

Matthew 22-09-04a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 4th of September, 2022. We begin a new chapter in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 26.

Chapter 26. Bless God's blessing on our study, on our time together and begin. Father, thank you for granting us another day, another opportunity to make use of those provisions and expressions of grace that you have given to us to be good stewards of our resources, our time, our talents, our opportunities to represent the Lord Jesus in this earth.

We pray that our study this morning will contribute to our preparedness, our insight, and our ability to operate in your power through the presence of your spirit and the guiding light of the truth that we see before us, most clearly in the example of the Lord Jesus himself. We pray that together we can grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior and be prepared for his kingdom and for yours. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

Matthew chapter 26. Let's read the first portion here together. Now it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these sayings that he said to his disciples, you know that after two days is the Passover and the son of man will be delivered up to be crucified.

He may have said a lot more than that, but you can imagine that those words, despite Jesus' previous efforts had to have been a shock and evidently nobody remembers anything he might've said after these words. Delivered up to be crucified. Then the chief priests and the scribes and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest who was called Caiaphas and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill him.

But they said not during the feast lest there be an uproar among the people. Let's take a closer look at these first five verses. Now it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these sayings.

We have had other notations like this in the gospel of Matthew where he introduces a new section generally of narrative by saying when Jesus had finished these sayings. This is unique in that he says all these sayings and it seems to be an indication that Matthew is finished giving us the extended teaching discourses that we've had in the earlier part of the book. Had finished all these sayings.

And of course those extend if you have a red letter edition, you will see that your preceding four pages are almost entirely red ink. Beginning in chapter 23 when Jesus spoke to the multitudes and said to his disciples. And we have seen him deliver the woes to the scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites lamenting over Jerusalem and predicting its destruction.

Do you not see these buildings? And he said there's no two stones that will remain on one another. Then chapter 24, which we covered in extensive detail. Chapter 25 with the parables of the wise and foolish virgins, the parable of the talents and the sheep and goats judgment which we have just completed.

After Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, you know that after two days is the Passover. And it's always tricky counting days in the Jewish world at the time of the Lord Jesus with their days beginning at sundown. The common understanding of the Friday crucifixion and a silent Wednesday.

And so people say, well, when he says after two days he is speaking on Tuesday. He's talking about Wednesday where scripture doesn't record anything as happening in the traditional understanding. And then Thursday is the preparation for the Passover traveling to the house that has the upper room, having the meal in the upper room on Thursday night, going to Gethsemane, the prayer in the garden, the arrest, the trials that traditionally understood to have taken place on Thursday through the night.

And then the Friday morning events leading to the crucifixion that begins around 9 a.m. and extends to 12. And then you have the three hours of darkness until 3 p.m. Again, traditionally understood on Friday. Our understanding of the sequence is the same, but based on the two very strong pieces of evidence that we have covered many times in the past, generally around Easter.

And we talk about Passion Week. I call it Easter. I don't like to use that term because it's pagan.

But around the time of Resurrection Sunday, we've talked about this many times. Very strong pieces of evidence in my mind, and they are not strong enough to overturn people's traditional understanding of the synoptic Gospels, including Matthew here. But very quickly, the strongest pieces are what we saw a bit earlier in Matthew.

No sign will be given to this generation except the sign of Jonah, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, even so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. They say, well, it was just a figure of speech. It didn't really mean.

Anytime I hear someone say he didn't really mean what he said, it makes me nervous. Jesus didn't have to say three days and three nights, but he did. You cannot get three nights out of a Friday crucifixion.

I'm sorry, it can't be done. It's only a Friday night and a Saturday night. Early in the morning on Sunday, he is up and walking around.

So however else you want to understand the Gospels, the evidence, the phrases, the terminology, when Jesus says he is going to be in the heart of the earth three days and

three nights, I take him at his word. I don't want people trying to tell me Jesus didn't mean what he said and it was a figure of speech. Jesus didn't have to use that figure of speech.

