

# INSTEAD OF ME

Matthew 26-28

## **Introduction: Matthew 26:36-56**

During this series we are focusing on how Jesus didn't just die for us but *instead* of us. Matthew's Gospel moves chronologically through the events leading up to Christ's death and resurrection. Immediately following the Lord's Supper (which we looked at last week), Jesus leads his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, which means "oil press." Other Gospel accounts tell us that this was a usual place for Jesus to get away with his disciples during the week they spent in Jerusalem (the Passion Week). Here, Jesus invites his disciples to pray with him one final time before he is betrayed and handed over to those who would soon kill him.

### **This week's main point:**

The cross was a divinely ordained event that Jesus willfully chose to endure in our place.

There are three primary themes we will see at work over this text: First, Jesus is sovereign and has victory over everything that is happening. Second, Scripture's and Jesus' predictions are fulfilled in the events transpiring. Third, Jesus' disciples fail in those events. At some point in your study, your group should pause and recognize that as Jesus' disciples were betraying and leaving him, he remained faithful to their means of salvation at the cost of his life. The disciples should have chosen to stay with Jesus, and Jesus could have chosen to exit from this plan. Instead, though not an easy thing for him, his life was willfully given for our salvation.

In the midst of this we see Jesus modeling intimate prayer with God. Jesus asks for a very specific resolution to the path before him, namely, it not ending in his death, while completely surrendering to God's will in prayer. We can learn to entrust ourselves to God's sovereign will in the same way Jesus did in the garden on the eve of his betrayal and abandonment.

### **Sermon Response Question:**

1) Pastor J.D. introduced us to three teachings of Jesus that are hard to understand and that could turn our world upside down. What were they, and which was most "upside down" to you?

### **Read Matthew 26:36-56.**

### **Bible Study Questions:**

2) Reread verses 36-46. If you were to divide these verses up into smaller parts, what main sections do you see in this passage? How does each one contribute to what's about to happen to Jesus?

3) Describe Jesus' interactions with the disciples around these three prayers. What does he want *from* the disciples, and what does he want *for* the disciples?

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4) Jesus models in this passage how to pray in the midst of trials. How does this passage teach us to go from asking God for our will to be done (like we are prone to do in prayer) to confessing, “Your will be done”?

5) What three groups does Jesus talk to while being arrested in verses 47-56?

6) A major theme of this passage is Jesus’ sovereign control at all times. Where in this passage do we see this clearly?

7) How does seeing Jesus’ control over this event make the gospel more clear to us?

## **Application Questions:**

8) Jesus tells the disciples to stay with him and pray during his hour of need, yet we read that they could not keep their eyes open. What distracts you from living as a faithful disciple?

9) Proverbs 18:24 says, “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” We may deal with the betrayal of those we love our entire lives. How does Jesus’ betrayal, death, and resurrection give you hope in the midst of disappointments?

## **Prayer:**

Matthew 26:41 says, “Stay awake and pray, so that you won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- Break up into groups of two to four.
- Share a trial of some sort that you are in the midst of (big or small) and how you are tempted to seek resolution your own way.
- Share how you may sense God leading you to surrender to his will in the midst of it.
- Finally, pray for others in your group, that they will be able to surrender and trust God in the midst of their trying circumstance.