

How Would Jesus Hurt? (26:31-44)

What's up church fam? If you have your Bibles, turn with me to [Matthew 26](#). We'll be in verse 31 here shortly. If I haven't met you yet, my name is Marcus Williamson and I am one of the pastors here at City Church. [So I don't know about yall, but for me and my family, 2024 has already been a year and we've only finished one month. January has for sure felt like this. Can I get an amen? My wife shared this with me after we had a somewhat rocky start to the new year. I had COVID, our littlest, Isaiah, who is 10 months old, had at the time what feels like a world record of 8 ear infections, I say at the time because he started February off with a double ear infection. We got a stomach bug. And my wife got a sinus infection on top of that. So January, at least for us, has been a huge Monday that we couldn't seem to break the cycle of. Now all this might seem normal with two kids under 3. They're just always sick or getting sick which in turn causes us to either be sick or at the very least disrupt routines. Well it's normal until you hear more of our story. I won't go into too many details but over the past few years we've dealt with infertility, several deaths, an ectopic pregnancy, my car being stolen right out of our driveway, mind you in front of our eyes, we watched it be stolen, all of which led to crippling anxiety attacks even one time being taken to the hospital because I was sure I was dying. So needless to say, it's been quite a few years for us. We've had physical pain, emotional pain, psychological pain—really, you name it, and we've probably had some version of it.](#)

And I bring that up because the sermon today, I think is going to be one for any of us who have been through, or are going through any and all of that. And honestly, if this isn't a part of your story now, chances are you *will probably* go through something like this, or bare minimum, you will know people in your life that go through something like what I just mentioned. I don't know what has happened in your life, but I do believe the Spirit has something for all of us today. We are going to be walking through how Jesus deals with some significant emotional pain and anxiety and honestly that might be putting it mildly. I think among other things this passage gives us some absolute gold on how to handle the most trying, most difficult, most heartbreaking moments in our life. It will give us tools in our toolbelt for when life goes wrong. So let's pray together that the Lord will move through this sermon and in our lives. [Verse 31](#).

31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." 32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." 33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."

Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples and per usual, he was ever the confident one of the bunch. Always first to speak, even if his foot was in his mouth. He wants everyone to know, if everyone falls, including the other disciples, *he* would never betray or disown Jesus. Verse 34.

34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." 35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

So Jesus doesn't thank Peter for having his back, like Peter maybe thought he would, instead, Jesus checks Peter. "No Peter. Not only will you disown me, but you will do so 3 times. I promise you, this is not a prediction, this is a spoiler." And Peter, doubling down says, "I would die first before anything like this ever happened." He also inadvertently leads the charge of the "We won't disown you" chant from the other disciples. Gotta love Peter. Let's keep reading.

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

So Jesus and his disciples go to a garden and once they arrive, he asks his disciples to pray. Now we'll return to this, but this will be what I think is one of two key moments in this passage for us today. But let's put a pin in it for now, because in this next section we are about to go in.

37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John] along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

So he asks his disciples to pray in one area, while he takes Peter, James, and John along with him to a different area. It's at this point the passage says he began to be sorrowful and troubled. He even tells Peter, James, and John as much. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." Those words sorrowful and troubled, in English, don't fully capture what Jesus is feeling at this moment. Or rather don't convey the level of sorrow he's feeling. The words in Greek are more akin to the *greatest* sorrow imaginable. It's the type of sorrow when you lose someone close to you, or when you hear about a friend or family member getting a bad diagnosis from the doctor. It's when you feel a deep distress or sadness. Or when your body feels like it's physiologically reacting to your emotions.

And we know this based on the last phrase that Jesus says, that he's so overcome with sorrow that it feels like his very soul is dying. And I don't want us to bypass this moment, because we are getting a window into how Jesus is feeling mentally and emotionally here. Spoiler alert, he's about to be betrayed, he's about to have all of his closest friends leave him, as well as outright deny ever being with him, not to mention, he's about to also be beaten, mocked, spit on, laughed at, and ridiculed. So when Jesus says he is overwhelmed, or that his soul feels like it's dying then what he means is that he is not doing well in this moment. Jesus is not okay.

