

We're honored to have some guests this morning! The Lord is blessing us.

For those who haven't worshipped with us before, just a few words. We are committed to expositional preaching here. Verse by verse, book by book, although this Sunday marks our 2 year anniversary, and we've not left Matthews gospel yet.

Indeed, Matthew's book about Jesus is so rich, we might hope to never leave!

There's a method to my madness though. Some logic for battle.

I'm painfully aware of my shortcomings. God doesn't send His John MacArthur's to Tonopah Nevada. You get me. But here's my war strategy.

I am power~~less~~. This book is power~~ful~~.  
I can't change anybody. This book can change any one at any time  
Sovereign God decides to do so.

We're going to look at just 3 verses this morning, but I believe they have the power to move mountains. The kingdoms of this world are like a drop in the bucket or a particle of dust on the scales compared to the words in these 3 verses. (stand) Matthew 20:17 - 19

*17As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."*

We humans, in the complexity that our creator created us, have the capacity to sort information and file it away in our memory.

I picture a railroad car rolling along at 50 miles per hour between 2 great cities and it's a mail sorting car. There are different canvas bags and a

work bench with all sorts of varieties of sorting out the mail between stops. Some of it goes in the bag that gets handed off at the next city to be further sorted there, some of it gets cubby holed for towns in between. It all has a place to go and the mail sorter uses his skill and memory and intelligence to move it along towards its destination. All happening in motion while the train flies through the night.

In a way, our brains work like that. We can sort problems and give them a ranking of importance. Do now. Do later. (my brain is really good at this one.) Think about immediately. Think about not only later, but put this in a dark corner where I won't be reminded it's even there.

If I'm going to Las Vegas to the dentist to get a root canal done, my brain is working through all sorts of issues. Up front is the immediate problem of finding the right offramp and then finding the address on the right street which is my destination.

But somewhere in the recesses is the pain and inconvenience of the ordeal that I've known about for weeks. I have the capacity to file that in some dark corner that's marked, there's nothing we can do to change this so we'll worry about crossing over the bridge when we get to it.

This is now the third time that Jesus has spelled out the events of His death to His 12 disciples, and . . . they aren't getting it. It keeps getting filed in that dark place. Deal with later. Don't understand and it's very unpleasant, so put it away for later.

Let's think instead about what we DO know. We believe with all of our hearts that this Jesus is the messiah of Israel. And we have learned from childhood that the Messiah will be King in Israel and will defeat all of Israel's foes. That's what we know.

And Jesus has just finished talking about thrones. That fits our pre-conceptions based in Old Testament prophecies. Jesus will be King. There will be thrones. And He's just told us we're going to be sitting on those thrones, with Him. Let's think about *that*! In fact let's argue amongst ourselves about who's going to be the most elevated after Jesus!

Even better, since Peter seems to have the lead spot and the most bluster, let's undercut him and send our mom, who Jesus really seems to have a special love for, and mom will ask Jesus to put US on His right and His left. Of the inner 3, blood should trump mister bluster.

They're sort of traveling with a group. Many people have traveled with Jesus. He does miracles. He seems to be heir to something. There's no one else like Him. And this large group is heading down the Jordan river and they get to an intersection where if you go on straight you're on your way to the Dead Sea.

Or if you cross over the Jordan river you're on the road to Jericho and then you climb the 3,400 feet up to Jerusalem. And a great company of people would be going up to celebrate the passover feast. But those guys in Jerusalem hate Jesus. It's not a safe place for Him to go.

And perhaps it's that intersection where Jesus takes His 12 special disciples aside and for the third time, He spells out in great detail by means of prophetic utterance, that when we turn here and cross this river, every step we take uphill after that; is a step closer to a really ugly *ugly* death.

You think you're going up for glory and thrones. It's time to prepare yourselves mentally for what's going to happen next. You've put it off long enough. It's time to face the fact that every step we take towards Jerusalem is a step closer to something so horrific, you've refused to think about it.

*17As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."*

The first thing we want to consider here is Jesus method of delivering this important information.

Jesus is famous for what? Parables. Metaphors. Picture stories to illustrate a point. Parables that illustrate spiritual truths in physical parallels. An enemy plants tares among the wheat. A fool builds his house in the flood plain.

