KINGDOM of HEAVEN

A SERIES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Community Group Material

Matthew 26:31-56 – *by Jenny Laithwaite*

Week of Sunday 13th October

Drink this cup

Leader Preparation

This passage contains a few elements:

- Jesus' prophesy of the disciples' falling away and Peter's denial
- The Garden of Gethsemane.
- Jesus is handed over

I have included quite a few different options for discussion, prayer and worship: ***PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO DO EVERYTHING*** – choose what will work best for your group.

Group Time – a worshipful preparation:

Read Psalm 75 together. Read it slowly verse by verse, with a time of meditation or an opportunity for prayers of praise after each verse.

Exploring the Passage

READ Matthew 26:31-56

1. Gethsemane: vv 36-46

What is the cup that is spoken about in verse 39? *(see Psalm 75, Jeremiah 25:30-31)*

- If the choice was yours, would you like to rid the world of the cup of God's wrath? Why is it a good thing? What makes it a hard thing?
- Why did Jesus have to suffer the weight of this cup? *(remember vv 53-54)*
- Does this passage make you think that Jesus didn't want to go through with God's plan?

Despite his feelings, Jesus does not rebel against the path laid out for him.

- Do your feelings ever lead you to act differently from what you have planned?
- What kind of feelings are likely to make you change how you act? *(perhaps tiredness, anger, disappointment. . .)*
- What made Jesus able to follow through with his original intentions?

Peter and the other disciples had stated their determination to act in a particular way – but later fell away as Jesus had predicted.

- What feelings do you think overwhelmed their good intentions?
- Looking at v 41-42, what was needed to help the disciples hold firm?
- What steps can you take to "strengthen the flesh" so that you follow the leadings of the spirit?
- What area of your life do you need to commit to God to protect and strengthen you in following through? Pray for one another "that you would not fall into temptation"

2. Jesus is arrested

Peter is still apparently strong in his desire to see Jesus defended!

- What situations make you feel that you need to "defend" Jesus?
- What conditions are we "offended" by in Jesus' name?
- What might be Jesus' response to our efforts to "protect" him?
- Are we offended by the same things that Jesus is?

Lastly, think about the way Jesus addresses Judas in verse 50.

- If you have ever been betrayed, how easy have you found it to refer to the person as "friend" afterwards?
- Spend some time being amazed by the depth of Jesus' love, even for this friend.

Prayer

Commit yourselves to God's ways this week:

Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven

Give us today our daily bread

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

Amen