

The Surrender of Jesus – Pastor Vinh Doan– Matthew 26:30-56

NOTE FROM PASTOR JONATHAN

Easter is coming! Let's invite any family members, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances who don't believe in Jesus yet. Let's also pray for all those who don't know that Jesus died and came back from the dead to give them eternal life. They need God's Spirit to open their eyes to see why Easter is so beautiful.

After Easter, we'll have three weeks on our church's vision. Let's pray that the church will be moved to live rightly in light of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Don't forget, leaders, that WSBM gives you a 50% discount on all courses! If you want the code, send me an email.

Also, our next **Mission Night** is next Thursday, where you'll get a firsthand look at our recent **short-term mission trips to Thailand, Aruba, and the Middle East**. Come and hear **powerful stories, inspiring testimonies**, and be amazed at all that **God is doing** in these places. Please register using the link here: [Spring STM Team Reports Night - Willingdon Church](#)

Matthew 26:30–56

³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 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.' ³² But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." ³³ Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." ³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." ³⁵ Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same.

³⁶ 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." ³⁷ And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." ³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." ⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

⁴⁷ 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. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." ⁴⁹ And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take

the sword will perish by the sword.⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me."⁵⁶ But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Let's Warm Up: Questions to break the ice.

1. Have you ever overestimated your courage to do something?

Have you told yourself you were going to talk to a certain cute guy or girl? But when you saw them in person, all the butterflies in the world suddenly appeared in your stomach? Perhaps you thought speaking in front of your work team or classmates wasn't going to be a big deal. But once in front of everyone, you suddenly feel your palms are sweaty, knees weak, and arms heavy.

I took a swimming class as a kid. At the end of the week, we got to jump off the diving board. I was so excited to climb up, but when I got there, I was terrified. My legs couldn't move and I panicked. The kids behind me kept telling me to jump. The teacher eventually said she'd climb up and help me down. Well, she did so by pushing me off the diving board.

In this week's passage, Peter overestimates his courage and loyalty to Jesus.

2. Who do you love more as you get to know them more?

Do you have a spouse that you love and appreciate more and more as you grow in your marriage together? Some celebrities are controversial, but some are just seemingly all-around good people. Every news story that pops up about them just makes you realize what a great person they are.

My son's always been lovable, but as he's growing, I'm able to appreciate and love him in more ways.

In this week's passage, we learn more about Jesus' love for us, and that should lead us to love Him more.

3. What do you do the night before a difficult, challenging situation (e.g., a big exam, major surgery, or a trip with difficult logistics)?

All of us have been there. What do you do? Do you stay up all night trying to make sure you're ready? You go through your flash cards or luggage over and over again to make sure you got everything. Do you give up trying to prepare and distract yourself? "My brain is fried! I need to let my brain decompress."

Are you stressed, anxious, or irritable? Or do you let go and let God? Are you somewhere in between?

In this week's passage, Jesus prepares for His crucifixion by praying to the Father.

Let's Get Started: Questions to start thinking about the main themes.

4. How do you feel about “surrendering” (e.g., rights, freedoms, or a conflict)?

We have the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/how-rights-protected/guide-canadian-charter-rights-freedoms.html>) that guarantees the fundamental rights of everyone in Canada, whether they're a citizen or not. Even visitors have rights. How would you feel surrendering your right to life, liberty, or personal security? Would you give it up for personal gain? What if it was for the sake of helping others?

We also tend to want to win disagreements. Some arguments are easy to give up on, but I think most of us have specific issues with certain people we have trouble letting go of. Are we OK surrendering the battle for a greater good like maintaining a relationship or sustaining peace?

5. How do you feel about Jesus being sorrowful and troubled? Does it challenge your idea of Jesus?

If you look at famous paintings of Jesus praying in the garden, there's a mixture of expressions on His face. Sometimes, He looks pretty chill or concerned. But most of the time, He doesn't look like He's “sorrowful and troubled ... sorrowful, even to death”.