Many commentators agree here that Jesus is likely experiencing what you and I would call a panic attack. His breathing is most likely labored, his heart is most likely beating so intensely that he can almost hear it, when we read a little further it will say that he falls with his face to the ground. Luke, in his account, says that when he prays his sweat will be like drops of blood.¹ We think what Luke, who was a physician, is describing what doctors now call hematohidrosis², which is an actual medical condition where you sweat blood because of an intense trauma or anxiety. So Jesus is feeling some kind of way and rightfully so. The anticipation of the future is weighing on him. *If you've ever waited on a diagnosis from a doctor, you know this feeling. News about a recent scan. Maybe you get a call about your friend having cancer and you're waiting for updates.* Waiting/anticipating, can carry so much weight. And Jesus is feeling just that.

Physically, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically, Jesus is not doing well. Again, he's about to be betrayed and left for dead by those closest to him. He's about to be beaten, and then killed in one of the most horrifying ways imaginable. And he knows all of this is coming. Some of us might not be doing well this morning. Some of us might be in wait mode, in anticipation mode, and I want you to hear me right now that Jesus knows what it's to wait and anticipate in this way. He knows what it's like to not be doing well. When you feel no one else can relate, he can relate to you on a deep personal level. *Verse 39.*

39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed,

Jesus is so overwhelmed that he falls with his face to the ground. Notice it doesn't say he elegantly bowed with his face to the ground. From the way it reads, it feels more like a collapse, a faceplant if you will, to the ground. And in this moment, when everything seems off he does what church fam? He prays. He prays...

"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

¹ [Luke 22:43-45](#)

² [Hematohidrosis](#)

Jesus asks can the Father take this cup away from him. Now this cup that Jesus references is based on Old Testament language for God's wrath and judgment.³ Jesus asks the Father to take his wrath and judgment away from him. Which might sound a little weird, especially if you are newer to church. Why is God giving Jesus a cup full of wrath and judgment? Seems like something reserved for someone who might be an enemy of God. Someone who might be against God. You don't just give out cups of wrath to those closest to you.

And the Scriptures would insist that the reason Jesus is taking this cup of wrath and judgment is because he's actually taking it on instead of us. He's taking it in our place. We were the ones who sinned, who failed, who fell short. We were the ones who deserved wrath and judgment but Jesus chose to take on the consequences of that on himself. So if you can imagine, just for a brief moment, the anticipation of what Jesus is feeling right now, one could argue, might be a little intense. Jesus, wholly committed to the mission the Father gave him, wants to take on the sins of the world, but in this moment, he is emotionally overwhelmed and is asking the Father whether there is another way to do this. He both wants to do this, and still he asks if there is another way to achieve the same outcome because of how emotionally heavy it is. But even after asking the Father all of that, Jesus says "yet not as I will, but as you will." Verse 40.

40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Now, that's an interesting statement from Jesus, right? Because on the surface, it sounds like Jesus just told them that falling asleep is 'giving into temptation.' But last time I checked, falling asleep isn't a sin. And if it is, I will pre-confess that I'm about to do a lot of sinning this afternoon. So what does Jesus mean here? Well, this is most likely a callback to when Jesus tells his disciples that they will all fall away. And here Jesus says: "I know it's late but do you remember what we just talked about not too long ago? Do you remember how you said you'd never betray me? How you'd never disown me. Well, maybe that could be a thing to, I don't know, pray for? You know, so you don't fall into temptation?" See, their spirit, the vigor to which they spoke about not being disloyal was willing, it was strong, but when push comes to shove, their flesh will be weak and they will all fall away as Jesus said. And it would seem Jesus is linking them not watching and praying as evidence of their future falling. Verse 42.

