

MATTHEW



WELCOME!

We are glad you are joining us.

March 23, 2025

Worship Team led by Micah Dillon

Message by Karl Helvig

Matthew Week 40

Text: Matthew 26:1-46

The Head and the Heart

Seven Responses to Jesus:

The religious elites' scheme against him. vv. 3-4

An unnamed woman lavishly anoints him. vv. 6-7

Judas betrays him. vv. 14-16

The disciples are in denial. v. 35

The disciples are exhausted. vv. 40-41

The Sanhedrin condemns him. vv. 65-68

Peter denies Jesus. vv. 73-74

YOUR MOVE

We are fickle people, often and easily changing our minds.

Our emotions, experiences, and life circumstances all influence our response to Jesus.

Humans are emotional, physical, intellectual, relational, vocational, spiritual beings designed for love.

LIVE WITH OUR WHOLE HEART AND WHOLE MIND:

Worship with your head and your heart.

Read scripture with your head and your heart.

Build community with your head and your heart.

Serve others with your head and your heart.

Study Notes

Dallas Willard on Character Change: A Summary

The writings of Dallas Willard have deeply influenced many in the Church, and at CCC. His work focused on the same question today's sermon asked, "How will we respond to Jesus?"

He emphasizes that our response flows from our character and true character transformation occurs through intentional spiritual formation. Here are five key principles from Willard that help us respond to Christ in faith and be formed in His image:

1. Inner Transformation through Spiritual Disciplines

Willard asserts that lasting change begins within – in our spirit, heart, and will – which then shapes our thoughts, emotions, actions, and relationships. Spiritual disciplines like solitude, silence, scripture study, prayer, fasting, and service are tools for retraining the will, renewing the mind, and allowing God's grace to transform us from the inside out. This inner change contrasts with the self-centered motives of Judas and the Sanhedrin, whose hostility and greed led to their rejection of Christ.

2. Vision, Intention, and Means (VIM Model)

A clear vision of Christ-like character is essential. Willard encourages cultivating a genuine desire for virtues like love, joy, and peace, rather than simply trying harder to "be good." Aligning our will with God's requires intentional choices to follow Him, even when feelings or desires resist. Judas and the Sanhedrin aligned their wills with betrayal and self-preservation, illustrating the danger of misaligned priorities.

3. Renewing Thoughts and Feelings with God's Word

Thoughts are foundational to spiritual formation, and emotions often influence our actions. Willard advocates renewing the mind through scripture and prayer to reshape our understanding and emotional responses. Practices like reading Psalms aloud help shift fear and doubt to faith and trust in God. The Sanhedrin's rigid thinking and Judas's despair exemplify the destructive power of untransformed minds and emotions.

4. Honesty and Vulnerability in Community

Transformation happens best in authentic community. Willard highlights the importance of relationships where we can honestly share struggles and receive encouragement. The Sanhedrin's focus on maintaining their authority and Judas's hidden disillusionment demonstrate how isolation and pretense hinder growth. Honest, supportive communities create environments for healing and accountability.

5. Dependence on God's Grace

God's grace is the power behind true transformation. Willard warns against self-reliance, which often leads to failure or legalism. Instead, continual surrender and reliance on God's active work in our lives enable genuine change. The Sanhedrin's self-righteousness and Judas's despair reveal the consequences of rejecting God's grace.

By practicing spiritual disciplines, aligning our will with God's, renewing our minds with His truth, embracing authentic community, and relying on His grace, we are empowered to grow in Christ-like character and avoid the pitfalls of denial and accusation exemplified by Judas and the Sanhedrin.