So that puts the crucifixion on Thursday. Secondly, John's gospel makes it clear that what the synoptics call eating the Passover, preparing the Passover, I have desired to eat this Passover with you. The meal in the upper room was the day of preparation.

John clearly says it was the day of preparation. This is the day preceding the actual slaying of the lamb and so on. And there is a common misunderstanding of many things Jewish at this distance, especially if you want to talk about a figure of speech, I would be more likely to understand when Jesus says, let's prepare the Passover.

I desire to eat this Passover. I'm gonna celebrate this Passover with you and my disciples talking to the owner of the house that has the upper room, that this was a general term. When you say the Passover, it's like someone saying, I'm gonna spend Christmas with you.

And yet they may not be there on the 25th. It's, I will see you anytime in that general vicinity. We just say Christmas or Hanukkah or whatever.

And we're not being as specific. And to generally people would come for the entire feast because Passover, as you know, is followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And it is a long period of time, eight days at a minimum.

You've got that entire week following Passover. So when he says, I've desired to eat this Passover and so on, it's everyone got there a day early to make the preparations, ensure that the lamb was prepared, that the other accoutrements were in place, that they had the unleavened bread. And the third piece of evidence I would offer is everyone understood the requirements in Exodus for celebrating the Passover.

And that is when the lamb is slain between the evenings, between three o'clock and six o'clock on 14 Nisan, at sundown, everyone is indoors and they eat the meal and they remain indoors. All of the traditional things you've understood about celebrating Passover, the father and the staff in his hand and his traveling garments and the pierced bread and all of those even extra biblical traditions that are associated with hiding the bread and the various things that are said at various times in the whole sequence. It's very interesting to observe or participate in the observance of a Seder of that nature.

A lot of extra biblical tradition, which is interesting, but not necessarily inspired. But the fact that Jesus and his disciples left the upper room and went to the Mount of Olives tells me that cannot be the evening following the Passover meal because nobody traveled after dark having eaten the Passover meal. It says, they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Also the arresting party would be guilty of violating a high Sabbath because the arresting party is led by Jews. There are some soldiers who are attached to the temple and to the Sanhedrin and so on and are intermediaries that are a part of that arresting. But remember that the servant of the high priest, Malchus gets his ear cut off.

The servant of the high priest is gonna break Passover and be out on the hill. These things persuade me that we have the upper room meal on Wednesday night. The Lord Jesus is crucified Thursday and is in the tomb by sundown on Thursday, which is then three days and three nights early in the morning on the third day.

So you have Friday one day, Saturday, second day, early in the morning on the third day, Sunday. You don't have to do any gymnastics. It's like the counting of the 490 years of Daniel's 70 weeks.

And well, you've got to take those years and multiply by 365 to get a number of days and then divide by 360 because that's a prophetic year and that gives you some extra years and you can stretch the time between Daniel's statement that from the going forth of the decree until the coming of Messiah the Prince is gonna be, you've got to do all these gymnastics to get it to come out in 30 to 33 AD whenever they figure it. And it's just too much. Nobody's gonna know that kind of math.

Nobody's gonna make those calculations. A year in Israel is defined by the feast cycle and you can't inject more years to get your math to come out the way you want it to match what you think the New Testament says, which it doesn't. Jesus wasn't born in Anno Domini one.

He was born four to six BC. And when he's about 30 years of age, that's gonna put you in the mid twenties with a likelihood that the crucifixion is taking place around 27, AD 27, somewhere in that vicinity. It's earlier.

And that blows away all of the math they do by multiplying by 365 and dividing by 360 on the 490 years to push it into 33 AD. I say that to say this, details matter. I saw a program earlier this week where somebody was repeatedly making that point.

Details matter. And these details matter. It came to pass when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, you know that after two days is the Passover.

After two days is the inception of this eight days of Passover, feast of unleavened bread, first fruits, all of that together. It's like Christmas and new year's for us where when you say the holidays, you're talking about that entire period. You know that after two days is the Passover and the son of man will be delivered up to be crucified.