³ [Isaiah 53](#)

42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." 43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

So Jesus prays two more times. The exact same prayer. Please take this cup from me. Have you ever asked the Lord for something and eventually got to the point where you were able to say, but ultimately Lord, I put this into your hands? If I'm not supposed to have this relationship. If I'm not supposed to get this job. If it's not your will for me to do this or that then let it be so. Have you ever been there and then immediately also pray but also Lord will you let this work out. Will you heal me? Will you heal my friend or family member? Will you give me this job or this relationship? Again, only to end right back with your will be done. Apparently Jesus knows this all too well. Don't you love when Jesus shows his humanity? We can often get so caught up in his God-ness that we lose sight of his human-ness. Jesus was every bit as human as he was God.

So that's our passage for today. As I was reading I felt like there were a few sermons in there that we could talk through today but again, I feel like the one of note and also what we felt like was needed for you and I to witness today was how Jesus navigates heavy emotional pain. **And to then ask the question, what can we learn from Jesus on how to navigate our own emotional pain?** How do we navigate our life when our kids are actively walking away from God? How do we navigate being fired from our job but bills still need to be paid? How do we pick up the pieces when a relationship doesn't pan out. How do we navigate through the emotional pain of someone in our life who has an incurable illness? How do we go on when someone close to us has died? How do we deal with all of these emotions when everything is going or has gone wrong?

Well, first I think we look at what Jesus does when emotions hit for him and then we follow suit. So how does Jesus deal with his emotions? Well first I think he:

Turns to Community

I said we would come back to it, but I'm finding this in [verses 36–38](#). In it Jesus asks his disciples to be with him and pray alongside him. **In one of his most vulnerable moments, he wants the people that the Father placed around him to be with him.** Put another way, he doesn't isolate. He doesn't check out from community. He doesn't run from the people that care about him and want to help him. In fact, he wants them to pray, even going so far as to check in on them to see how their praying is going. Let me say it this way, he's not doing the thing where he goes, **"no one can understand what I'm going through"**. And hear me say, if anyone could have said this, it would be Jesus. Because truly no one

before or since can fully understand the pain and suffering he is about to go through and yet, he still leans into, presses into, asks for help from his community.

Many of us might feel the temptation to isolate when we are going through pain and suffering in our lives. We might feel like we need to work through our emotions on our own and then report our success, or confess our failure, to our community rather than inviting them to enter into it with us.

You may say things like well I'm an introvert, I just need alone time. I just want to think. I need one on one time with Jesus. And while I agree with you in part, because Jesus also went away to pray on his own on a few different occasions in the scriptures⁴, but what we see here is that in his most dire moment he desires community to be there with him. So to me, at the very least, you shouldn't have a pattern of isolation while going through pain and suffering.

When you pull away from others to be alone in your thoughts for extended periods of time, you assume no one can share in your pain or know your pain. Or that no one wants to share in your pain. That people have too much going on. Maybe you feel like you've gone to your community one too many times. And you're feeling shame or guilt because of it; so you isolate. So you don't ask for help. "I'm good, things are fine, it's a bump in the road. It's not a big deal. They have a lot going on, I don't want to bother them." But what I want you to see is that if Jesus, who was God in the flesh, if he can turn to the community around him and ask for prayer, there might be wisdom in that.

"But pastor, what if the people around me don't get it? What if the people around me only nod their head but never actually write any of my prayer requests down or check in on me." To that I would say a couple things, first, I'm sorry that you might be in this situation. That you feel like your community is not praying for you or checking in on you. I would also say, how you respond can be very powerful. Jesus, as we read, was in a similar situation as I just mentioned, so he can relate. And how did he respond? Does he disown them? Does he write them off? No, he stayed in relationship with them and he asked them to pray for him, time after time.

