

Our Atonement | Matthew 26:17-30

Context: What Are You Reading?

Matthew 26:17-30 takes place during the final night before Jesus went to the cross. Jesus was sharing the Passover meal with His disciples. The Passover was a yearly meal where the Jewish people remembered how God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt. A lamb was sacrificed, and its blood reminded them of God's deliverance.

But this night was different.

Jesus was showing His disciples that the Passover had always been pointing to Him. John 1:29 calls Jesus "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." He is the true and better Passover Lamb. His body would be broken. His blood would be poured out. Through His death, sinners could be forgiven and brought back to God.

This passage is not just about a meal. It is about atonement. Atonement means that Jesus took the punishment for sin so that you could be made right with God. Jesus died in the place of sinners, and He rose from the dead, proving that His sacrifice was accepted by God and that forgiveness is truly available to everyone who believes in Him.

At the table, Jesus was helping His disciples understand what the cross meant before they ever saw it happen.

Explore the Text: Understanding Key Words

Passover

A Jewish celebration remembering when God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt. In this passage, Jesus shows that He is the greater Passover Lamb.

Betray

To turn against someone who trusted you. Judas' betrayal shows the seriousness of sin and the danger of being close to religious things while still being far from Jesus.

Body

When Jesus says, "This is my body," He is pointing to the sacrifice He is about to make on the cross.

Blood

In Scripture, blood often points to sacrifice, life, and forgiveness. Jesus' blood would be poured out to pay for sin.

Covenant

A serious promise or agreement. Jesus' death brings the new covenant, where forgiveness comes through Him.

Forgiveness

The removal of guilt before God. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, your sin does not have to define you. If you are in Christ, you are forgiven, made new, and covered by His righteousness.

Day 1 - Matthew 26:17-20

The disciples ask Jesus where they should prepare the Passover meal. At first, this may seem like a simple detail, but it shows something important: Jesus is not surprised by what is coming. He knows the cross is near, and He still moves toward it with purpose.

Jesus was not dragged to the cross. He chose to walk toward it because He loves you more than His own comfort.

You may have moments when life feels confusing, uncertain, or out of control. But this passage reminds you that Jesus was never out of control. He was not trapped by the cross. He willingly walked toward it for you.

The disciples prepared a table, but Jesus was preparing a rescue. They thought they were getting ready for a meal, but Jesus was getting ready to show them the meaning of His death.

Before you ever knew how much you needed Him, Jesus had already made a way for you to be forgiven.

Application Question:

Where in your life do you need to trust that Jesus is working with purpose, and how might that change one specific decision you are facing this week?

Day 2 - Matthew 26:21-24

During the meal, Jesus says something heavy: one of the disciples will betray Him. This was not said to strangers or enemies. It was said at the table, among people who had walked with Jesus, listened to His teaching, and seen His miracles.

It is easy to think about sin as something “bad people” do. Judas reminds you that someone can be close to spiritual things and still have a heart far from Jesus. You can attend church, know the right words, sing the songs, and still be hiding sin.

1 John 1:8-9 reminds us that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us.

Jesus does not expose sin because He is cruel. He exposes it because hidden sin damages your soul. Sin brought into the light can be confessed, forgiven, and healed.

The good news is that Jesus already knows the truth about you, and He still invites you to come to Him honestly.

Application Question:

What is one area of your heart that you have been trying to hide from Jesus instead of bringing into the light?

Day 3 - Matthew 26:25

Judas asks, "Is it I, Rabbi?" Jesus answers, "You have said so." This is one of the most heartbreaking moments in the passage. Judas is sitting close to Jesus, but his heart is moving away from Him.

This verse invites you to examine your own heart. Not in fear, but in honesty. The question is not, "Can I fool everyone around me?" The question is, "Am I being honest before Jesus?"

Judas called Jesus "Rabbi," which means teacher, but he did not truly surrender to Him as Lord. That can happen in your life too. You can respect Jesus, learn about Jesus, and even talk about Jesus, but still refuse to give Him your heart.

If you are someone who has been close to church, close to Christian friends, or close to spiritual things, but you have not truly surrendered your life to Jesus, this is a moment to be honest.

Atonement is deeply personal. Jesus did not die for a general idea of sin. He died for real sinners with real names, real choices, and real hearts.

Application Question:

Where are you treating Jesus like someone to learn from, but not someone to fully trust, follow, and obey?

Day 4 - Matthew 26:26-27

Jesus takes the bread and says, "This is my body." Then He takes the cup and gives it to His disciples. In this moment, Jesus is helping them understand the cross before they ever stand near it.

The bread points to His body that would be broken. The cup points to His blood that would be poured out. Jesus is not just giving them a symbol. He is showing them the cost of their forgiveness.

Your salvation was not paid for with good intentions, religious effort, church attendance, or trying harder. It was paid for by Jesus giving Himself completely.

That means you do not have to pretend you are good enough. You are not saved because you are strong. You are saved because Jesus is gracious. The cross proves that your sin is serious, but it also proves that Jesus' love is greater.

Jesus gave His body and blood so that you could be forgiven, rescued, and made right with God.

Application Question:

How does remembering the cost of Jesus' sacrifice change the way you see your sin, His love, and your need to surrender to Him?

Day 5 - Matthew 26:28-30

Jesus says His blood is poured out "for many for the forgiveness of sins." That is the heart of atonement. Jesus stood in your place. He took the punishment your sin deserved so you could receive the forgiveness you could never earn.

But Jesus does not end the meal in hopelessness. He points forward to the kingdom. Then they sing a hymn and go out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus is walking toward suffering, but He is doing it with the hope of God's coming victory.

And we know the rest of the story. Jesus did not stay dead. He rose from the dead on the third day, proving that sin and death have been defeated for everyone who trusts in Him.

That matters for you. Forgiveness is not just about your past being covered. It is also about your future being secure. Because of Jesus, your guilt does not get the final word. Your failure does not get the final word. Death does not get the final word.

Jesus' blood was poured out so you could be forgiven, restored, and welcomed into His kingdom.

Application Question:

What guilt, shame, or failure do you need to bring to Jesus and believe that His death and resurrection are enough to forgive you and make you new?

Challenge for the Week

This week, take five quiet minutes each day to remember what Jesus has done for you. Before you pray, say this slowly:

“Jesus, Your body was given for me. Your blood was poured out for my forgiveness. Your resurrection proves that sin and death do not have the final word.”

Then do three things:

- Confess one specific sin to Jesus.
- Thank Him for His forgiveness.
- Ask Him to help you walk in obedience that day.

If you already follow Jesus, let this become a rhythm in your life: confession, thanksgiving, and obedience.

If you are not sure where you stand with Jesus, be honest with Him today. You can pray something like this:

“Jesus, I know I have sinned. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I do not want to just know about You. I want to trust You, follow You, and surrender my life to You. Forgive me and make me new.”

If you prayed that prayer for the first time or for the first time and you meant it, reach out to your parents or to Justin so they can help you start to grow and take next steps. This is one of the most important parts!

Jesus' atonement is not just something to understand. It is something to receive by faith.