I want to share with you some interesting observations that Alfred Edersheim makes at this point. He talks about how busy the days are starting on the Sunday of the tragic entry. There was a Saturday night meal in Bethany to which we are about to return by

the way in classic Hebrew fashion.

Matthew has taken us up through Tuesday and then he is going to back up and give us some details from a few days earlier. Jesus says, after two days is Passover. Matthew's gonna take us back two days and give us some events shortly.

But Edersheim says it's been a busy time and he is very eloquent and somewhat wordy here. But I want to particularly share with you his section on this prediction that he is going to be delivered up to be crucified. There are two things we're gonna look at here.

One is being delivered up and the other is his use of the term son of man. We've looked at that before, but it is useful to review it. It's been used throughout the gospel of Matthew, throughout the synoptic gospels in general.

It is Jesus' most oft-used reference to himself. Why doesn't he just say in two days, I will be delivered up? He often refers to himself using this term, the son of man. So these are the two things we're gonna look at this morning.

We'll begin with this delivering up. And Edersheim says that before this, Jesus had sought gradually to prepare them for what was to happen on the morrow's night. He had pointed to it in dim figure at the very opening of his ministry on the first occasion that he taught in the temple.

And this is John chapter two, verse 19, John two. You remember the geography of the gospel of John. Chapter one is the theological introduction.

And you move from there to the wedding feast at Cana, the first great sign that he gives. And in verse 13, after the turning of the water into wine, the first great sign, the Passover of the Jews was at hand. This is 2.13 of John.

So this is an anniversary occasion. And Jesus, knowing that he is going to be crucified at Passover, and this is the first Passover of his public ministry. The Passover of the Jews was at hand and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

He found in the temple those who sold oxen, sheep and doves and the money changers doing business. You mean this also has been bracketed. This is what he has just done a day or two before our portion of Matthew.

Cleansing of the temple at the beginning at Passover, cleansing of the temple at the end at Passover. And you remember there are differences in detail just as there are differences in other accounts that they try to put together. They try to put the sermon on the plane together with the sermon on the mount.

And it's not the same here. When he made a whip of cords, he drove them out of the temple with the sheep and the oxen, poured the changers money and overturned the

tables. He said to those who sold doves, take these things away, do not make my father's house a house of merchandise.

Remember in this latter occasion, he talks about it being a house of prayer. And then his disciples remembered that it was written zeal for your house has eaten me up. So the Jews answered and said to him, what sign do you show us since you do these things? Jesus answered and said to them, destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up.

This is one of the sayings that is going to be introduced at his trial before the Sanhedrin as a species of blasphemy. They're going to say that he claimed that he was going to destroy the temple himself, destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up. And then in verse 22, when he had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said, the scripture and the word.

What is the scripture to which this refers? He's talking about the temple of his body, but we have old Testament scripture. After two days, he will raise us up. On the third day, we shall live again and so on.

The sign of Jonah is scripture as well, but his disciples don't put this together until they're looking at it in retrospect. But this was perhaps the earliest recorded reference to his impending death in John 2, verse 19. He also speaks this to Nicodemus in the next chapter, John 3, 14, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up.

Again, son of man. And you're all familiar with that section of John chapter three, but the son of man must be lifted up. This temple is going to be destroyed.

And in three days, it will be raised. He himself will be lifted up. That whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

God sent his son into the world so that the world through him might be saved and so on. He also talked about it in Matthew 9, verse 15. This has been some time ago for us, but when Jesus is accused of being excessively celebratory, he and his disciples, and he says, can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? This is Matthew 9, 15.

And he's being questioned, you know, the disciples of John fast and your disciples do not. And he says, can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. He spoke in Matthew chapter 10, verse 38, if you turn the page, he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me taking up the cross.

And you think, well, if you're taking up the cross, if Jesus doesn't have a cross, then you can't really be following him. The implication is Jesus has taken up a cross and those who

follow him take up a cross as well. He who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

This reminds you of the words to the church in Smyrna in Revelation chapter two, be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life. Faithful unto death. As I was just referencing a bit earlier, Matthew chapter 12, verse 40, Jesus speaking of the sign of Jonah.

Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish. So will the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Matthew 12, 40. You would think that these repeated references would have created some curiosity or a troubled mind among the disciples and that they would have questioned him more closely.

But we hear what we wanna hear. Kingdom talk is good. Death talk is bad.

Grant, oh Lord, that James and John may sit at your right hand and your left in your kingdom. No mention of, do you remember when I said, you've got to take up a cross to follow me and you remember the dialogue that follows. Can you be baptized with my baptism? Can you drink my cup? And they say, we are able.

And Jesus says, well, you're going to. And we've explored that in some depth. But the sign of Jonah in Matthew 12, verse 40, over and over again, from the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus made reference to the fact that he was not going to be here long and his career, his incarnation was going to end in death.

In John 6, verse 51, Jesus said in, remember his, I am the bread of life section of teaching. And he says, I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

And the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. Says John chapter six, once again, relatively early in Jesus' career. You remember, he's not in the upper room until John 13 and 14.

So I will give my flesh for the life of the world. John 6, 51. You have John 10, talking about the good shepherd.

John 10, 11, and John 10, 15. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

Four verses later, as the father knows me, even so I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep. Once again, if we ask the right questions and in some cases ask the hard questions, there is revelation from God that is available to answer them. But we have to be listening.

We can't pick and choose and say, I like that. I like the kingdom talk. I like the treasure in

heaven talk.

I like the protection and provision parts of scripture. I don't like the parts that talk about sacrifice. I don't like the parts that talk about suffering.

And I don't want to think about how God has woven those challenges into life for a purpose. All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose, all things. Somewhat interesting that you have the same phrase at the beginning of chapter 26 here, when Jesus had spoken all these things, all things.

And the path to error, the potential to be misled begins by not paying attention to every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Jesus did not say to Satan, man does not live by bread alone, but by some selected aphorismic references to the word of God, to my favorite refrigerator magnet bumper sticker verses, to those promises. I like those uplifting, man stays inspired by thinking about these wonderful uplifting verses, every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Details matter. If we want to understand, if we want to serve, if we want to be useful to the master, did you ever give children some instructions and they follow them, but they leave out one essential detail? Resulting in disaster. And when you're questioning them afterward, you just shake your head that they didn't catch your meaning.

They took selected words that you said, and well, you said, wash the car. So I tried to drive it to the car wash. You know, you said, put the clothes in the dryer.

And so I put the dirty clothes in the dryer. We want them to pay attention to all of our guidance. We want them to remember everything that we have said.

And we, as God's children, would do well to try to pay attention to those details and be Bereans, compare scripture with scripture and make sure that our understanding of some parts of it comport and align with other parts. We take more difficult scriptures and reconcile them with ones that are more clear. This is why I believe in a Thursday crucifixion.

Three days and three nights is very clear. Eating the Passover is somewhat nebulous when you know that that word, like so many words in the Hebrew culture, in the Jewish parlance, can mean various things. Day can mean all kinds of things.

It's used even in Genesis one. You know, God saw that everything was good in the day that he created them. And the word day covers all the six days of creation in the day they were created.

And you say, well, you mean each one in its separate day? No, the day expands. Yom is used for a flexible period of time. Many such terms in scripture are flexible and it's easier

to understand Passover as being one of those than it is to deny the clear statement of the Lord Jesus that the sign of Jonah isn't really the sign of Jonah.

He won't be in the heart of the earth the same length of time that Jonah was in the belly of the fish. It's important. So he also gave the parable of the, that we saw in Matthew chapter 21 of the wicked vinedressers.

And the owner sends servants to receive the profits from the operation which they have kept. And so they slay those servants and he says, well, I'll send my son. Surely they will respect him.

And the wicked vinedressers kill him. And it is very clear allusion to the father sending his own son. And the disciples just seem insensible to these repeated allusions to his death.