Jesus is God (John 1:1). He has predicted His death repeatedly (Matthew 16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-19). In fact, Jesus had planned His death since before the world was created (1 Peter 1:20). He knows what's coming, and it really bothers Him. Does it seem weird that Jesus is fully God but is stressed and sad? He knows He's going to pop back to life on the third day, so why fret?

6. Why is it easy to spend hours looking at a screen (e.g., social media, streaming videos/movies) but hard to spend several minutes in focused prayer? Why is that a problem?

Some stats show Canadians spend an average of almost four hours a day on social media (<https://prioridata.com/data/social-media-usage/>) and watching streaming or broadcast TV for over three hours per day (<https://madeinca.ca/internet-statistics-canada/>). Some of you are probably thinking, “Wow, only four?”

Sadly, I couldn't find any stats on the duration of prayer for Canadian Christians, so these are mostly from the US. One website surveyed almost 7,500 Christians and asked how long their prayer sessions lasted (https://graceandprayers.com/christian-prayer-frequency-statistics/#How_Long_Christians_Prayer_Per_Prayer_Session). Most prayed for less than one minute, with the vast majority praying for less than five minutes. Another survey found that the average American Christian prays twice daily for 18 minutes a day (<https://www.christianpost.com/news/87-percent-of-americans-who-pray-say-prayers-were-answered.html>). A recent survey found that half of Christian youth in South Korea spend less than 5 minutes a day on doing things related to Christianity (<https://www.christiandaily.com/news/most-christian-youth-in-s-korea-spend-less-than-5-min-on-faith>).

Those are some very different numbers! Our time spent on entertainment is measured in **hours**, but our time spent in prayer is measured in **minutes**. Why is that the case?

Entertaining vs. Boring. Social media is designed to give us quick dopamine hits of pleasure. It's not meant to stir our souls or cause deeper reflection. Prayer is ultimately about spiritual formation, developing a deeper relationship with God. That takes effort and time.

But, everything worthwhile takes effort and time. Whether we're learning a skill, growing a friendship, or studying a subject. If we never develop the patience to do the work, we won't grow.

Doing vs. Praying. Pastor Vinh revealed his struggle to pray: "Children, Youth, young adults or fully grown adults, praying is hard for most people, especially me who would rather get stuff done in my own strength." When it's time to get things done, we get things done. When it's time to relax, we relax. Prayer often ends up fitting in neither category. It's not doing because it (seemingly) doesn't help us accomplish our tasks. It's not relaxing because it takes effort and makes us think about what we need to do.

It's dangerous because we end up never spending quality time with God. We also develop self-dependence instead of dependence on God.

Thirsting for Wrong Things vs. Thirsting for God. One of the books I'm reading right now is *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* by Donald S. Whitney. He writes, "Just because a man longs for something that can be found only in God doesn't mean he's looking for God. A man may pine for peace and have no interest in the Prince of Peace. Even most of those who claim they are questing for God are not thirsting for God as He has revealed Himself in Scripture but only for God as they want Him to be, or just a god who will give them what they want." We're thirsty for entertainment and fun, thinking we'll find peace and joy, but that only comes from God and on God's terms.

Donald Whitney lays out the danger of this kind of thirst further down the page: "The eternal tragedy is that if the empty soul never properly thirsts on Earth, he will thirst in hell, as did the rich man who pled in vain for even the tip of a moist finger to be touched to his tongue (Luke 16:24)."

7. Pastor Vinh said, "When we know more about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, I believe it deepens our love for them." Why does our knowledge of God impact our love for Him?

Your answers will vary, but here are some suggestions.

More Knowledge. We're finite beings in the face of an infinitely great and loving God. Everything we learn about Him will point to His greatness and love. There's always more to learn. As we know Him more, we realize how much *more* loving He is than we had expected. That leads us to love Him back even more.

I've recommended this book a lot, but check out Pastor Vinh's 2024 recommendation: *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* by Dane Ortland. He does a great job at showing how big Jesus' heart is for us.

More Appreciation. As we learn more about God, we appreciate Him more. For example, most people can appreciate music at a basic level. But when you study music theory, study the artist's life, break down the lyrics, or get audiophile-quality headphones, you're able to appreciate on a deeper level. Those things were always there before, but now it's on your radar.