That isn't what's happening here. This is more like one of those deals where your boss calls you to his office and when you get there he closes the door and turns off Fox news and sits across a table separate from his desk and says, "we need to talk".

Oh dear. Suddenly you are completely focused on the information at hand.

Jesus talks to them in the most forthright of straightforward language here. This is not lawyer speak. These are simple profound words that describe exactly what is going to happen, in great detail. There's just no way to mis-understand what's being said here. It can't get any plainer.

*vs.18*“Behold, . . . He begins with behold. We might say to our children under similar circumstances, rather sternly, now listen. STOP thinking about anything else and give me your full attention because I'm going to say something important! Behold!

Now I want to consider carefully all of the things Jesus said in two possible veins; *prophetically*. Outside Jesus. How they pertain to the disciples, and 20 centuries later, to us. and second, Inside Jesus. The sufferings plural of Jesus. Every one of these items listed represents a different phase and area of suffering that Jesus experienced.

Prophetic utterance. In this case the pre-telling of events, before they happen.

Isaiah 46:

*9“Remember the former things long past,  
For I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is no one like Me,*

*10 Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times things which have not been done,  
Saying, 'My purpose will be established,  
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';*

*11 Calling a bird of prey from the east,  
The man of My purpose from a far country.  
Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.  
I have planned it, surely I will do it.*

Our God is the ONLY God who tells the future. He's planned the future. He will bring it to pass. When God speaks it, it's already done. *I am God, and there is no one like me.*

Now, I'm not a great mathematician. But I can figure out simple things. And by very simple process of elimination, if you are someone who can foretell events of the future, you either have a direct informational connection to God, you're one of His prophets that He's using to disseminate His information . . . or . . . you **ARE** God.

I've read through this several times. There's nowhere here that Jesus says; *Thus saith the Lord*. That's what prophets said. I'm just me, but this is from God. Jesus doesn't do that. That only leaves one possibility then. If the prophecies come true, and He didn't claim to be a prophetic mouthpiece for God, the only other possibility is; He is God.

What we have here, by my count, are at least 11 distinct prophetic statements about future events.

- *we are going up to Jerusalem;*
- *and the Son of Man will be delivered*
- *to the chief priests and scribes,*
- *and they will condemn Him to death,*
- *19 and will hand Him over to the Gentiles*
- *to mock and*
- *scourge and*
- *crucify Him,*

- *and on the third day*
- *He will be raised up.”*

I want to quickly return and visit these in brief detail, but first a little math. A bit of science.

In 1958, a man named Peter Stoner published a little book by Moody Press called, *Science Speaks*.

Peter Stoner was chairman of the mathematics and astronomy departments at Pasadena City College until 1953 when he moved to Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. There he served as chairman of the science division. At the time he wrote this book, he was professor emeritus of science at Westmont College.

What he did was take 8 bible prophecies from the old testament and he did the calculations to come up with a number which is the odds of 8 distinct prophecies coming to fruition.

When he was done, the number calculated is the odds of 8 things being stated ahead of their happening and all 8 coming true is 1 with 28 zero's behind it. One chance in 1 times 10 to the twenty eighth power for you math geniuses. Those are the odds for 8.

Jesus pulls His men aside and He says, Now Listen! and He tells them 11 distinct future events that are going to happen in short order.

Did they happen? Yes, all 11. In order. As stated. Then, Jesus is God.

Let's look at them, briefly; I want to draw out very briefly how every one of these except the resurrection is related to some facet of Jesus suffering.

- *we are going up to Jerusalem;*

OK, that one was pretty obvious. If that was the only prophecy we wouldn't give it much import. Everybody was going up to Jerusalem. It

was passover.

Never the less, it has singled out the place where all of the events He's about to spell out, will take place. If He'd said Jericho, or Tyre, you could throw out the other 10. This will happen in Jerusalem.

How does Jerusalem relate to suffering? It is the city of God. Given to the people of God, the seat of the religion revealed by God, and God is not welcome there.

It's so dangerous for Jesus to be there that He has largely spent his 3 year ministry 85 miles away up in the fringe areas where the jewish nation and the gentiles are mixed together. Jerusalem wants to murder the Anointed One who's right it is to sit on David's throne.

