

Recently, while reading Matthew 26, I found myself drawn to a particular phrase that Jesus uttered to His disciples: "I am in anguish of soul, even to the point of death." These words struck me deeply, compelling me to reflect on their profound significance. Death, the most feared aspect of life, pales in comparison to the anguish of soul that Jesus experienced. I began searching to understand this anguish of our Lord.

First, there was the anguish of the knowledge of impending suffering. Jesus knew, with perfect clarity, every detail of the horrifying ordeal that awaited Him. He experienced deep sorrow in anticipation of the agony He would endure.

There was the anguish of bearing the sins of the world. Jesus had never known even the slightest sin, yet He willingly took upon Himself the weight of humanity's transgressions, a burden unimaginable to our finite minds. The transition from completely innocent to completely and comprehensively guilty before God for the sin of the world would be an incredibly agonizing source of anguish to His perfect soul.

Jesus also faced the anguish of loneliness and abandonment as His disciples deserted Him amidst the unfolding turmoil of that dark night.

And then there was Judas, who used his position among the twelve as an opportunity to enact one of the most wicked, most injurious of all relationship sins -- betrayal. Betrayal unsuspectingly barges into the center of our lives with the raw realization that one in whom we trusted has behaved in a manner shockingly contrary to our entrusted expectations. It is a wound that pierces deep into the heart leaving lasting relational wounds.

The anguish of unjust accusation and punishment is always difficult to bear, but especially so when you are the perfect and righteous Son of God. Nevertheless, He willingly bore the injustices of his accusers for the sake of God's higher purpose of redemption to the fallen race.

Then there's Peter's three denials of Jesus around the courtyard fire, despite being one of Jesus' closest disciples, plunged him into the anguish of personal betrayal.

And of course, there was the anguish of Jesus' suffering itself. The mockery, beatings, and the weight of the cross on His raw back, culminating in the crucifixion where He bore our sins. Peter, despite his role in the events, later in 1 Peter 2:24-25 writes, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed."

As I reflect on these truths, I am reminded of the personal significance of Jesus's sacrifice. His willingness to bear the weight of my sins on the cross fills me with gratitude and awe. Through His death and resurrection, He secured redemption for all who place their trust in Him. I am deeply grateful for the redemption I have received through Christ Jesus. May we, as His redeemed people, walk in holiness and joy, reflecting His love and grace in all we do.