As you learn more about God, you're able to appreciate Him in ways you didn't know existed. Even as I continue to study the Bible, the Holy Spirit brings me new insights and angles I didn't see before. In this morning's Bible reading, I looked at

More Experience. God can't reveal everything about Himself to you at once. He works in your life over time. Your knowledge of God becomes paired with experience. You read about God's patience and know He's slow to anger, but when you see how He was patient with you during your rebellious years, you *know* His patience because you've experienced it. As abstract ideas about God become concrete, your love becomes concrete as well.

Let's Dig In: Questions to discuss the passage and how we can respond.

8. What does Jesus' prayer tell you about what He is going through and what He is about to face?

After celebrating Passover, they go to Gethsemane. Check out a video on it: <https://youtu.be/bJXS-Ee0tsc>.

Sorrowful, even to death. This phrase can also be translated as "deeply grieved, even to the point of death" (NET), "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (NIV), or "crushed with grief to the point of death" (NLT). Luke records that Jesus' "sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). And that's *after* an angel strengthened Him (Luke 22:43).

Jesus is facing His biggest challenge yet, being humiliated, beaten, and executed on a cross. By itself, that is plenty of reason to be sorrowful and troubled. But that's not all of it. (See next point.)

This cup. In the Old Testament, God used the image of a cup filled with foaming wine to illustrate His wrath (Jeremiah 25:15-29; Isaiah 51:21-22; Lamentation 4:21). He forced wicked nations to drink His wrath.

Jesus is the "propitiation" for our sins (1 John 2:2). Propitiation means something that satisfies God's wrath. God is righteous and just, meaning He loves what's right/good and punishes sin/evil. But people naturally disobey God. We all fall short of His standards (Romans 3:23) and deserve punishment (Romans 3:26).

It's not so much what we did, but who we did it to. We have offended and rebelled against an infinite God, so we deserve an infinite penalty. By satisfying God's wrath, Jesus took all the wrath/anger/punishment onto Himself. Not just what one person deserved but the sins of the world. (What's infinity times 10 billion?) Jesus knew that was what He was soon to experience. (Check out this explanation for how Jesus could experience eternity within three days: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/jesus-eternal-punishment-hours/>.)

Take this cup. That should be shocking. Up until now, Jesus has been all about the Father's will and nothing has phased Him. No problem, no hesitation. But now Jesus is so stressed and sorrowful that He's asking the Father to change the plan, if possible. Jesus is fully God but also fully human. If there's any way He can avoid this terrible fate, He would rather go through that instead.

Not as I will, but as you will. Ultimately, whether He has to go to the cross or not, He will still obey the Father. He will still face terrible wrath and suffering. He will do it. Yes, the cross and God's wrath for sin are unimaginably terrible and painful, but Jesus will still go through with it. He's obedient, even to the point of death.

9. What can you learn about facing challenges from Jesus' prayer?

Pray! As Pastor Vinh said, "Jesus did not suck it up and get on with it, Jesus did not try harder, Jesus did not even tell his disciples, 'Don't worry about this, this too shall pass and I will go to a better place once this is all done' - instead, Jesus prayed." He could have done anything to prepare for His terrible death, but He picked prayer. He prayed right up to His arrest.

When we face challenges, stress, and sorrow, let's pray! Seek God. Cry out.

I'm reading *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* by Donald S. Whitney. He quotes Jonathan Edwards in the introduction: "The members have the same kind of life with the head. It would be strange if Christians should not be of the same temper and spirit that Christ is of." Since our life comes from Jesus, it would be weird to live differently than Jesus. Since Jesus prayed in times of trouble, we should, too.

Acknowledge how you feel. When Jesus faced the cross, He didn't put on a happy face or quote a Bible verse to cheer Himself up. "Hey Jesus, God has plans to prosper you ..." (Jeremiah 29:11). "Why are you so sad? You know all things work together for good" (Romans 8:28). He admitted how badly He felt.

