**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:** What does it take to have the courage to go first? In a world that so often tries to pressure us onto certain paths, how do we blaze our own trail? How do we walk the straight and narrow path that Jesus set before us? Lean in as we learn from some of the heroes of the faith of what it means to be #TRAILBLAZERS.

**Week Overview:** Jesus Christ serves as the ultimate Trailblazer. But, there’s a particular instance where he himself is unsure whether he’s fit to blaze the trail set before him. We learn from Jesus that when Traiblazers submit to sacrifice, anything is possible.

***Outline:***

**Grab the Room (Intro):** Story of when you’ve struggled to submit to authority

**Tension (what’s the struggle):** We are inherently selfish and want to look out for ourselves.

**Text: Matthew 26:36-46**

**THP**: #TRAILBLAZERS SUBMIT TO SACRIFICE.

**Supporting Points:**

Gethsemane = “olive press” where olives were CRUSHED. So too the son of man would be crushed.

How do we respond when God’s plans don’t align with ours?

God knows best. As Trailblazers, we must be willing to submit to sacrifice when called upon.

**Application (call to action)**:

How will you submit to sacrifice now in an effort to blaze a new trail?

* Will you pass on the red solo cup when all of your friends are begging you to drink?
* Will you stop your boyfriend or girlfriend when you’re in the back of their car pushing boundaries?
* Will you trust God even when your friends turn their back on you for making wise choices?

You have to make the choice. Submission to sacrifice must be decided now. The hope and future of the world depends on it.

Response Song

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

*THP/Main Points – Bold*

**Intro:**

What’s good Northview Students! How we feeling tonight?! Good, good. It’s so good to see you. I’m so glad you’re here.

If you didn’t notice—we’re crazy about this guy named Jesus. We believe Jesus to be the perfect Son of God—God in human form—who lived a perfect life here on Earth and then was wrongfully convicted and murdered by being nailed to a cross—all in accordance with the plan and will of God. Because 3 days after Jesus was killed, the tomb in which he was placed was empty and in everyone’s confusion and bewilderment, Jesus APPEARS in physical form—showing that the depths of hell were no match for his divine power. And because of that sacrifice and victory over death, we are given the free gift of eternal life as Jesus now serves as the bridge over the chasm of sin that separates us from God. Through Jesus, we have access to eternal life.

Tonight, we are in week 4 of this series called #TRAILBLAZERS, everybody say Trailblazers. And in this series, we’ve looked at heroes—authoritative Biblical figures—who have lived out this concept of being a Trailblazer. The world had gone one way, but these men and women had chosen to go a different route, to find a new path, to blaze a different trail. And tonight, I am so excited because we’re going to look at the ultimate trailblazer. The greatest to ever do it—the G.O.A.T. Himself—Jesus Christ. Now, we could spend approximately 20 years unpacking every single thing Jesus did that is recorded in Scripture because his entire M.O. was Trailblazing. Jesus turned the world as we knew it upside down and challenged humanity to live a life that is countercultural. A life that leads the way and blazes the trail.

**Text:**

But, to save us some time, we’re not going to do that. I just want to look at one story in particular. One story of Jesus’ life that I think serves as the apex of Jesus choosing to blaze a new trail. See, it is in this moment that we’re about to read, that Jesus decides once and for all, to blaze the trail only he could. So, let’s read it. If you have a Bible, turn with me to Matthew chapter 26. Matthew 26 and I’m going to read beginning in verse 36. It’s 10 verses. Read it with me or follow along on the screen, it says this, Matthew 26, verse 36: It says,

*Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”****37****He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.****38****Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”* ***39****Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”* ***40****Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter.****41****“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”* ***42****He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”* ***43****When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.****44****So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.* ***45****Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.****46****Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”*

Will you pray with me?

*Prayer.*

*Amen.*

**Personal Story:**

*(Story of when you failed to submit to authority)*

*Have you ever been in a moment where time has almost stood still? Let me rephrase that—have you ever failed to submit to authority, gotten caught and as you’re getting caught, time seems to stand still? Yeah, I know y’all know what I’m talking about.*

*I’ve never really struggled with submitting to authority. I think God knew all along that I was going to be a preacher and so to give me more credibility—he saved me from a lot of (public) bad decisions and consequences as I sought to develop good character. Now, I don’t say that to say I don’t sin or struggle. In fact, I think I have it harder than most people because the sins I struggle with the most are internal, they’re the things you can’t see—deceit, greed, lust, rage. So please don’t mishear me and think that I’m saying I’ve never made mistakes. I’ve made so many mistakes. I make mistakes every single day. Mistakes that if you knew about, you’d be like, “how’s this dude my Pastor?”*