One more thing about community before we move to our second point, take a look with me at [verse 38](#) on the screen:

38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

⁴ [Matthew 14:3](#), [Mark 1:35](#), [Luke 9:18](#)

When we turn to our community, let me suggest we get as close as we can to being open and honest like Jesus was with his disciples. I get it that it can be overwhelming to pour your heart out, especially if it's your first time letting people in. **I remember my first time in a lifegroup setting. I can see it as clear as day. I was sitting around the room with about 12 other guys and our LifeGroup leader asked whether there were things we needed to confess or talk through. And to be honest I don't remember my train of thought at the time but I don't think I was expecting what would come after he asked that question. These guys who I didn't know from Adam began one by one confessing and sharing their life very openly.** And do you know what it did for me? The more I saw others confess, the more the Spirit nudged me toward confessing and being more open and honest about where I was at in life. So I believe being open and honest not only helps you, by allowing others to pray for you, but it also models for them what Jesus did in the garden. Thus having the potential to soften their hearts to also be open and honest with where they are, whether that is talking through pain and suffering, confession, or praise. So as Jesus turned to community during his suffering, let us too turn to community. But simultaneously, we see that Jesus also...

Turns to God

He asks his community to pray for him and his closest and dearest friends to pray alongside him, and also in the midst of it all he also prays to the Father. He doesn't forget to commune with the Lord. He both turns to community and turns to God. And I think that is very profound for our community here.

Something our church does well is the community portion we just talked about. If I'm honest, we might do it *too* well. I think all things being equal, we are open and honest for the most part. We text our lifegroup when things pop up in our lives. We ask for prayer probably 8/10 I would say. And I'm very thankful we have a community that looks like what Jesus does in the garden with his disciples. Hear me say, we're not perfect at it, but I do believe we do it in such a way that it has to be beautiful for outsiders to see and behold.⁵ But, and this is why I said we do this too well a moment ago, I think if we are not careful something that we might miss is this aspect of turning to God himself. If we constantly outsource our prayers to our community and never go to God himself, we will inadvertently make our community into an idol. An idol that was never meant to carry all our burdens. Community is an incredible, necessary, beautiful gift that God has placed around you, by all means, go to them. Always. You'll never hear us at City Church say otherwise **and** also hear me say, your community, *our community*, was never meant to replace God.

⁵ [John 13:35](#)

So let us turn to the Lord, just like Jesus modeled for us. And as we go before the Lord, let us do so from a place of honesty and rawness. When Jesus asks for the cup to be taken away from him three times, it was one of those, oh Jesus is human, moments. He's really feeling this. But by the end he is also able to be humble enough to trust that God knows what's best. And I think this dichotomy, how Jesus navigates through this hurt, can be very pivotal for us.

For some of us in the room don't feel like we can be honest like Jesus was in the garden. Our prayers are a little more buttoned up, a little more matter of fact, could even say, it's more self aware or detached from our feelings. **We only pray God, your will be done and hardly ever pray things like , Father take this cup from me.** We move past our feelings to get to what we *think* will help us. "Lord, you know my situation, please help me to be inside your will and to submit to whatever it is you want from me in this season." For whatever reason we don't want to navigate through our emotions with God or perhaps even ourselves. But that is exactly what God invites us to do as evidence from the scriptures. All throughout the scriptures, there are endless accounts of people pouring their hearts out to the Lord. They quite literally cast their burdens on the Lord. Looking to be comforted and sustained through their pain and suffering.⁶ After a couple chapters in the Psalms, you'll see David or the psalmist laying every emotion down before the Lord.

Here's my point. Some of us could stand to supplement some of our 'your will be done' prayers with what I'll affectionately call 'God, this sucks' prayers. Have you ever prayed a 'God, this sucks' prayer? They're a version of what Jesus prays in the garden. "God, I don't want to do this. This is difficult. This is miserable. This is painful." Do you have room in your prayer life for those types of prayers? Some of us in the room might have handcuffed ourselves to only pray "your will be done" prayers, but I want you to know right now, that if Jesus can pray, take this cup away from me, you can too. There is freedom in being honest with God about your circumstances. There is freedom in laying down everything before him. There is freedom to cry out. To yell. I need you to know this deep in your soul. You can, and should, pray like Jesus did in the garden.

