and it made Him stagger. The cross is intensely personal. It is Jesus personally enduring the personal wrath of the personal God at us, personally, for our personal rebellion against Him. That’s what propitiation means – to avert and appease and endure God’s anger. Jesus drank the cup of God’s anger all the way down to the dregs, when that cup should have been ours. And that’s why God is no longer angry at the Christian. It was spent and satisfied on Jesus.

No wonder He prayed to His Father, *“If you are willing, remove this cup from me.”* That is the measure of God’s wrath against our sin – not even Jesus could endure the prospect of it without bitter agony. *“You who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great, here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate. Mark the sacrifice appointed, see who bears the awful load; ‘tis the Word, the Lord’s Anointed, Son of Man and Son of God”* (*Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted*, TH 257). Our sin is so heinous, so damnable, that it takes the eternal Son of God to pay its price, and even He staggers under the weight.

Yet by the end of v.42, Jesus is praying the Lord’s Prayer. *“Not my will, but yours, be done.”* And the divine response to that prayer is that God sends an angel to minister to Jesus and strengthen Him. God answers prayer. When we ask Him for strength to do His will, He responds. And if Jesus needed to pray for that strength, then we need to pray for it all the more, expecting God to answer. But the angel doesn’t make everything easy. The angel came and strengthened Jesus to agonize in prayer even more earnestly, until his sweat became like blood clots dropping into the dirt. Prayer did not change God’s will for Jesus. **It strengthened Jesus in His submission to God’s will.** When Jesus prayed *“not my will, but yours, be done,”* it led Him to the cross, to give His life away as a sacrifice for others. And when we pray that prayer, that’s what we’re praying as well. God is calling us to deny self, take up our cross, and follow Jesus in giving our lives away for the spiritual good of others. That is His will for your life, Christian. Our sacrifice can’t take away anyone’s sins. But the Christian life is cruciform. God’s will is that we die to self and live for Him and for His people. And so when we are praying the Lord’s Prayer, and we get to *“thy will be done,”* one of the things we

should be praying is that God would strengthen us to do lay down our lives for the spiritual good of others. In v.45 “*He came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow.*” The sorrow may be coming from v.37 where Jesus tells them that he will be numbered with the transgressors; or it may be coming from Jesus counsel in vv.35-36 that they had better prepare for hostility from the world. Sleep can be an escape from sorrow, when what we should be doing is praying about our sorrow and asking God to not let us give in to it, to give us power to withstand our sorrow. The warning of this passage is that lazy discipleship will deny Jesus when it counts the most. Prayerless discipleship will deny Jesus. That’s exactly what happened in Peter’s case. The Lord’s Prayer is a pre-emptive prayer. Noah built the ark before it started raining, and Jesus says we should be praying before temptation comes. We pray that God would not lead us into temptation, and we pray that if we are tested and tempted, that we will not give in. If you find yourself defeated by your sin time and again, ask yourself whether you’ve been faithful to pre-empt temptation with prayer.

And notice, what he tells them to pray in v.46 is not that the Lord would let this cup pass from him. He tells them to pray for themselves, that they would not enter into temptation. Even in His most harrowing hour, He is expressing concern not for Himself, but for the spiritual good of those who are with Him. **It’s more important to Jesus that His disciples would avoid sinning than that He Himself would avoid suffering.** Even Jesus’ friends are prone to deny Him, in part because we don’t realize the danger we’re in. We don’t realize that temptation is just around the corner. We don’t realize that Satan is six steps ahead of us. We think everything has been fine, and everything will be fine, because we’re with Jesus. Wrong. Jesus knows far better than we do that temptation is just around the corner, and this leads us right into vv.47-53.

2. WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO ENDURE? God’s sovereignty over Jesus’ betrayal (22:47-53)

Luke introduces the scene change in v.47 with the phrase “*While He was still speaking...*” Jesus had not even finished telling them to pray when the temple police arrive and prove Him right. The disciples had good reason to pray against entering temptation, because unbeknownst to them, temptation was coming.

