Fall Week 9 · November 14–15, 2026

Why Jesus Didn't Want To Die For Us

Matthew 26:36–56 · Pastor Chris Brown · Message #76

The big idea: Jesus didn't want the cup, and he drank it anyway. He told the Father exactly how he felt and still said, "Your will be done."

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Plain text	Grey boxes and Leader Extras
= your group's guide. Same questions your group has in their hands.	= for you only. Tips, extra questions and background your group doesn't see.

THIS WEEK IN 30 SECONDS

The passage

After the Last Supper, Jesus takes his disciples to Gethsemane and brings Peter, James and John in close. He tells them his soul is overwhelmed with sorrow. Three times he falls on his face and asks the Father to take the cup from him, and each time he ends with the Father's will. Three times he comes back and finds his friends asleep. Then Judas arrives with an armed crowd and a kiss. A disciple swings a sword, and Jesus tells him to put it away: he could call more than twelve legions of angels. He goes with them, and everyone runs.

Watch for

- **"Jesus was scared?" Some people get uneasy seeing Jesus this troubled. He was fully human, and dread isn't sin.**
- **An angry-God picture. The cup passages in Know It 2 are strong. The Father didn't drag the Son to the cross. Jesus chose it (John 10:18).**
- **"Fight" in Share It 1. For most people it means control or worry. For a few it may mean a situation that isn't safe. Surrender to God never means staying in harm's way.**

A win this week

Everyone leaves knowing Jesus chose the cup for them, and with one thing they'll hand to God honestly this week.

LISTEN: THIS WEEK'S LEADER PODCAST

Listen before group. About 15 minutes on the questions, the tricky moments and what to say when someone asks the hard one. Good for the drive over.

Scan the code or open the episode: share.transistor.fm/s/c8a006f5. Pass it on to your co-leader or host.

LEADER NOTES & LINKS

- **Confirm your roster:** Log in and confirm who's in your group and how many spots you have left for Winter. **Confirm your roster**
- **Social & Impact:** Thanksgiving is close. Fill a table this year (first drop-off November 18), or put a social on the calendar before the holidays fill up. **Social ideas** · **Thanksgiving Projects**
- **Leader podcast:** a walkthrough of the questions, the tricky moments and what to say. **northcoastleaders.transistor.fm**
- **Monthly leader email:** behind-the-scenes news, stories and a recipe or two. **Subscribe**
- **Tell us:** a question, a win, or something great about someone in your group? **Send it here**
- **Post attendance: northcoastchurch.com/attendance**
- **Baptisms in November:** If anyone in your group has been thinking about it, this is the month to point them to. Dates by campus: **northcoastchurch.com/baptisms**.

SERMON NOTES: OUTLINE

Why Jesus Didn't Want To Die For Us

Setting the scene in the garden:

The Last Supper · The Garden of Gethsemane · The Cup · The Prayer · The Sword

Only two possibilities:

Option #1: What Jesus accomplished on the cross is truly the **ONLY WAY** for **EVERYONE** to be **SAVED**.

Option #2: Christianity is about an **UNJUST** and **UNLOVING** God who **TRICKED** His Son into a **FOOL'S DEATH**.

Passages: Matthew 26:36–56 · John 1:29 · Romans 5:18–19 · 2 Kings 19:35 · Psalm 75:8 · Isaiah 51:17 · Isaiah 53:4–7 · Ezekiel 23:31–34 · Jeremiah 25:15 · Nahum 1:2–8 · 2 Corinthians 5:21 · Hebrews 12:2

THE GROUP GUIDE *Exactly what your group has, with your leader notes*

These questions are designed to help groups discuss the weekend teaching while building relationships with each other and applying God's Word to our lives.

WARM UP

1. What's something you dreaded doing that turned out to be worth it, like a hard conversation, a workout, a dentist visit, or a move?

> LEADER NOTE
> **Three Warm Ups this week:** Pick the one or two that fit your group.
> **Tip:** Listen for the part right before: the night before the move, the walk into the dentist. The dread is part of the story. Hold on to that for Know It 1.
> **If the room is quiet:** Go first. A dentist story is a safe bet.

2. When you need to think something through, where do you go to do your best thinking? A walk, the car, the shower, a quiet room? What makes that place work for you?

> LEADER NOTE
> **Tip:** Jesus had a place like this. Luke says he went to the Mount of Olives "as usual" (Luke 22:39).
> **Aha:** John says Judas "knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples" (John 18:2). Jesus went to the one spot where Judas would look for him.

3. What stood out to you most from this weekend's sermon? Did anything change the way you think about Jesus' final hours before the cross?

> LEADER NOTE
> **Tip:** If someone was surprised that Jesus didn't want to go through with it, stay there. That's the title of the sermon, and the rest of the guide builds on it.
> **Optional extra:** Try this week's Kinship Question (see Leader Extras).