I've been learning this one myself recently, with everything that has happened to our family. Do you know one of the best things I've done over the years? It's something our LifeGroup leader, Emily, told me a while back, she said that it might be wise to journal my prayers and honest thoughts with the Lord when everything feels overwhelming. And while I don't do it perfectly, do you know how much freedom and lightness comes from me journaling to God and asking him to work, where I feel there is no way. To be strong

⁶ [Psalm 55:22](#)

where I'm weak. To be God. To be my Father. To comfort me and others like the scriptures say he does. To be my shield. To be my refuge. Family, there should be room in our prayer life to just sit down with the Lord and say, this absolutely sucks. I don't want to be in this situation. I don't want it. I don't want it. I don't want it. The biblical term for these types of prayers are called prayers of lament. There's even an entire book of the bible that's centered on this called Lamentations.

There should be room in our prayer life for 'God, this sucks' prayers. Now, that's not to say those should make up all of our prayers. That can get pretty self-consumed and self-important if you're not careful. But there should at least be *room* for those prayers in how we interact with God. It shouldn't be that our prayers are so cold, so detached from our honest thoughts, feelings, and emotions that we prevent ourselves from ever praying like Jesus prayed in the garden. Amen? Amen.

Let's land here. This passage gives us a model of how to take our grief, hurt, and emotional pain to God when those moments come. But I do want to make sure you see that this passage isn't only that. It's not just a template to follow. It's also a passage about the lengths Jesus goes to make that relationship possible for us. It's a passage about what Jesus did to ensure that we can take all of our hurt, pain, and anxieties to the Father in those moments. Jesus suffered in our place so that we have access to the Father. He suffered well so we could have access to God in our own suffering. To say it another way, if Jesus didn't suffer, we wouldn't have access to the Father. Jesus knows what it's like to ask God a question and not get an answer. He knows what it's like to ask "Why?" and just hear silence. But we need to realize that He was forsaken so you don't have to be. So that we can realize that we never *will* be. Not if we're in Jesus.

That thing that you are going through right now. The pain, suffering, the heart ache, the tears at night when no one else is up. The weight you feel because of work and you just want relief. The desire to date or be in a relationship or be married. To have kids but nothing. Attempt after attempt after attempt. All your emotions. If you haven't taken them to the Father, it might be time to get on your knees in this moment. To pour your heart out to him. It might feel silly to do, but some of us might need to earnestly do like Jesus and fall on the ground, well maybe just gently get on the ground, but some of us might need to be face down, cupped hands, in prayer. Maybe some of us need to scream. Maybe not bloody murder, but scream out to the Lord, where are you?!? [Hebrews 5:7](#)⁷ literally says that Jesus offered up "loud cries" and tears when he prayed. I know sometimes we like to be all sanctified and dignified up in here, but name a better place to offer up loud cries and tears than around our community. Some of us might not have

⁷ [Hebrews 5:7](#)

words and only tears, that's alright too, [Romans 8:26](#)⁸ essentially says the Holy Spirit will intercede on our behalf if that's you. Some of us might need our LifeGroup to rally around us. To pray over us. Some of us need healing hands or to hear a Word from the Lord directly via prophecy. Maybe just maybe you might hear from him today. Maybe this is your first time, and you're like I don't currently have a community here, for you, and for others here, we actually have a newly installed prayer team that would love to be your brother or sister in this moment. To pray over you and go on behalf of you to the Father. I believe there are a couple upstairs and there will be a few up front during our next song. If you are feeling any pull to do this, answer it, because most likely it could be the Holy Spirit nudging you to do so. As we transition, the communion tables will be open. This is a tangible reminder of exactly what the Lord has done for us, as we already mentioned, how he took our sins, and how he suffered on our behalf so that we could have access to the Father in our own suffering. Let's pray.

⁸ [Romans 8:26](#)