And Judas, one of the twelve, was leading the way. He draws near to Jesus to kiss him, probably to let the temple police know which one to arrest since they were operating under the cover of darkness. But Jesus knows what Judas is doing. He’s not fooled by Judas’ kiss. “*Do you betray the son of man with a kiss?*” Again, Jesus knowingly allows Himself to be betrayed by Judas. Jesus is not taken by surprise or even against His will. He is fully aware of what they are about to do to Him, and He gives Himself up to them. Everything is happening just as Jesus predicted it would back in v.21, “*Behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table.*” Jesus knew it would be Judas. Satan may have been six steps ahead of the disciples, but Jesus was seven steps in front of Satan. But again, it’s not just that Jesus knew what Judas would decide to do. It’s that Jesus knew God had planned that Judas would betray Jesus. Verse 22 “*For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!*” It was determined that Judas would betray Jesus, and Jesus knew it, because Jesus is God, and *the Father loves the Son and shows the Son all that He Himself is doing* (Jn 5:20).

The long and short of it is that Jesus knows what’s about to happen because God has planned it to happen that way, and because Jesus is God’s only Son, the one who has special access to the Father’s plans for the future. Of course, the disciples don’t know that. Look there in v.49, “*When those who were around Him saw what would follow...*” The disciples finally realize what’s about to happen, and of course, in their eyes, what would follow could not possibly be God’s will. The Temple Police are going to take Jesus into custody. And so they think, “Surely this isn’t right. Surely this isn’t God’s will. This won’t bring the kingdom; this will kill the kingdom!” They’re operating on their own natural assumptions and presuppositions. And so they ask Jesus if he wants them to start fighting. They ask about striking with the sword because they had misunderstood Jesus’ instructions about buying a sword in v.36. The kingdom does not come through the sword. It doesn’t come through cultural imperialism or force. It comes through suffering.

What the disciples could not grasp was that God might have actually ordained Jesus’ death as the means of

inaugurating the kingdom. But that's exactly what Jesus teaches in v.53 when he says to his captors, "*this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*" They did not take this hour away from Jesus by force. This hour was given to them by God the Father to do exactly what they were doing – arresting, arraigning, and condemning the king of God's kingdom. God had ordained Judas' betrayal of Jesus, just as Jesus had said in v.22 "*For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined.*" Here it is. This is what was determined. The hour and power of darkness had arrived, Jesus is confident that God Himself had ordained it to be so, and His confidence has now been strengthened by pre-emptive prayer.

This is one of the most important truths that we can know about God and how He relates to evil. **God ordained the greatest evil ever perpetrated, in order to accomplish the greatest good ever achieved.** American Playwright Steven Deitz once said that "One should rather die than be betrayed. There is no deceit in death. It delivers precisely what it has promised. Betrayal, though ... betrayal is the willful slaughter of hope." Yet in the Bible, it is precisely the betrayal of a friend that leads to the only real hope humanity has, which is atonement for our sins in the blood of Jesus Christ. And it was ordained by God. The apostles affirm this doctrine in their preaching of the cross after Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus restores Peter from his denials in this chapter, and he preaches in **Acts 2:23** "*this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*" Jesus was delivered up not only according to God's foreknowledge of what presumably autonomous people would do with their autonomy. He did not simply look down the corridors of time, see what we would do, and adjust His plan as a result, like some omni-competent responder, always out-maneuvering us because he knows what we'll choose to do before we do it. God's foreknowledge is not reactive. It's proactive. Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan of God. In fact, we can go so far as to say that God's foreknowledge is rooted in His foreordination. That is, God foreknows all things because he fore-plans all things, even the greatest evil that was ever perpetrated, the betrayal and murder of the sinless Son of God. And if we are able to believe that the cross is the greatest evil ever perpetrated by humanity, and that it was ordained, then we can believe that lesser evils, as evil and horrific as they still are, are nonetheless ordained by God as well.

