

## **The Story – Chapters 26-27: *Jesus’ Death and Resurrection***

### **Introduction**

Jesus ministry comes to a climax, as opposition mounts and he is arrested, tried and killed. His followers think that this is the end until, on Sunday morning, everything changes. God raised Jesus from the dead and the world will never be the same.

This week, we look at Chapters 26 and 27, all about Jesus’ death and resurrection. If you want to read this material in the Bible, you can read Matthew 26-28, Mark 14 -16, 22-24, and John 13 -14 and 19-21. (If you’re reading from Mark, note the ending in Mark. Most commentators think that the original gospel of Mark ends at Mark 16:8. That means the women told no one. Why might Mark want to end his story like that?)

### **Summary of Chapters 26 and 27 – Jesus’ Death and Resurrection**

In Chapters 26 and 27, we see Jesus spending his last few hours with his disciples. The Passover was approaching so they prepared a customary feast. But this was no ordinary Passover meal; Jesus was about to change history. At His “last supper,” He taught the disciples a lesson about love and service by washing their feet. He even washed Judas’ feet, although He knew Judas would betray Him. Then Jesus took the unleavened bread and cup of wine from the Passover meal and instituted a new meal – the Lord’s Supper. Jesus then led his remaining disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane. There while his followers slept, Jesus prayed, asking his Father if there was any way to avoid what he knew was coming. He answered His own prayer when He acknowledged that He would do God’s will and not His own..

Then Jesus’ betrayer, Judas, arrived to betray Him. Jesus was arrested and escorted to the assembly of the Jewish religious leaders. But no one could find legitimate charges against Jesus until He affirmed His identity—Messiah, the Son of God. At that point, the religious leaders charged Him with blasphemy, sentenced Him to death, and took him to the Roman governor Pilate to carry out the sentence. Watching from a safe distance, Peter who a few hours earlier had promised never to desert Jesus, three times denied knowing Him.

Meanwhile, Pilate was stuck between a rock and a hard place – he could find no legitimate charge against Jesus, but the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus crucified. Finally Pilate gave in and condemned Jesus to death, and then Roman soldiers took him and nailed him to a cross.

Crucifixion was an exceptionally cruel way to die. The public execution drew scornful onlookers who challenged Jesus to save Himself if he was the Messiah. They failed to grasp that Jesus was there to save them.

Even the creation testified to the enormity of this event. As Jesus faced death, darkness eclipsed the whole land, and upon his death, the temple curtain was torn in two.

"It is finished," Jesus proclaimed as He died. Jesus finished the work that the Father sent Him to do, culminating God's plan to erase the separation between God and God's people. Late on Friday, Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and buried in a nearby tomb, with a giant stone rolled in front to seal the entrance.

One might have thought that was the end of the story. But early on the Sunday morning following Jesus' burial, a small band of faithful women approached His tomb wondering who could remove the rock sealing the entrance. Imagine their shock as an angel announced to them that Jesus was not there, "He is risen, just as He said!"

Later the same day, an unrecognized Jesus approached two downcast followers on the road to Emmaus. When they expressed their dismay at Jesus's death, Jesus used Moses and the prophets to teach them about the Messiah. Later they recognized him and when He disappeared from their sight, they ran back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what they had experienced. And then Jesus himself appeared to his disciples. But despite an empty tomb and other appearance reports, the disciples still cowered and mistook Jesus for a ghost until he showed them His hands and feet.

Thomas, who was not there for Jesus' earlier appearance had to wait another week before he saw the nail marks for himself. And when he saw Jesus, Thomas confessed, "My Lord and My God."

Sometime later, Jesus appeared to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee. And finally, the eleven disciples met Jesus on a Galilean mountain where He commissioned them to continue to carry out God's mission by directing them to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them to obey everything Jesus had commanded them.

The resurrection of Jesus vindicated Him as the Son of God. It is the cornerstone of the Christian faith and the climax of God's great story of redemption. The redemptive work was finished, but now there was more work to do to spread the good news, and this ragtag group of disciples were just the ones to do it.

### **Discussion Questions**

As you read, remember there are discussion questions for Chapters 26 and 27 on page 485 of the book and also questions that can be found on *The Story* bookmark (which is also on our website). Also, feel free to consider some of the questions below:

1. While in the upper room with His disciples, Jesus knew his death was imminent. He was with the friends he'd spent three years teaching, yet he knew soon one would betray him, one would deny him and all would abandon him. Then he says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." The disciples were anything but worthy, and still Jesus gives them this gift of life. How does reading this story impact what you experience in communion?

2. What was Jesus trying to teach the disciples when he washed their feet? What does this tell you about God's kingdom? Would it be easier for you to wash someone else's feet or for someone else to wash your feet? What is it, for Peter and for us, that makes the servant life of Jesus hard to accept?
3. What can we learn about prayer from Jesus' prayers at the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross?
4. The Sanhedrin could find no evidence to charge Jesus (Jewish Law, Deuteronomy 17:6, required two witnesses.) Three times Pilate declared, "I find no basis for a charge against him" Why is this important? Why was Jesus crucified?
5. Jesus' betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion and death are also known as the "Passion." Describe your most dramatic experience of the Passion. What was it? Scripture? A movie? A play? A Good Friday worship service? What did you think, and how did it make you feel? How does it feel to know that Jesus knowingly did all of this for you?
6. By caring for Jesus' body after his death, Joseph and Nicodemus publicly declared they were followers. What were they risking? What are ways you let people know you follow Christ? Is there anyone from whom you've been keeping your discipleship a secret? What can you do to change that?
7. As the risen Jesus talked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, they later reported that "our hearts [were] burning within us while He talked to us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us" (Luke 24:13-35)? Has your heart ever burned with insight into God's word? What did you learn?
8. Thomas is frequently referred to as "doubting Thomas" because he refused to believe his fellow disciples' testimonies. Then, a week after the resurrection, he confessed, "My Lord and my God!" Do you think Thomas' reputation is justified, or do you think he has been labeled unjustly? Why or why not? How has doubt played a helpful role in your spiritual journey?
9. What does Jesus' Great Commission on the mountain in Galilee require of all his disciples? What are the various ways you can obey this command? What is involved in making disciples? What is a disciple anyway?
10. In what ways does the resurrection of Jesus turn the world upside down? In what ways does the resurrection of Jesus turn the world right side up?