KNOW IT

This weekend we saw Jesus' struggle as He prayed in the garden before His betrayal. It is a tense picture of wrestling in prayer and submission that is almost uncomfortable to witness. Still, we'll revisit the scene and try to experience it tangibly. **Read Matthew 26:36–56 together.**

> LEADER NOTE
> **Reading:** Twenty-one verses, two scenes: the prayer (vv36–46) and the arrest (vv47–56). Give each scene its own reader and ask them to read slowly. The guide says to "experience it tangibly," so let the room sit in quiet for about 20 seconds when the reading ends. Ask people to count how many times Jesus prays and how many times he finds his friends asleep (three and three).

1. What stands out about how Jesus prays? Why do you think the biblical authors go into such detailed description of Jesus' emotional state?

> LEADER NOTE
> **Tip:** Things people may notice: he asks his friends to stay with him (v38), prays face down (v39), calls God "My Father," says plainly what he wants, and prays the same prayer three times (v44). Asking more than once isn't a lack of faith.
> **Aha:** Hebrews 5:7 says Jesus prayed "with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard." He was heard, and the answer was still the cross.
> **Why so much detail:** The writers want us to know this cost him. He wasn't acting calm. Hebrews 4:15 says he can "empathize with our weaknesses."
> **Read:** Mark 14:36. Mark keeps the word Jesus used: "Abba, Father."

2. Throughout the Old Testament, the cup is used as a symbol of God's judgment against sin. Read a few of these aloud: Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, 22, Jeremiah 25:15–16, Nahum 1:2–6, 2 Corinthians 5:21. Which image hits you hardest, and what does it show about the cup Jesus dreaded?

> LEADER NOTE
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> **Tip:** Read Isaiah 51:22 right before 2 Corinthians 5:21. God takes the cup "out of your hand" and says, "you will never drink again." Then Paul says God "made him who had no sin to be sin for us." Let the group put those two together.
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> **Aha:** In Matthew 20:22 Jesus asked James and John, "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" They answered, "We can." A few chapters later, both of them fall asleep in the garden (vv37, 40).
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> **Careful:** Nahum and Jeremiah are hard to hear. If someone gets stuck on an angry God, don't argue it out here. Point to 2 Corinthians 5:21 and the Be Ready notes.

3. Jesus asked for the cup to be taken from Him. Read verses 53–54 and Romans 3:25–26. Why was taking this cup and the cross necessary?

> LEADER NOTE
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> **Tip:** Verse 53 says Jesus wasn't trapped. More than twelve legions of angels were one prayer away. He stayed because the Scriptures said it had to happen this way (v54), like Isaiah 53:5–6: "the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
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> **Tip:** Romans 3:26 says God is "just and the one who justifies." He didn't pretend sin didn't matter, and he didn't leave us to pay for it. He paid it himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).
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> **If people get stuck:** Ask, "If a judge let every crime go, would we call him kind?" Then, "What if the judge paid the fine himself?"
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> **Aha:** In 2 Kings 19:35, one angel struck down 185,000 soldiers in a night. Jesus says he could have twelve legions.

SHARE IT

1. Jesus told Peter to put away his sword and asked, "Am I leading a rebellion?" What things do you reach for when life doesn't go your way? Think control, anger, worry, manipulation, or withdrawing. Is there an area in your life where you feel like you should fight, but this passage is leading you to a greater faith?

> LEADER NOTE
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> **Tip:** Go first with yours: worry, control, a sharp tongue, disappearing. It gives everyone else permission. Peter's sword was loyal and brave and still wrong, because it was trying to stop what the Father was doing.
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> **Aha:** Luke says Jesus touched the servant's ear and healed him (Luke 22:51). It's the last healing recorded before the cross, and it was for someone who came to arrest him.
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> **Careful:** Some people hear "don't fight" and think of a marriage or a home that isn't safe. Surrendering to God never means staying in harm's way. Jesus spoke up for himself (v55) and protected his friends ("let these men go," John 18:8). If someone shares something like this, thank them, follow up one-on-one and bring in your campus Life Groups pastor.

2. Jesus brought His honest feelings to the Father and still said "Your will be done." Do you tend to hide your feelings from God, or stay stuck in them? What would it look like to do both: be honest and surrender?

> LEADER NOTE
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> **Tip:** Some people hide and pray polite prayers. Others pour out how they feel and never get to "your will be done." Jesus does both in one sentence: "may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (v39).
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> **Read:** Psalm 13. It opens with "How long, LORD?" and ends with "But I trust in your unfailing love" (vv1, 5). Psalm 62:8 says "pour out your hearts to him."
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> **Careful:** Don't fix anyone's feelings or rush them to the surrender part. "I'm not there yet" is an honest answer.

LIVE IT

1. Read Philippians 2:5–8. Jesus modeled humility by laying aside His own rights and desires to carry out the Father's will. Where might God be asking you to set aside your own preferences, pride, or need to be in control in order to respond with humility?

