



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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March 7, 2012

Midweek Lenten Worship

Pastor Randy Ott

Gospel: [Mark 14:27-41](#)

Sermon Text: [Matthew 26:36-46](#)

### **Sacred Heart, Now Wounded: The Wound of Apathy**

The wound of apathy is what we are looking. What is apathy? If you immediately think "Who cares what apathy is," you are in the heart of downtown Apathyville, because apathy is to be without concern, without feeling, to have no feelings one way or the other, to just not care at all.

As we listened to the words from both Gospels this evening, from the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew, you kind of get the picture that there was a little feeling going on in Jesus' heart at this point in time. The disciples meet Jesus. They see him in a way they had never seen him before this evening. As far away as you can get from apathy, that's where Jesus was. He is so troubled. He is so full of sorrow as he sees what lies ahead of him that he goes to these guys and says, "Come with me. I need your help." He told them he was going to die. He told them one of them was going to betray him earlier in the evening. Now he says, "Come with me. I need your help. Keep watch. Pray."

He takes Peter, James and John, the guys who had seen the Mount of Transfiguration. He takes those guys, the guys that had seen the one daughter get raised to life. They had been the inner circle and saw all these incredible things. Now they saw something they thought they'd never see. Jesus looks them in the eyes and says, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."

Can you imagine what that must have been like for them? This is the guy they had seen talk to waves and the wind and said "quiet" and "be still," and it was. How could this guy be filled with sorrow to the point of death about anything? They had seen his power. That had to just send a chill down their spine, don't you think? Don't you think that made the afternoon lunch bind up in their stomach a little bit?

So he says, "Watch and pray. This is what I need you to do. I am so full of sorrow. I need you praying. I need you keeping a spiritual watch over me." The guy who had done all those things is now so troubled that he asks them to do that. Then he goes off, and all we have recorded for us is "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will." But he said later, "Couldn't you watch with me one hour?" But he must have said a few more things than that.

Why did he spend an hour in prayer? Why was his heart overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death? Why was he talking about a cup? If possible, take this "cup" from me. It all centers on that cup. That cup that he is talking about is what one of the

psalmists had talked about. The psalmist said, "The Lord has a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices. He pours it out and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs." It is the cup of God's wrath that is reserved for those he punishes eternally for their sins.

The cup of God's wrath. That's what he has to pay. That's what he has to drink. That's why his soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. He knows what God's wrath is against sin. He knows everything he is going to have to go through. That's why he says, "If it's possible, take this from me."

Think about that for a minute. Think of how different that is from you and me. Jesus never sinned, but he understood the consequences of sin. You and I sin all the time. Then we go, "What's the big deal? God will forgive me." We sin blithely as though it's no big deal, right? "God will forgive me. I can do what I want. So what?" Here's Jesus staring in the face of what our sins deserve, and the One who created the world is shaking in his sandals. Does that give you an insight as to what our sins really deserve and what he was going to go through?

How troubled was he? The One who said, "Let the dry ground be gathered together" now throws himself and puts his face in that dry ground as he pleads with the Father. Such humility before the Father. Such fear, because he knows what he is going to go through. Sin is no small matter. Don't ever let Satan tell you otherwise.

So he does all this. He pours out his heart to his heavenly Father. He comes back to the guys to see them, maybe to get support from them. He comes back, and what does he see them doing? They're asleep. You know this part of the story. You've heard this all your life. But think about it. They are sleeping. They're tired. Their eyes are heavy. This is apathy.

Jesus had told them what all was going on and this is the hour of darkness and all these other things he had said already, and he says, "Keep watch over me. Be my spiritual shield." And they go to sleep. Your sinful nature is probably thinking "You have to understand, Pastor. You are being too harsh. They were just really tired." Okay, let's assume you're married. It's the middle of the night. You grab your chest. Your arm goes numb. You wake up your spouse and say "I think I'm having a heart attack. Call 911!" Your spouse says "Okay," and then rolls over and goes back to sleep. Isn't that the very definition of apathy?

