



NG Study Guide: Matt. 26:1-5, 14-16 “The Plot to Kill the King” [8.6.17]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. **Leader note:** *Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: The Bible teaches that God is sovereign. This means that He is in complete control of human history because He writes it. When we face this reality, we can respond in different ways and our motives are often revealed. We may respond with resisting His authority, seeking personal gain or submission to His authority which will bring great joy and abundant life.

Jesus has completed the Olivet Discourse, describing future events to the disciples. We now enter into the plot to kill the King.

A. The Motive of the Religious Leaders: Resisting Jesus' Authority (v.1-5)

This is one of many times that Jesus is predicting His death to His disciples (the fourth and final time in the gospel of Matthew). One of the greatest confirmations of Jesus' deity and that the Bible is indeed God's word is this pattern throughout Scripture of God prophesying about the future and being correct. The plot to kill Jesus begins to unfold as we read these verses. The chief priests, scribes, elders and the high priest Caiaphas make up the local political and religious leadership over the Jewish people. They ruled subject to Roman authority.

It is very clear throughout Scripture that the religious leaders felt threatened by Jesus and His authority. They did not want Jesus to take their authority and were infuriated that Jesus was attracting their people to His leadership. Thus, they devise a plan to kill Him. They must

use "trickery" because they are walking a tight rope of having the execution approved by the Roman government and a desire to not cause a riot from the people of Israel.

Jesus was crucified during the Passover feast and this is very critical. Jesus was the ultimate Passover lamb providing a permanent covering to all who would put their faith in Him. John the Baptizer proclaimed regarding Jesus, "...Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29). Additionally, the Old Testament contains numerous prophecies of Messiah being crucified (some being penned hundreds of years before crucifixion is even invented): Psalm 22:16, Zechariah 12:10, Isaiah 53:5. No man could plan this.

A cross reference from Luke gives us insight into what was driving the religious leaders: "And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people" - Luke 22:2. "The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe." - Proverbs 29:25. The religious leaders fear of man was a byproduct of their resistance to Jesus' authority. The Scriptures regularly contrast fearing God (submitting to His authority) with fearing man (1 Samuel 15:24, Luke 12:4-5). When we are driven by the fear of man, we will be resistant to the authority of God. When we are driven by a healthy fear of God, we will be increasingly less affected by what people say and think about us.

Q1. Why is it so difficult to honestly assess our motives? What can we do to be able to more clearly discover our motives?

Q2. How is God teaching you to have a healthy fear of Him (submitting to His authority) as opposed to living in the fear of man?

B. The Motive of Judas: Self Gain (v.14-16)

These 30 pieces of silver were silver shekels. They were worth about 4 Denari, an average days wage. 30 pieces would be equivalent to 120 Denari, or 120 days of work. In Camarillo, you could say this would be about \$26,000. ("[American FactFinder](#)". [Factfinder.census.gov](#). Retrieved 2013-10-03.) Zechariah 11:12-13 foretells Judas' actions predicting he would betray the Messiah for 30 pieces of silver and that the money would later be used to purchase a Potter's field.

It is easy to look down on Judas for his betrayal. It is much more difficult to look in the mirror and see that we may not be that different than Judas. "Judas heard all Christ's

sermons.” - Thomas Goodwin. We gain some insight into Judas’ progression away from Jesus in John 12:6, “This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.”

Q3. Discuss as a group how you think Judas went from being a disciple to a betrayer.

Q4. Have you ever had a time in your life when you have seen some of Judas in yourself?

C. The Motive of Jesus: Obedience to the Father for His Glory and Our Flourishing

Right before Jesus is betrayed, he prayed, "...Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given me to do."- John 17:1b-4. Jesus reveals that his motives were to walk in obedience to the Father and to give us eternal life. We can be inspired by Jesus’ motives, but we cannot have pure motives in our own strength. Jesus went to the cross for us and died in our place so that we could be forgiven of our sins and our impure motives. He rose again and gave us His Holy Spirit so we can now walk in His power. We bring our sin to Jesus asking for His cleansing and His power so we can walk in the newness of life He has given to us. As we submit to His authority, we will experience great joy and abundant life.

Q5. How does the gospel purify our motives?

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?

3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Go on a walk in your neighborhood this week. As you pass each house, pray for your neighbors that live inside (by name if you know their names). Pray that God would give you opportunities to love your neighbors.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

1. **Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
2. **Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
3. **Feel free to use an icebreaker question or activity** to get to know one another better.
4. **Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. **What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.