

STUDYING THE BOOK OF MATTHEW
IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Lesson 100 - The Plot Against Jesus - Matthew 26:1-5

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

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MT 26:1 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, [2] "As you know, the Passover is two days away--and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

MT 26:3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, [4] and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. [5] "But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 100 - The Plot Against Jesus - Matthew 26:1-5

- 1220. To whom was Jesus talking? When? (26:1)
- 1221. How close was the Feast of the Passover? (26:2)
- 1222. What did Jesus say would happen at the Feast of the Passover? (26:2)
- 1223. Who presided over the gathering of chief priests and elders? (26:3)
- 1224. Where did the chief priests and elders assemble? Why? (26:3-4)
- 1225. What group got together in secret? Why? (26:3-4)
- 1226. What did the chief priests and elders gather to do? (26:4)
- 1227. What was the chief priests' and elders' ultimate desire concerning Jesus? (26:4)
- 1228. Whom did the religious leaders plan to arrest? Why? (26:4-5)
- 1229. When did the religious leaders not want to carry out their plan? (26:5)
- 1230. Why were the religious leaders reluctant to act during the feast? (26:5)
- 1231. Why would devout religious leaders plot to murder someone like Jesus?

1232. How can we avoid justifying evil acts with the belief that we are serving God?

Lesson 101 - Jesus Anointed at Bethany - Matthew 26:6-13

MT 26:6 While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, [7] a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

MT 26:8 When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. [9] "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

MT 26:10 Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. [11] The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. [12] When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. [13] I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 101 - Jesus Anointed at Bethany - Matthew 26:6-13

1233. In what kind of place was Jesus when this scene opened? (26:6)
1234. Where was Jesus staying? (26:6)
1235. The woman who came to see Christ had what with her? Why? (26:7)
1236. What did the woman do with her perfume? (26:7)
1237. How did the disciples react to the sacrifice they witnessed? (26:8)
1238. What did the disciples claim would have been a better use for the perfume? (26:9)
1239. How did Jesus respond to the disciples' indignation and muttering? (26:10)
1240. What did Jesus call the woman's act? Why? (26:10-11)
1241. Why did Jesus say the woman did the right thing? (26:11)
1242. How did Jesus describe this anointing? (26:12)
1243. What recognition did Jesus promise for the woman? (26:13)

1244. When are we most likely to bad-mouth the efforts of other believers?

Lesson 102 - Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus - Matthew 26:14-16

MT 26:14 Then one of the Twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to the chief priests [15] and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. [16] From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 102 - Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus - Matthew 26:14-16

1245. Who is the central character in this passage? (26:14)
1246. To what elite group did Judas belong? (26:14)
1247. How did the meeting between Judas and the priests get started? (26:14)
1248. With what group did Judas meet? Why? (26:14-15)
1249. What offer did Judas make to the chief priests? (26:15)
1250. How did Judas refer to Jesus? (26:15)
1251. How did the chief priests show they were interested in Judas's offer? (26:15)
1252. What did Judas get for betraying Jesus? (26:15)
1253. What did Judas do once he struck a deal with the chief priests? (26:16)
1254. How did Judas spend his last days with Jesus? (26:16)
1255. If Jesus knew everything, why do you think He picked as one of His disciples a man who would eventually betray Him?

Lesson 103 - The Lord's Supper - Matthew 26:17-30

MT 26:17 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

MT 26:18 He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, `The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples

at your house.' " [19] So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

MT 26:20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. [21] And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."

MT 26:22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

MT 26:23 Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. [24] The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

MT 26:25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."*

MT 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

MT 26:27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. [28] This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. [29] I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

MT 26:30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 103 - The Lord's Supper - Matthew 26:17-30

1256. What was going on during the time of the incidents described in this passage? (26:17)

1257. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? (26:17)

1258. What instructions did Jesus give His followers? (26:18)

1259. What was the response of the disciples to Jesus' instructions? (26:19)

1260. What did Jesus and His disciples do that evening? (26:20)

1261. What shocking statement did Jesus utter during His meal with the disciples? (26:21)

1262. How did the disciples react to Jesus' announcement? (26:22)

1263. How did Jesus identify the one who would betray Him? (26:23)
1264. What sobering statement did Jesus make about His betrayer? (26:24)
1265. How did Judas respond to the words of Christ? (26:25)
1266. What did Jesus say about the bread on the table? (26:26)
1267. What remarks did Jesus make about the wine they were drinking? (26:27-28)
1268. When did Jesus say He would eat with His disciples again? (26:29)
1269. What did the group do after they finished eating? (26:30)
1270. What does Communion or the Eucharist mean to you personally?

Lesson 104 - Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial - Matthew 26:31-35

MT 26:31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written:

" `I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

[32] But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

MT 26:33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."

MT 26:34 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

MT 26:35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 104 - Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial - Matthew 26:31-35

1271. What prediction about His followers did Jesus make on the Mount of Olives? (26:31)
1272. To what did Jesus compare Himself and His disciples? (26:31)
1273. What was significant about Jesus' statement and His situation? (26:31)

1274. What did Christ predict about Himself? (26:32)
1275. Where did Jesus say He would go? When? (26:32)
1276. How did Peter respond to Jesus' statement that all the disciples would abandon Him? (26:33)
1277. What prediction did Jesus make about Peter? (26:34)
1278. What did Peter have to say when Jesus said Peter would disown Him? (26:35)
1279. How did the rest of the disciples react to these depressing comments by Christ? (26:35)
1280. How is the commitment of many Christians today much like that of the eleven disciples with Jesus in the garden?