Isn't that exactly what these guys did? He was looking for strength to go carry the sins of the world and he comes back and gets another spear shoved in his side of another sin...the sin, the wound of apathy. That had to hurt, don't you think?

It probably still hurts, doesn't it, when you and I wound our Savior with the wound of apathy? He hasn't given us the command to watch and pray because he is about to be betrayed, but he certainly has given us many commands in Scripture, hasn't he? He tells us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He

tells us to be his witnesses in the world. You might think that as a congregation we do a really good job of growing. You can point out all the time and effort we spend in training our children. I've even had people tell me, "The Bible says, 'Train a child in the way he should go and when he is older, he will not depart from it.'" Sure, that's what it says. I agree with it. That's what God says. But you have to ask yourself...are we training our children that growing in God's Word is just for being a child and when you become an adult, it just isn't that important anymore? That's children's work? We take a command he has given us to grow in his grace and knowledge and find more important things to do in our daily life than actually do what he tells us to do. That would be the wound of apathy.

Being apathetic towards reaching out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others...I think we can probably all think of examples in our own lives individually, and it's certainly obvious as a congregation that it is a wound we inflict on our Savior. The wounds the apostles inflicted on the Savior and the wounds that we inflict on him makes what happens absolutely amazing.

Jesus goes back to pray a second time. This time he doesn't say "Take the cup away." He says, "My Father, if it's not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." Maybe seeing them for what they were again, these sinners, drove home the point that he had to drink the cup. He had to endure all of God's wrath on all of their sins, all of your sins, all of my sins, all the sins that ever have been committed and ever will be committed. He had to drink that cup to the very last drop because he sees what pitiful wretches we are.

He does it because he and the Father are one, and he is going to carry out his Father's will, but there is something else that you have to understand that boggles the mind. A little bit earlier he quoted to the believers there the passage from the Old Testament where it said "I, the Lord, will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered." "I, the Lord," the Father would strike the shepherd. The shepherd was the Son. God would strike down God because there was no other way to achieve our salvation.

The wound of apathy that we put on our Savior, that we put in our Savior, could not extinguish the love that drove him to the cross. The wounds that we inflict on him day after day after day as we are bored by his Word, we are bored by his love, as we take it for granted, that never kept him from bringing his mission to completion...His love overcame all of it. So he lived perfectly and he died on the cross for all of the wounds we inflict upon him, including our wounds of apathy.

The amazing thing is that he still includes the disciples, these guys who failed him. The Father had to send an angel to minister to him, a created being, ministering to the Creator, Jesus, to strengthen him because his disciples failed. He comes back to them but he still involves them. He says "Look, the hour is near. The Son of Man has been betrayed under the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" He says "Rise! Let us go!" He doesn't say "Get out of here you guys! I'm sick and tired of you bums. You're nothing, nothing for me, nothing to me!" He doesn't say that. He

says "Rise! Let us go!" even though he knows they are all about to scatter and leave him alone. Even though he knows that one is going to deny him. Even though he knows that one guy is going to run out of his clothes because he's so quick to get out of there. He still involves them because of his love and his mercy and his forgiveness.

This is the essence of Lent. We look at ourselves and we see how we have wounded our Savior. The other parts of the year we are pretty good at seeing how other people wound our Savior, but this time of the year, check that. Put that away for a time. See how you wound your Savior. Then just marvel again and rejoice again that he loves you this much that he is willing to go and face his betrayer. He is willing to go and be nailed to a cross because he loves you and me that much, in spite of our apathy.

As you and I contemplate that glorious, mysterious truth, that changes us. As we focus on this incredible love our Savior has for us, our faith is strengthened and our faith shows itself in actions as we rise up and we go to fight against apathy, to fight against our sinful nature, and to let the new self, which loves our Savior, win more of those battles and live more and more for our Savior simply because he loved us first.