What is different about this one that we have before us in Matthew chapter 26 to which we now return? What's different about this one? What do you think? We've reviewed these and there are a few others where Jesus speaks of his coming death. What's different about this one? He gives the time from being general and somewhere in the future, which is a bit easier to put off and think, well, I don't want to think about that right now. We all know that we're going to die, but we don't know when.

And so in most cases, so we can kind of push consideration of that out a ways. But when he says after two days is the Passover and the son of man will be delivered up to be crucified. Keep that thought in mind here, because in verse three, the chief priest, the scribes and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest who was called Caiaphas.

He doesn't live in a house. He lives in a palace. Palace of the high priest, Caiaphas.

Plotted to take Jesus by trickery. This word in Greek is *dolos*, D-O-L-O-S. And it is deceit.

The earliest time we run across this word is in John chapter one. And remember when he is leaving the scene of the baptism and the disciples follow him. And he sees Nathanael in chapter one, verse 47 of John, coming toward him and says of him, behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no deceit.

Same word, *dolos*. On the first day Jesus has disciples, he uses this word two days before his crucifixion. We have this being spoken about the leadership of Israel.

We're also gonna find that one of the 12 is complicit in this deceit, in this trickery, this deception to bring about the death of the Lord Jesus. They plotted to take Jesus by guile, by deceit, by trickery. Remember in Proverbs chapter one, we saw the warning against giving in to the persuasion of those who want to operate this way, who surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird, so they lie in wait, they sneak, they love darkness

rather than light because their deeds are evil.

So here you are in the palace of the high priest plotting to lie and cheat and deceive and betray in the palace of the high priest, the pinnacle of spiritual attainment to be the high priest of the nation of Israel. And this is what is going on there. They plotted to take Jesus by trickery.

If it was on the up and up, if it was legitimate, why not use legitimate lawful, mosaic law, lawful means to bring Jesus to account? If he is indeed guilty of violating the law of Moses, of engaging in behavior that is worthy of death, why do you need trickery? Why do you need deceit? But notice verse five, as we go to our break here, they said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people. Not during the feast, not during the festival. How long is the festival? Well, Passover, unleavened bread, first fruits, unleavened bread.

It's many, many days, right? They say there's too many people here and we don't want to take him and kill him while there are all of these people in town. Not during the feast. When does Jesus get arrested, tried and crucified? During the feast.

Right as these crowds have all gathered, just before they all go indoors to celebrate Passover, he is on the cross. So whose plan is going to be implemented on the timing of Jesus' crucifixion? Not the high priest. They were afraid of a riot and they didn't want to do it.

While everyone is in town, but it gets away from them. The cunning deceit and trickery of men often winds up, it's like the mainspring of a clock. You crack that thing open.

If you've ever done that, which I have, you know, the mainspring is usually in a little case for your bedside alarm clocks and such. You take one of those off uncarefully and that mainspring swarms out. It's like toothpaste trying to get back into the tube as well, nigh impossible.

And because they are employing deceit and trickery and the schemes of men, this gets away from them. They don't want to do it during the feast and it happens at the feast. It happens simultaneously with the slaying of the lamb, which is the beginning of Passover, unleavened bread and first fruits, all of that.

They say, well, we don't want it to happen then, but it just gets away from them. It becomes impossible to contain. Once they start this rolling, it almost immediately gets beyond their control.

Well, let's pause here and take our break. We have covered the repeated references to his death. The son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.

It's one of the references we didn't look up specifically, but he came not to be served,

but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. And the timing, the implementation is under God's control. All of our suffering, all of our hardship, all of our challenge is as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and members of his body.

It is controlled by God, not by men, not by circumstance, not by happenstance, not by heredity or environment. Our lives are carefully regulated, modulated to include the cross that we bear by God himself. This is the privilege we enjoy as his children.

And it is something for which to be thankful. We can be thankful for our sufferings. We can be thankful for our hardships and our challenges because they are woven into God's plan by God himself.

This is the reason Jesus said, "'Not my will, but thine be done' in the garden." And it should be our attitude as well. Let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're gonna look at the second great opportunity here.

It's a lot more fun to see the term, the son of man.