



Discussion Guide – October 11, 2026

Kingdom Victory

Matthew 26:31-46

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HOW TO PREPARE

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

RESOURCES

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/jesus-predicts-peters-denial>

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/garden-gethsemane>

DISCUSSION GUIDE OUTLINE

Matthew 26:31-46

1. In Ourselves, We Fail.
2. In Christ, We Prevail.



SCRIPTURE (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE 1995)

MATTHEW 26:31-46

31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.'

32 But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

33 But Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."

34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too.

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

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

37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed.

38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?

41 Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."



43 Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.

44 And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.

45 Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 26:31-46.

INTRODUCTION AND MAIN IDEA

Recently, I found myself at a water park, up six flights of stairs, locked inside one of those slides where a door drops below you. As the capsule closed, I began to become fearful. I reminded myself, "Cody, you're 39, it's a water slide, deal with it". In case you were wondering, I made it to the bottom just fine. I appreciate your concern.

If we are honest, we all face moments where our measure is tested. And if we are honest, every single one of us will reach a moment where we will fail.

Life will throw all kinds of things at us. Sometimes it is a simple fear like going down a water slide. Sometimes though, it is much more: persecution, sickness, and even death.

If we were to rely only upon ourselves, we would all eventually fail to endure. Jesus knows this. He knew His disciples would scatter once He was taken because they would not have Him anymore.

But thankfully, Jesus can endure all things we cannot: things we cannot even begin to fathom like drinking from the cup of God's wrath. He can do so because He is both the perfect, obedient man, and the perfect, omnipotent God. Thankfully, He has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to seal us eternally and guide us through life's trials.

1. Have you ever tried to just "muscle" through something in life by your own willpower? How did that work out?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. In Ourselves, We Fail.

2. Considering Verse 33-35. Read Matthew 26:69-75. Did Peter fall away from Jesus that very night? Why?



3. Considering Verses 40-41, 43. As Jesus endures agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, His core group of disciples—Peter, James, and John—cannot even stay awake one hour to pray for Him. Are any of us ever perfect at doing what God has called us to do? How have you failed to keep God’s commandments?

4. How does the fact that the Bible calls us sinners, unable to save ourselves, give us confidence that the Bible is true? Isn’t that what we observe about ourselves?

II. In Christ, We Prevail.

5. Considering Verse 31. Read Zechariah 13:7. Why is Jesus constantly telling His disciples about things that are soon to come true? Why did they struggle to believe Him? How did their confidence in Him grow, looking back on the fact that everything He said would happen, happened?

6. Considering Verse 32. Read Matthew 27:5. What happened to Judas after betraying Jesus? Read John 21:1, 4-7, 15-17. What happened to Peter in Galilee after betraying Jesus? Read Matthew 28:16-20. What happened to the all the disciples in Galilee after betraying Jesus?



7. How does Jesus restore those whom He loves and what does He call them to do? How does the fact Jesus knew all along He would restore and empower His disciples in Galilee—and promised them He would do so—give us confidence that Christ will guide us through any trial?

8. Considering Verses 36-39, 42, and 44. Read Luke 22:44. Christ is in agony in the garden to the point of death. He had been in near-death situations many times and never reacted this way before. What was Jesus sorrowful over: dying or drinking the cup of God's wrath? Can anyone other than Jesus drink the cup of God's wrath? Why not?

9. Consider Genesis 3:6. Adam and Eve willfully disobeyed God by eating a fruit that was "good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom." Jesus willfully obeys God by drinking from His cup of wrath: "not as I will, but as you will." From the first act, sin and death begin. From the latter act, sin and death are defeated. While sin seems pleasing to us in the moment, it was agony for Christ to endure it from the garden to the cross. Have you ever thought about how much agony your sin cost Christ?

10. What are some practical ways you can daily remember what Christ has done for you and the promises He has for you?



COMMENTARY (FROM ESV STUDY BIBLE)

Matt. 26:17–35 The Passover and the Lord's Supper. Jesus and his disciples prepare for, and then partake in, the Passover meal. Jesus reveals his betrayer and institutes the Lord's Supper.

Matt. 26:31 You will all fall away. Not just Peter, but all the disciples will forsake Jesus and run (v. 56). They will not cease being his disciples, but they will fail to stand with him in the face of persecution.

Matt. 26:32 I will go before you to Galilee. Jesus will graciously restore the disciples back to fellowship with himself following their failure to stand.

Matt. 26:33–35 Peter fails to heed Jesus' warning and underestimates the extreme test of faith they will all soon encounter. All the disciples said the same. They are swayed by Peter's bravado.

Matt. 26:34 rooster crows. Symbolic for the arrival of the day at sunrise.

Matt. 26:36–46 Gethsemane: Jesus' Agonizing Prayers. Jesus experiences a time of overwhelming sorrow and distress as he faces the cross, and he expresses this in three agonizing prayers.

Matt. 26:36 Gethsemane means "oil press," indicating a garden area among the olive groves on the Mount of Olives where olive oil was prepared. The traditional location of Gethsemane is now marked by the modern Church of All Nations, which was built over a fourth-century Byzantine church.

Matt. 26:37–38 Jesus asks his inner circle of disciples (Peter, James, and John) to share with him this agonizing time of anticipation and sorrow as he faces the cross.



Matt. 26:39 fell on his face. In this typical posture of abject humility in prayer, Jesus lays his life before his Father in complete honesty and surrender. Jesus is facing the most severe temptation of his life, at the moment when he is ready to accomplish the culmination of his life's mission—to bear the sins of the world—which is what this cup signifies. See note on 20:22–23.

Matt. 26:41 Their temptation was to succumb to physical sleep and so fail in their responsibility to support Jesus. It may point also to the temptation to deny Jesus when he is led away to the cross (cf. vv. 31–35).

