

Tuesday, April 4, 2023
Season of Lent
Day 36

Matthew 26:1–5

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵ “But not during the festival,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.”

Reflection

The moment of final conflict draws nearer; human sin and God’s grace. Jesus ties his pending crucifixion to the Passover meal of the Exodus. Do you remember it? The angel of death (executing God’s wrath?) will move through all of Egypt and will take the life of every first born son, Egyptian or Jewish. In order to preserve their son the family must sacrifice a lamb and smear its blood on the door posts of the home. When the angel passes, if he finds the blood he will pass over, but if he does not he will take the life. When the Egyptians wake in the morning and find their sons dead, including Pharaoh, the Israelites are released from their slavery. YHWH instructs the Israelites to host an annual meal to commemorate the moment when Israel was delivered.

This context of the second exodus makes the second scene of our passage particularly grievous. The chief priests, elders and high priest know the story, but they are too much in the captivity of sin and death to see and hear what God is doing in this moment. They know they cannot openly kill Jesus because the people will riot—they have accepted Jesus’s claims at some level. So they scheme and wait with murder in their hearts.

Of course, it’s too easy for us as believers to condemn these men, and that’s not our job. What we do need to realize is our own blindness when it comes to the things of God. The hope of Jesus’s gospel is that the very rejection that we make due to our blindness, God makes the means of our redemption. Hallelujah! However, we do not want to merely settle for forgiveness. Instead, we want to press on to transformation. To become a people who can see rightly and therefore live rightly.

Prayer

Lord, as your passion comes closer help us to see you and your story. We are grateful for your death as a means of redemption, but we ask for your Spirit to do his ongoing transforming work in our lives. Help us to become a people who not only believe rightly, but live rightly. Amen.