We see plenty of examples in the Bible. David was the "man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). That included presenting His grief to God. Check out Psalm 31:9-13.

<p>⁹Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also.</p> <p>¹⁰For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away.</p>	<p>¹¹Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me.</p> <p>¹²I have been forgotten like one who is dead; I have become like a broken vessel.</p> <p>¹³For I hear the whispering of many— terror on every side!— as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.</p>
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Just look at how vividly David describes his predicament. He didn't keep it in a private journal. These prayers became part of Israel's public worship, and we can pray along with David 3000 years later.

You don't need to mince words or use euphemisms. Be honest with your pain to God and others. He knows how you feel.

Pray honestly. Again, Jesus is honest with how He's feeling. He doesn't fake enthusiasm. "I've been waiting for this since the beginning of time! This is why I've come! Let's go! I ain't afraid of no cross!" Jesus prays, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

It's OK to ask God to get you out of your trouble. It's OK to share how you feel about what's waiting for you and pray for relief.

Get others to join you. There were plenty of times Jesus prayed by Himself (Luke 5:16), but Jesus didn't face this challenge alone. He invited His disciples to stay up with Him.

Don't struggle alone. Invite others to pray. Let them know your needs so they can approach God with you.

Submit to God. Despite His approaching pain and suffering, Jesus prays “your will be done”. This was part of the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples: “Your kingdom come, your will be done” (Matthew 6:10).

I love the song Your Will Be Done by CityAlight (<https://youtu.be/8nLXXephYRI>). My favorite line is “My hope was sure, when there my Saviour prayed: ‘Father, not my will but Yours be done.’”. If Jesus did not obey, we would all be hopeless. But, praise Jesus, He obeyed the Father’s will!!!

10. How does Jesus’ faith during difficulty help us to trust during our difficulties?

Jesus doesn’t panic when Judas and His betrayers come. Legion was a military unit that varied in size, between 6,000 and 7,000 soldiers during Jesus’ time. The Gospel of John records that Judas came with a band of soldiers. Band is σπεῖρα (spi-rah) in Greek, usually referring to 1/10th of a legion, about 600 soldiers. “My enemies brought 1/10th of a legion. Ha! I could get 120 times more soldiers. Not just human soldiers, but supernatural angels!”

This reminds us of when the king of Syria surrounded the city the prophet Elisha was in. When Elisha’s servant panicked, Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes. The servant saw that although the army surrounded the city, an even bigger angelic army surrounded them (2 Kings 6:11-17).

That’s not all. Jesus could do much more. With just His words, the disciples saw Jesus command thousands of demons (Mark 5:1-13) and the weather (Matthew 8:26-27). The disciples didn’t yet realize that Jesus could hit DELETE on the universe and make a new one in a heartbeat (Colossians 1:15-17).

Of course, we don’t have the same powers as Jesus. But that’s ok! If God was willing to sacrifice His Son and use His power to resurrect Him for our benefit, God will definitely use His power for our benefit (Romans 8:31-39). Nothing can prevent Him from caring for us. Not even death can separate us from God!

11. Pastor Vinh said, “Suffering Servants like Jesus today, if we are honest with ourselves, we would not look to, we would not follow their example ... We would rather follow someone seemingly strong and mighty, wealthy, or better still, follow someone to give us everything our hearts desire.” Why is it easier to follow someone who gives us what we want over someone who leads us to surrendering and suffering?

Jesus’ followers thought Jesus would lead them to power and success. When He fed the 5,000, the people wanted to make Him their king because He could supply their needs (John 6:14-15). Disciples wanted political access and power when Jesus established His kingdom (Matthew 20:20-23; Mark 8:33-34). They wanted Jesus to destroy those who disrespected them (Luke 9:52-56). They didn’t want Jesus to die (Matthew 16:21-28). Wouldn’t all of us want a leader who defeats His (and our) enemies and gives us positions of privilege?