> LEADER NOTE
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> **Tip:** Verse 7 says Jesus "made himself nothing." Nobody took it from him. Humility here isn't thinking less of yourself. It's setting aside what you're owed for someone else's good.
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> **Make it concrete:** Ask for one place: home, work, a friendship, a church decision, this group. Who picks the restaurant counts too. Small surrenders are practice for the big ones.

2. Think about something you're currently holding tightly to—a relationship, a decision, a desired outcome, or a circumstance you can't control. In light of our teaching this weekend and the passage, what would it look like to surrender that to God in a practical way? Is there one specific action you can take this week that reflects your trust in Him?

> LEADER NOTE
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> **Make it concrete:** One thing, one action. Make the call, stop checking, send the application, have the talk, take the decision off your daily list. Write the actions down (with their OK) and ask next week.
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> **Tip:** Surrender isn't doing nothing. It usually looks like doing the next right thing and leaving the outcome with God.
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> **Close:** Have people hold out a closed fist, then open their hands while you pray "Your will be done" over each person's one thing (Matthew 26:39).

You don't have to have every answer. Create safety, guide reflection, point people to Jesus. **Thank you for leading.**

LEADER EXTRAS *Not in your group's guide*

OPTIONAL EXTRA: KINSHIP QUESTION

When have you felt most alone, and who showed up?

How: Ask it after the Warm Up, and before you ask, say: "This one goes a little deeper. Passing is completely fine." Go around the circle, 60–90 seconds each. It isn't about the sermon. It just sits next to a night when Jesus asked his friends to stay with him.

OPTIONAL EXTRA: MEMORIZE IT

Matthew 26:39 "Yet not as I will, but as you will."

How: Say it together to close the night and once more to open next week.

BE READY: WHAT TO SAY

"Why did God need a sacrifice? Couldn't he just forgive?" Forgiveness always costs someone. If God just looked away, evil would never be dealt with, and he wouldn't be just. At the cross God is "just and the one who justifies" (Romans 3:26), and he pays the cost himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). → "What would it say about God if evil never had to be dealt with?"	**"So the Father punished his innocent Son?"** Jesus wasn't forced, and he wasn't tricked. "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18). Twelve legions were one prayer away (v53). The Father and the Son wanted the same thing, and Jesus went "for the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2). → "What changes for you, knowing Jesus chose this?"
"If Jesus was God, why was he so afraid?" He was fully human too, and he knew exactly what was in that cup. Dread isn't sin. He felt everything we feel (Hebrews 4:15) and obeyed anyway. → "What does it mean to you that Jesus felt this?"	**"So surrender means I let people walk all over me?"** No. Jesus surrendered to the Father, not to whoever was loudest. He spoke up to the crowd (v55) and got his friends out of there (John 18:8). Surrender is about who you trust, not staying somewhere unsafe. → "What would trusting God look like here, and what would wisdom look like?"

SET THE ROOM

Text the six passages in Know It 2 to six people before group so nobody is flipping pages. Line up two readers for the passage. Think about your own answer to Share It 1 ahead of time, because you'll want to go first.

GO DEEPER: FOR YOUR PREP

The oil press Gethsemane means "oil press." It was an olive grove on the Mount of Olives, across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem (John 18:1). Olives were crushed there to make oil.	**His usual place** Jesus went to the Mount of Olives "as usual" (Luke 22:39), and Judas knew the place because Jesus had often met there with his disciples (John 18:2). He didn't hide.	**What was in the cup** "In the hand of the LORD is a cup full of foaming wine... all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs" (Psalm 75:8). In Isaiah 51:22 God takes that cup out of his people's hand: "you will never drink again."
"Can you drink the cup?" Jesus asked James and John this in Matthew 20:22, and they said, "We can." In the garden, he brings the same two brothers along with Peter, and they fall asleep (vv37, 40, 43).	**Sweat like drops of blood** Luke says Jesus' sweat "was like drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Many early manuscripts don't have verses 43–44, and the NIV says so in a footnote. Matthew and Mark give the same picture in words: "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."	**Two gardens** The Bible starts in a garden where Adam says no to God. This garden is where Jesus says yes. "Through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19).

Twelve legions A Roman legion was several thousand soldiers, so twelve is an army of tens of thousands. One angel struck down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a night (2 Kings 19:35).	**"Friend"** The form of "friend" Jesus uses with Judas (v50) shows up only three times in the New Testament, all in Matthew: the landowner to a grumbling worker (20:13), the king to a guest without wedding clothes (22:12) and Jesus to Judas. Each time, someone is in the wrong and still gets called friend.	**The ear** John names the swordsman and the servant: Peter and Malchus (John 18:10). Then Jesus asks, "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" (John 18:11). Luke says he healed the ear (Luke 22:51).