

**The Path to the Cross: Seized**  
**Matthew 26:45-68**  
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**Jesus Seized in the Garden (Matthew 26:45-56)**

1. Emerging from the agony of prayer in the Garden, Jesus is resolved to fulfill God's purposes. The cross *"must be so"* (v. 54).
  - a. Jesus' enemies came to seize him in stealth, in force, with weapons, under the cover of darkness, and with a kiss. From a human perspective, this scene looked like a helpless, powerless man being seized and overpowered by a mob.
  - b. But Jesus saw this moment not as one being ruled by the force of violent men, but as the fulfillment (v. 54, 56) of His Father's good will and purpose.
  - c. We need to remember this truth as followers of Jesus Christ. If we look at life without remembering the power, goodness and sovereignty of God, we will see nothing but wicked men taking what they want by force. And we will grow discouraged, bitter and hopeless. But if we know God's Word, His power and His faithfulness, then we will see that everything that happens in our lives and in this world is being used by God to fulfill His purpose for our good and His glory.
2. The disciples did not see this situation through the eyes of faith, and therefore, fell into temptation.
  - a. Peter met force with force, playing by the rules of the world in attempt to serve Jesus, and cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant. When Jesus rebuked and corrected him for using violence, the disciples all fled (v.56).
  - b. The same thing happens in our own lives. When we fail to prayerfully cultivate confidence in the goodness and power of God, we either try to fight back with the weapons of this world, or we run.
  - c. However, God's purposes are not brought about with the weaponry and methodology of this world. If we take up the sword (as individual believers) and trust in violence to achieve God's purposes, we will be consumed by that violence ourselves.
  - d. But Jesus didn't lack power or control. He could have summoned 12 legions of angels (about 72,000) to rescue Him. But He didn't. He willingly surrendered to the mob and walked the path to the cross out of His love for us.

**Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders (Matthew 26:57-68)**

1. Despite their role as representatives of God to the people of Israel, the Jewish leaders' eyes remained blind to truth. These men had all the outward trappings of

religion but were dead. The same is true for us. Doctrine, religious knowledge and practice don't save. We must be born again.

2. When the high priest demanded that Jesus tell them whether He was the Christ (i.e., the Messiah), the Son of God, Jesus' answer was rooted in Psalm 110:1, 5 and Daniel 7:13-14. Jesus claimed total equality with God. Jesus said that He is the Son of Man that Daniel saw in his vision; that He is the eternal One to whom the Father, the Ancient of Days, will give dominion and glory and a kingdom; that He is the One who will sit at the right hand of God the Father in power until all His enemies are a footstool under His feet.
  - a. The scribes and elders called Jesus' words blasphemy. They never considered that these were words of truth. They didn't realize that they were committing the greatest blasphemy as they struck him, spit on him, mocked him and decided that He was deserving of death.

### **Fellowship Starters:**

1. When the crowds came to take Jesus by force, Peter reacted with violence. But Jesus knew the sovereign plan of His Father was being fulfilled. How did God use the crowd's evil to accomplish His perfect plan of salvation?
2. Through what lense do you most often view your trials and sufferings—through the lense of this world or the lense of God's power, goodness and sovereignty? How does remembering that God is in control of every detail of your life bolster your faith?
3. In the circumstances of your life (at home, in school or at work), in what are you oftentimes trusting – your power (your gifts, abilities, intellect, etc.) or God's grace and power? What weapons do you oftentimes use—your words, your forcefulness, etc., or the spiritual weapons of prayer, faith and God's Word (See Eph. 6:10-20)?
4. Charles Bridges once wrote, "Unbelief looks at the difficulty. Faith regards the promises." What would faith look like in your circumstances? What promises from God's Word would strengthen your faith?
5. When asked if He is the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus answered that He is equal with God and is the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14) who is seated at the right hand of Power, ruling over all the earth (Ps. 110:1,5). What does Jesus' answer reveal about His character, His authority and His Kingship?
6. Take time as a care group to give thanks to Jesus for enduring the pain of betrayal, false accusations and mockery. Take time to exalt Him as King of Kings over your life and circumstances.