Lesson 105 - Gethsemane - Matthew 26:36-46

MT 26:36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." [37] He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. [38] Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

MT 26:39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

MT 26:40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. [41] "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

MT 26:42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

MT 26:43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. [44] So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

MT 26:45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. [46] Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 105 - Gethsemane - Matthew 26:36-46

1281. Who was Jesus with? When? (26:36)
1282. Where did Jesus and His companions go together? Why? (26:36)
1283. What did Jesus tell the disciples? (26:36)
1284. With which disciples did Jesus choose to pray? (26:37)
1285. What was Jesus' state of mind at the time? (26:37)
1286. What kind of pain did Jesus confess to His friends? (26:38)
1287. When Jesus went on a bit further and fell to the ground, what did He do? (26:39)
1288. What scene greeted Jesus when He returned from praying? (26:40)
1289. What kind of warning did Jesus give Peter? (26:40-41)
1290. What did Jesus do after speaking with Peter? (26:42)
1291. What were the disciples doing while Jesus was praying the second time? (26:43)
1292. How did Jesus react when He found His disciples sleeping a second time? (26:44)
1293. When Jesus finished praying, what did He say to His disciples? (26:45)
1294. What event happened after Jesus prayed? (26:46)
1295. Why would it have been very advantageous for the disciples to have stayed awake and prayed?

Lesson 106 - Jesus Arrested - Matthew 26:47-56

MT 26:47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. [48] Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." [49] Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

MT 26:50 Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. [51] With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

MT 26:52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. [53] Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? [54] But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

MT 26:55 At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. [56] But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 106 - Jesus Arrested - Matthew 26:47-56

1296. What happened just as Jesus finished praying in the garden of Gethsemane? (26:47)
1297. Who accompanied Judas? (26:47)
1298. What kind of crowd accompanied Judas? (26:47)
1299. How did Judas greet Jesus? (26:49)
1300. What was significant about the signal Judas used to point out Jesus? (26:48)
1301. What command did Jesus give Judas? (26:50)
1302. What did the men in the crowd do when Jesus spoke? (26:50)
1303. What did one of Jesus' disciples do in an attempt to protect his master? (26:51)
1304. What did Jesus tell the disciple who attacked? (26:52)
1305. What truthful "boast" did Jesus make? (26:53)
1306. Why didn't Jesus take advantage of His disciple's brave attack? (26:54)
1307. What did Jesus say to the crowd? (26:55)
1308. What happened when it became obvious that Jesus would be arrested? (26:56)
1309. Why do you think this mob came at night to arrest Jesus?

1310. What is especially awful about the way Judas betrayed Jesus?

Lesson 107 - Before the Sanhedrin - Matthew 26:57-68

MT 26:57 Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. [58] But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

MT 26:59 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. [60] But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward [61] and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' "

MT 26:62 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" [63] But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

MT 26:64 "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

MT 26:65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. [66] What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

MT 26:67 Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him [68] and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 107 - Before the Sanhedrin - Matthew 26:57-68

1311. After being arrested, where was Jesus taken? (26:57)

1312. Who was assembled where Jesus was taken? Why? (26:57, 59)

1313. Who had followed Jesus at a distance? Where was he? (26:58)

1314. What did Peter do in an attempt to observe the proceedings against Jesus? (26:58)

1315. What were the chief priests and Sanhedrin hoping to find? (26:59)
1316. Who came forward to testify at this "trial"? (26:60)
1317. What did one witness claim to have heard Jesus say? (26:61)
1318. When the high priest first began questioning Jesus, how did Jesus respond? (26:62-63)
1319. What question did the high priest finally ask Jesus about His identity? (26:63)
1320. How did Jesus answer the high priest? (26:64)
1321. What prophetic statement did Jesus make in His defense? (26:64)
1321. How did Jesus' claim affect the high priest? (26:65-66)
1322. What emotional and physical abuse did Christ endure at the hands of these spiritual leaders? (26:67-68)
1323. How is it possible for an innocent person to be accused and convicted of a crime?
1324. Why do you think Christ didn't argue with his accusers and make some sort of defense?

Lesson 108 - Peter Disowns Jesus - Matthew 26:69-75

MT 26:69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

MT 26:70 But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

MT 26:71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

MT 26:72 He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

MT 26:73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away."

MT 26:74 Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. [75] Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 108 - Peter Disowns Jesus - Matthew 26:69-75

1325. Where was Peter? (26:69)
1326. Who approached Peter? Why? (26:69)
1327. What did the servant girl say to Peter? Why? (26:69)
1328. How did Peter respond to the servant girl's question? (26:70)
1329. What did Peter do after his exchange with the servant girl? (26:71)
1330. When another girl approached Peter, what did she say? (26:71)
1331. How did Peter handle the second girl's claim? (26:72)
1332. Why did a third group of folks insist that Peter had to be a follower of Christ? (26:73)
1333. What extreme reaction did Peter have to the allegation that he was a follower of Jesus? (26:74)
1334. What happened when Peter denied knowing Christ? (26:74-75)
1335. What memory did the cock's crow trigger in Peter's mind? (26:75)
1336. How did Peter react when he realized what he had done? (26:75)
1337. What do you think Peter was hoping to accomplish by hanging around the trial of Jesus?
1338. When has your faith in Jesus cost you something?