Do you think perhaps that causes emotional stress? Suffering? We're just a few chapters and steps away from watching Him weep over Jerusalem. So when He says we're going up to Jerusalem, that's a heart breaking conondrum. Jerusalem who kills the prophets and is seething with murder for the Son of God.

- *and the Son of Man will be delivered*

The Son of Man will be delivered. paradidómi It means betrayed. Handed over to enemies. There is subterfuge in this word. Dirty dealing. Back room whispering. He's being sold out.

Notice the term He loves to use of Himself. Son of man. Son of God, we would expect 12 legions of angels to come and assist if some rat sold you out. Son of man is steeped in the humility of the incarnation.

In God's eternal plan, He had to be Son of Man so that other men could carry out this plan. It's a thin veil. When Peter hacks off the court officials ear, Jesus picks it up and restores it. When He speaks in the garden, during the arrest, the soldiers all collapse like so many dominoes.

The Son of Man will be delivered; What's it like emotionally for

someone who you considered a friend, your homey, and he turns on you and sells you out. A man you broke bread with and shared years of your life with, turns and becomes your enemy. A traitor. Treason. That's an emotional trauma we don't like to even think about. Part of the sufferings of Jesus.

- *to the chief priests and scribes,*

These are the ostensible heads of the Jewish side of the house. Jerusalem belongs to Rome, but the chosen people operate under occupiers with their religious and national autonomy still intact.

We have to do what Rome says, because they've got the biggest stick. But we are jews. We operate under a religion steeped in history. God chose us to reveal Himself to. He gave us the book. And we've added mountains of traditions on top of His book to define it for us.

The scribes were the religious law experts. They were the guys with the volumes of traditions that could tell you how to split your lintels into tenths.

And the chief priests were the religious nobility. They ordered the sacrifices. They ran the temple. They along with the scribes were the heads of state on the Jewish side of the house. They were the movers and shakers of religious life in Israel. They had enormous power over the people. Huge. They could declare you in, or out, of heaven.

The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes. Why?

Well, Rome didn't have any motive. Jesus was nothing to Rome. Another religious guy with a band of followers. Big deal. Call me when you've got a real threat. It's the religious power brokers who are threatened by this Jesus that all the people have gone out to see.

Again, God's chosen people, in God's beloved city, but they belong to Satan. The rulers of the people of God are working in conjunction with Satan. They have wholesale rejected of the Lord's annointed. A facet of His suffering.



- *and they will condemn Him to death,*

Again the words are exact. It's the scribes and chief priests who will hold a mock trial and condemn Jesus to death. Not Rome. Rome could care less.

Jesus is writing history before it happens, and His words are definitive. If any of these 11 distinct statements had happened in the reverse of how He said it, you could throw the whole thing out. The chief priests and scribes will condemn Him to death.

Isaiah looking ahead at this says; Isa. 53:2 - 3

2 b

*He has no stately form or majesty  
That we should look upon Him,  
Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.*

3 *He was despised and forsaken of men,  
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
And like one from whom men hide their face  
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

And John says simply; 1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* They didn't want Him. They didn't like Him. With very little stirring by their rulers they came to hate Him and cry out for His blood.

Start adding all of this grief up and you begin to realize the extent of the soul trauma that Jesus was going through.

And the isolation of it is complete. Even these men who should have been able to come along side as friends and help bear up the burden at least with some sympathy and understanding, they're all in la la land.

He's describing soul crushing suffering and their next move is to have their mom go ask Him for a favor?

- *and will hand Him over to the Gentiles*

The jews have a huge problem. They do not have the power to effect capitol punishment. Only Rome can do that.

So they can condemn Jesus all day long. That's where it ends, unless Rome gets involved.

That just adds layers and layers of complexity to these prophetic statements. You can get the jewish side of the house to betray and condemn all you want, and it's meaningless unless you get Rome on board some how.

And Jesus isn't even a blip on the radar screen for Rome. But we'll find out in coming weeks that the jews *are* willing to die on this hill. They throw everything they've got at it. Call in every favor. Mount pressure on the Roman governor that's more trouble for him than the value of this Jesus, whoever He is. And it's done.

So His beloved friend has betrayed Him and handed Him over to the religious rulers, and His beloved chosen people have handed Him over to foreigners.