*However, my ability to submit to authority has saved me from a lot of “public embarrassment and shame.” I didn’t many trips to the principal’s office, didn’t get caught breaking rules by the cops (except one time which I’ve shared with you before, scarred me for life). I didn’t even really get into SERIOUS trouble with my parents much because I had this deep respect and maybe a slightly unhealthy amount of fear when it came to authoritative figures. Whether it was my parents, my teachers, coaches, pastors or anyone else who had an authoritative voice in my life, I desperately wanted to PLEASE them which often led to me obeying them.*

*However, there was one time in High School that I can remember off the top of my head where all that went out the window. See, y’all are growing up right now in the age of “Changes” Justin Bieber. Right? Y’all see him and he’s married, he’s yatted, on the other side (thank God) of recovery from drugs, he’s an adult. THIS is the Justin Bieber y’all know about.*

*But see, I was in High School during the era of “Believe” Justin Bieber. I grew up in the era of “Journals” Justin Bieber. And this was revolutionary because Bieber was moving away from his swooshy, boy-ish, emo-looking hairstyle to all the sudden, he’s spiking it up! And OH SNAP—he’s got EARRINGS. I’m telling y’all it was revolutionary for us wanna-be white boys. We were like, “THAT’S DOPEEEEE.” And so, I devised a plan. See, I went to a Christian, Private High School and there was a strict rule that boys could have no body piercings. Not in your ear, not on your nose, not in your eyebrow—nowhere. And so, I talked to my mom about this and y’all gotta remember—she’s a pastor too—so I’m really throwing her under the bus here haha—but we talked about and I decided, “you know what mom? That rule is stupid and I’m gonna break it.” And to my surprise—she’ll tell you—she said OK. And she tells people all the time that she said OK because she was so shocked that I actually wanted to break this very clear rule.*

*So, the next day she took me to Clare’s—where all man-cards go to die, but all great, cheap piercings take place—and I got two metal-ball studs put in my ears. I was on cloud-nine. I was so energized. I was living life on the edge. But, I wasn’t that dangerous. See, I thought ahead of time and had ordered these little, clear plastic studs to swap out for my metal studs to see if I could get away with having invisible earrings. I made it through day 1, no problem. I was like, “ohhh I’m bad, breaking rules.” But then, day 2 came and someone—who I still don’t know but very much dislike—snitched on me. The assistant principle found out and told me to take them out. I refused. I know, I’m telling y’all, I WAS ON ONE. When she couldn’t get me to take them out, she called in our headmaster. Now, in a private school, there’s a principal who oversees the high school, but the headmaster oversaw our entire institution—k-12. He was the chief-in-command. Top dog. They ended up calling my mom and it became this whole ordeal.*

*In the end, I was able to keep my earrings—c’mon! But, that’s not the point of the story. I tell you all that because how often in our lives have we blatantly disrespected authority? And if you can’t come up with many examples with other people, how many times have you blatantly disrespected GOD’S authority? You probably can’t even count, right?*

**Tension:**

See, for all of us, there is a natural tendency to want to look out for ourselves. Our sinful, fallen nature contains a level of selfishness we hate to admit, but know that we possess. And Satan will use whatever he can—including our desire for self-perseveration—to steer us away from the purpose and plan God has for our lives.

For example, consider the Corona Virus situation that we just came out of. As soon as it got “serious” enough, people stormed the stores and in a matter of minutes, the entire country was out…Toilet Paper?!? Why in the world was that the first thing that we all grabbed? We may never know, but here’s what I do know: That example shows the heart of our human condition. When it comes down to it, when things get tough, we look out for number 1…or maybe number 2…KIDDING. But seriously, we all feed into this self-preservation mode that ends up taking all toilet paper off the market for weeks!

I know that’s kind of a funny example, but the point remains, we are selfish. But Jesus—the greatest Trailblazer of all time—understood that **THP: #TRAILBLAZERS SUBMIT TO SACRIFICE (repeat).** Submit to sacrifice? Why in the world would we do that? Our culture tells us to get our money, feed our ego, get ours, build the empire. And you’re talking to me about…sacrifice? And submission? Nah, I’m not about that.

Well, then you’re not about following Jesus. Because Jesus, in the midst of the most TRYING time in his life—submits. To. Sacrifice. And he’s calling US to do the same.

He’s asks us—as his followers—when it’s hard, when it’s difficult, when it’s intense, will we lean in or give in? Will we lean into God when our friends are out partying but we’re supposed to be working on a big project? Or will we give into peer pressure? Will we lean into God and allow him to remind us of our worth an value or will we give in to FOMO and insecurity when we see that snapchat story without us in it? Like, we act like it doesn’t matter but IT MATTERS!