We get the same logic in **Acts 4:27-28**, where the Christians are praising God for the release of Peter and John from prison. "*For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, but Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*" And all this has its precedent in the Old Testament, in the Joseph narrative at the end of Genesis. Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery in Egypt, and when his brothers come to Egypt for grain during the famine, they're eventually reunited with Joseph, and Joseph says to them in **Gen 50:20** "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear, I will provide for you and your little ones.*" The brothers intended evil in their action, and God intended good from that same evil action. That's exactly what he did in Judas' case. Judas intended evil, and so did his accomplices. But God intended those same actions for good. And listen again to how Joseph applied God's sovereignty over the evil committed against him. "So do not fear, I will provide for you and your little ones." Recognizing God's goodness and sovereignty over the evil that others commit against us enables us to bless those who do us wrong. It's knowing God's goodness to us in the very evil that others commit against us, that frees us to do good even to our enemies, because we know that God is using their evil for our ultimate good. Even their evil serves us.

We see Jesus doing this very thing in Gethsemane. In Luke 22:50-51 one of the disciples cuts off the servant's ear, but Jesus touches the guy's ear and heals him! Jesus does good to His enemy. And one writer pointed out to me that Jesus did this even though the servant apparently never thanks Him, and never even realizes that the healing is a proof that Jesus actually is the Son of God. If Jesus' enemies had eyes to see, then this healing would have changed the whole situation. Everyone would have repented of their sin, believed in Jesus, and gone to the temple praising God that Jesus is the Messiah. But they were blind, Jesus knew they were blind, Jesus

knew that this healing would not stop them from arresting and detaining him, and He still heals the guy. How can you be so good to someone who has been so bad to you? You can do it by recognizing God's sovereign goodness superintending the evil of your enemies for the good of your soul. Jesus believed in Joseph's God. After healing the servant's ear in v.51, Jesus turns to the leaders in v.52 and basically asks them who they think he is, that they're coming after him with swords and clubs. After all, he just healed the ear of one of their men. He's neither a robber nor a revolutionary. He came to restore, not destroy. This is another one of those passages that would have helped Luke's original reader Theophilus understand that Christianity does not pose a political danger to the state, or threaten to foment social unrest. All Christians ask is that the state provides a social stability and political order that enables us to live a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way (1Tim 2:2). Christianity will revolutionize your life, and the way you look at the world. But Christians are not revolutionaries. Jesus was against spreading His religion by the sword. There is no such thing as a forced conversion to Christianity. That's impossible. People who become Christians don't convert. They are converted, passively, by God, who regenerates our hearts and gives us new desires to turn from sin and trust in Christ.

Jesus then confronts his captors in their hypocrisy and cowardice in v.53. He had been teaching publicly in the temple day after day over the last few weeks, yet the chief priests and elders had never laid a hand on him there. But now, under cover of night, secretly, away from the crowds, they come and do as they please with him. And when he adds v.53 "*this is your hour, the power of darkness*," he's saying that the ultimate reason they hadn't apprehended Him earlier wasn't their hypocrisy or cowardice. It was God's sovereignty. They didn't apprehend him back then, because God wouldn't allow it until now.

3. WHAT HAS JESUS ENDURED FROM US? Our duplicity in Peter's denial (LUKE 22:54-62)

The temple police take Jesus into custody, and they take him to the home of the high priest, who would have been a wealthy man whose house had been built around an inner courtyard. Peter follows the entourage at a distance to see what would happen to Jesus. When you look at the pronouns in verses 54-55, you see how Peter is already sliding into a mindset and environment where denying Jesus will be all too easy. Verse 54 says "*Then they seized him*," the temple police as representatives of the leaders and the rest of the crowd who had shown up at Gethsemane. Verse 55 uses the same pronoun. "*When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them*." Who is Peter sitting down with in v.55? In v.54 "they" refers to Jesus' captors, so in v.55 it seems that "they" again refers to the same group, Jesus' captors. They are the ones who kindle a fire. Jesus' enemies kindle a fire, and Peter sits right down with them and warms himself, rather than going in and suffering with Jesus. That's cold. He might as well be siding with them.