He is God and can call 10,000 legions of angels to come and destroy these enemies, yet, He is Son of Man, humbled. A mighty King who has left His power behind and is subject to mere men. Dupes of Satan are in control of the destiny of the Son of God.

Add that to the list of emotions playing out. Helplessness. Frustration. And humiliation.

- *to mock and*

Once that's done, the soldiers take over. Now it's time for the torture of the most diabolical excruciating death ever devised.

And it begins with mocking. Pilate's sentence is, this guy is a king.

## "THE KING OF THE JEWS"

Really. Who do these guys get their pay check from. Ceasar. The king. So here's a jew who thinks He's king. We can have some fun with that. Somebody get a king robe. Somebody make Him a crown. Of thorns. We'll dress Him up and shove those thorns into His flesh and then we'll spit on Him. King indeed.

Can you imagine 12 legions of angels standing by with orders to stand down, while the Son of God is being spit on?

- *to mock and scourge and*

If that's not bad enough while the angels gaze on, the Roman's had an order of events in this type of capital punishment. Scourging had a dual purpose. It hastened death. The body would be rent in pieces before the cross portion. Laid open. The cross was more of a display. This is what Rome will do to you if you mess with her.

It was the damage from the beating and scourging that rendered you very near to death. Some of the less stout would die at this stage. Not even make it to the cross.

If Rome hadn't been in place and Jesus had died by other means, Psalms 22 would be meaningless. Here, the suffering has turned very physical. Trauma and shock. The Psalmist gives us a view from inside Jesus experience. Psalms 22

*12 Many bulls have surrounded me;  
Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me.*

*13 They open wide their mouth at me,  
As a ravening and a roaring lion.*

*14 I am poured out like water,  
And all my bones are out of joint;  
My heart is like wax;  
It is melted within me.*

*15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,  
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;  
And You lay me in the dust of death.*

*16 For dogs have surrounded me;  
A band of evildoers has encompassed me;  
They pierced my hands and my feet.*

*17 I can count all my bones.  
They look, they stare at me;*

Helpless humiliation

- *to mock and scourge and crucify Him,*

This is the final indignity. Stripped naked. Nailed onto a tree to hang above the earth until death finishes it. Inexplicable agony. Not before or since has man devised a more cruel agonizing punishment. Suffocation. Thirst. Excruciating pain.

If the jews had gotten caught up in a frenzy and stoned Jesus to death like their laws state, you could throw the other 10 items out.

- *and on the third day He will be raised up.”*

Not the fourth day. Not the second day. On the third day, Jesus will be resurrected from the dead.

This is the balance. This is the victory that the cost will purchase. ***And on the third day He will be raised up.***

Everything else He said had precedent. They could picture the whole ordeal just as stated. They'd seen it before. But . . . how does someone come back from the dead?

They had witnessed Him bring others back from the dead. The widow's

son. The little girl. But, once the man with the power to do that is dead, how does that work. There's no precedent for what He declares here. That a man can be dead, and live again. By Himself.

*He will be raised up.* God will do this.

We're 20 centuries on the other side of these events. Did they happen? Just as He predicted?

This is one of those; if, then questions. If it did happen, then . . .

Did it happen, just as He said. Yes.

Then, He is God, and this book you hold in your hands is surely the very Word of God.

And if that is true, then by extension, we should worship Him with every breath, and we should be obedient to every word of this book.

Why did these things happen? Why the suffering? Why the resurrection from the dead?

Isaiah says it pleased God to crush Him. Why? Is God morbid? Does God get His jollies from crushing His Son? Listen carefully to Isaiah 53:10 and we'll be done.

*But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.*

We could spend a whole other Sunday in that one verse. The key to everything is in those words.

*But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring,*

Jesus is the offering for our guilt. Jesus is crushed so God would not

have to give us what we were due because of our rebellion and sin.

It says *If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring*. We are that offspring. Jesus went through the suffering in order to purchase us for His Father.

Where it says; *He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days*. That is an Old Testament promise of the resurrection. Jesus will purchase it by His death, but He'll live again to see His purchase, His offspring.

And finally, the Sovereignty of God in all of this; *And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand*. God is in ultimate control of all of it.

We are here today, hopefully, because He chose us, He purchased us, He bore our sufferings, He paid the debt of guilt against us, and He lives again to enjoy God forever with us.

***O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!***