Often, we have our own expectations for what following Jesus would be like. Some of us come from a Prosperity Gospel background (<https://www.gotquestions.org/prosperity-gospel.html>), where people believe that following Jesus will lead to health, wealth, and success. Prosperity Gospel preachers like Joel Osteen, Kenneth Copeland, Joseph Prince, and others draw in millions of viewers and dollars weekly. Come on, would any of you complain if God gave you an extra million dollars or fixed every one of your problems?

Even if people aren't explicitly buying into the Prosperity Gospel view, many of us fall into the Country Club mindset, where the church exists to serve and meet our specific needs (<https://churchanswers.com/blog/ten-signs-that-your-church-members-think-the-church-is-a-country-club/>). Wouldn't you want to be part of a church that checked all of your boxes and did everything the way you liked?

Instead, Jesus' path to victory passes through unbearable suffering and sacrifice, after which He calls us to take up our cross and follow Him (Luke 14:25-33). The end result is eternal life with Him (John 17:3). Our heavenly home will be infinitely more valuable than a \$500 million mansion (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/15/homes/bel-air-mansion-the-one/index.html>). Our eternal bodies that never experience decay will far outweigh 80 years of perfect health. Our eternal reward will far outweigh any momentary suffering (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

12. How are we like the disciples? How can we learn from their example?

As Pastor Vinh said, "We are more like the disciples than we care to admit."

Self-Confidence => Reliance on God. The disciples were probably on an overall spiritual high. Jesus had His triumphal entry, confronted the corrupt religious system, flipped the religious leaders' theological, and more. They celebrated the Passover, one of the big three pilgrimage festivals. They sang a hymn.

While on this spiritual high, Peter says that all the other disciples could fall away, but he wouldn't. He thought he was the superstar disciple. When Jesus is arrested, Peter abandons Him like the rest of them. Maybe Peter should have said, "Jesus, they all may scatter. I might scatter, too. Help me to stay with you!"

It's easy to think we're super spiritual and holy on Sunday morning while we're praising God with one voice. But it's easy for us to fall away during the week.

When everyone is sharing what they did over the weekend at work, do we confidently talk about our time worshipping God? Are we proud of dedicating a significant portion of our lives to God, whether it be in Life Groups, devotionals, serving, and more? When someone tells us about a struggle they're going through, do we offer to pray for them? If someone asks us what we believe about a controversial topic, do we confidently speak the truth in love? Or are we scared?

Too Weak to Pray => Build Up Prayer Habit. When Jesus called the disciples to pray, they fell asleep. Jesus calls them out three times. They aren't praying for something minor ("Dear God, my tummy hurts from the Passover meal."). The disciples could see Jesus was so, so, so, so sorrowful. Their spirits were willing, but their flesh was weak.

It's hard to go from zero to sixty on short notice. Prayer habits are built up over time. The amount of time we pray reflects our reliance on God. The more we rely on Him, the more we pray.

To help you pray, you can try praying out loud. That's what people have done throughout history. Praying silently is a relatively modern development. You can also try journaling or drawing/doodling your prayers as a way to process and record. Go for a walk while praying. There are many ways to improve your prayers.

Fight Battles Our Own Way => Surrender to God's Will. When Judas and the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, Jesus said, "Friend, do what you came to do." Jesus put up no resistance because He knew God's plan. Peter pulls out a sword and attacks. What's funny is how *useless* his attack was. Peter didn't attack the head legionnaire, slash open a passage for the disciples to escape, or get Jesus' crew into battle formations. He cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Good job, Peter! That's really going to help Jesus escape!

We often fight our own battles because we don't know God's will. Do we know God's will for our careers, relationships, health, and futures? Of course, we won't know the specific directions or choices God wants us to make, but we can know the principles and goals God provides through His Word.

I'm reading Paul David Tripp's book *Marriage: 6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make*. (Big thanks to Pastor Isaac for the recommendation. Keep praying for his recovery!). He writes that the core issue in our marriages isn't incompatibility but worship. We aren't worshipping God and seeking His kingdom. When we're angry at our spouses, is it because they broke God's laws or our own? Did our spouse rebel against God or us?

Sometimes, we know God's will, but we refuse to follow it. Peter knew Jesus was going to die. If we're struggling to submit to God's will, let's pray for His help.