The accusations against Peter begin to come in v.56. A servant girl – a lowly, un-intimidating servant girl – gets a good look at Peter in the light of the fire and says "*This man was also with him*." She was probably there when Jesus was apprehended, and she probably saw Peter in Gethsemane with Jesus, and so she's most likely implying that Peter should be arrested with Jesus. But Peter lies. He denies that he was in Gethsemane with Jesus. He gives false testimony about the facts of the case, and then to make his testimony seem even more firm, eh says "Woman, I do not know Him." Now it's not just that he wasn't there; it's that Peter doesn't know Jesus. A few minutes go by while Peter is sitting there by the fire, thinking about what he had just said. And then in v.58 some man comes up to him and says "*You also are one of them*." Now the accusation is that Peter is one of Jesus' disciples, he belongs with them. Here's an opportunity for Peter to recover himself. Which "them" will Peter side with? The 'them' around the fire, or the 'them' who should be condemned with Jesus? And Peter denies it. "Man, I am not." He now disowns not only Jesus but his fellow disciples. Even unbelievers know where Peter belongs; yet Peter is unwilling to admit it.

Another hour goes by in v.59 before someone else says to the rest of them, "*Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean*." Peter's accent was giving him away. Evidently he had said enough that the others could either hear a consistent accent or piece together from what Peter said that he was from Galilee. But Peter says in v.60 "*Man, I do not know what you are talking about*." Now he's claiming total ignorance. And

Luke says *“Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the lord turned and looked at Peter....”* Jesus knew what was happening even from a distance, even as Jesus himself was being mistreated. And the glance that Jesus gives here is not a condemning or frustrated glance. It’s a glance of mercy for Peter’s weakness. It’s a glance that recalls that Jesus had prayed for Peter, that his faith would not fail, and that when he had turned again, he’d strengthen his brothers. It’s a glance that gently rebuked Peter’s overconfidence when he said *“Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”* It’s a glance that said, I have prayed for you. Now you pray for you. And above all, it’s a glance that shows Jesus is not dying as a fool. He’s not walking the plank unknowingly. It’s all happening just as he said it would.

The old Anglican minister J.C. Ryle noted that Peter’s denial didn’t just happen spontaneously without prior warning. Peter slid down a slippery slope toward this denial. It started with strident self-confidence, *“I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.”* That arrogance leads him to choose sleep over supplication in the Garden of Gethsemane. That prayerlessness leads directly to powerlessness, which enables Peter to follow Jesus only from a distance. And from a distance, Peter falls in with the wrong crowd, denies that he was with Jesus, denies that he even knows Jesus, and even denies any association with other people who follow Jesus. Spiritual pride is a slippery slope to spiritual destruction. Pride will lead you to prayerlessness, which erodes devotion to Jesus.

I want to speak to those of you who are busy for the Lord. I want you to be busy for the Lord. Jesus wants you to be busy for the Lord. But in your busyness, you cannot become prayerless. Busyness in the Lord is a double-edged sword. The good edge is that it can often keep you bearing good fruit, it can keep your mind off yourself and your sorrows, and it can keep you out of sin. The bad edge is that you get hooked on the high of what appears to be productivity. Busyness can become a narcotic that makes prayer look boring and unproductive. And when you begin to think that way, Satan’s got you. You’ve given in to the temptation of prayerlessness, and all the while you think you are strong in the Lord, because you’re the one serving everyone else. But prayer-less discipleship is powerless discipleship, and it will deny Jesus when it’s tested.

It is not hard to see our own duplicity in Peter’s denials of Jesus. In one breath, we boast of our love for Jesus and the things of him. We condemn others that their love has gone cold, or their worship is not right, or their obedience is defective. Yet when it comes to suffering for Jesus ourselves, we sleep for sorrow and follow Him at a distance. We want to sit at his right hand or his left in His glory, and we say we can drink the cup that He would drink. But when the cup is passed to us, we balk. Jesus knows the duplicity of our hearts far better than we do. And that’s one of the great reasons he gave us the Lord’s Prayer, as a means of grace so that we would not enter into the temptation that He knows we’re oblivious to, but that is just around the corner for us.

CONCLUSION

And even when we fall because of our prayerlessness, all is not lost. Jesus has prayed for us, and He is still praying. Listen to how Heb 4 and 5 speak of Jesus’ ministry to us. *“We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.... 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, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.*

Jesus restored Peter. And he can restore you too. But if you would be restored like Peter after falling like Peter, you have to repent like Peter. You can’t act like you did nothing wrong. And the sign of true repentance is willingness to suffer with Jesus like Peter himself eventually taught in **1Pet 4:13** *“But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed....If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.”* That’s what restoration looked

like for Peter. I wonder, what will it look like for you?