**Truth:**

You know…we read this passage about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and for some of us, we don’t even blink. We think it’s just a garden with a really hard name to pronounce. Try saying Gethsemane ten times fast, haha. But, it’s incredible the amount of intricacy and detail that is wrapped within these words. See, Gethsemane means “olive press.” Now, you might be thinking, “what’s so important about that?” See, this was the Garden of Gethsemane. This was the garden where olives were CRUSHED. Ah, it starts to make sense now, doesn’t it? Jesus parallels as an olive…about to be…crushed.

See, we find Jesus in this emotional state that in no way reflects God at least in the way we imagine him. How is Jesus—the Son of God—so STRESSED? He’s the Son of God! He can perform miracles! Why’s he so anxious? The Bible says he was, “sorrowful and deeply distressed.”

I cannot emphasize this enough students—that is a horrible translation. Because we read that and we say, “Jesus was sorrowful and deeply distressed.” NOOOO!!!! The Greek expression used in this text literally translates to “the greatest sorrow imaginable.”

Students, JESUS WAS TERRIFIED. JESUS COULDN’T BREATHE. JESUS COULDN’T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO HIM. HE WAS PETRIFIED, HE WAS DISTURBED, HE WAS NOT OKAY. That’s the state that we find Jesus in as he prays in the Garden of Gethsemane.

You know, so often I think we come in and we PLAY church! We pretend and we act like everything is okay because we think that’s what we’re SUPPOSED to do! I’m sorry, did I miss something? We follow JESUS! And Jesus—in the garden of gethsemane—on the brink of total humiliation, of agonizing pain, of a shameful death, IS NOT OKAY!!

Some of y’all just need some permission tonight to lean IN to your feelings a little bit tonight. It’s okay to hurt, it’s okay to feel, it’s okay to stress, it’s okay to fear—for a moment. The example that Jesus sets before us is that in the moments of pain, in the moments of stress, in the moments of fear—Jesus exemplifies the fact that God can handle it. God is asking us, “my son, my daughter, will you LEAN IN to me? Or will you GIVE IN to your emotions?

Picture this with me, Jesus is in the Garden and scripture says, verse 39, ***39****Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.”*

I love how the message translation puts it. It’s so raw…it says, *“Going a little ahead, he fell on his face, praying, “My Father, if there is any way, get me out of this.”* (You ever prayed that prayer before)?? God!!! HELP ME!!

And so, I started to think, man, how do we respond to authority in our lives? How do we respond when God’s plans don’t align with ours? Because the WORLD tells us self-preserve. The world says get your money. Build your brand. Protect yourself. Feed your ego. But JESUS is so countercultural. HE’S THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD. HE DOESN’T HAVE TO DIE. But, Jesus is a Trailblazer and **Jesus understood that to blaze new trails, he had to submit to sacrifice.** Look at Jesus’ response.

*“Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

The Message:

*“But please, not what I want. You, what do you want?”*

Do we have the courage to pray that prayer? Do we have what it takes to submit to sacrifice for the betterment of those we’re blazing the trail for? And maybe for the detriment of our own ego, our own brand, our own popularity?

Jesus prayed for the cup to be taken, but it wasn’t. Does that make God evil? Does it mean God hates Jesus? Does it mean he hates us when our suffering/hardship/trail isn’t taken away? Absolutely not. Jesus was submitting himself before God saying, “God! I don’t want to do this! I’m scared. I don’t wanna do it. But if I must, I will. I submit to you the fact that I must sacrifice myself.” What does that say about Jesus? What does that say about God?

I think it says that Jesus knew that God knows best. I mean, this is the guy who turned water into wine, who fed 5000 people with 5 loaves of bread, who calmed the seas of a raging storm. You don’t think that guy—if he REALLY wanted to—couldn’t escape forever and live a long, fulfilling life? BUT HE SUBMITTED TO SACRIFICE. And he blazed a new trail—a trail of forgiveness, grace and eternal life for all undeserving sinners who proclaim him as Lord. Students, listen to me, as Trailblazers, we must be willing to submit to sacrifice when called upon.

We have a choice to make. And that choice has to be made NOW. We can’t wait. Our urgency must be at an all-time high. Why? Because if we don’t make the choice now, when the moment comes, we’ll fold. Jesus submitted to being sacrificed on a cross—THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD—killed by a bunch of mere mortals. But he CHOSE to submit to that in Gethsemane. Long before his flesh screamed in his ear, “SELF-PRESERVE. SAVE YOURSELF. DO A MIRACLE.” Jesus said, “I’ll blaze the trail. I’ll go first. **I will submit to sacrifice**.”

**Application:**

I firmly believe God uses moments of “crushing,” moments in the Garden of the Olive Press, moments in the fire to PREPARE us to step into the future he’s called us too. Because for so many of us, we get to moments of decision in our lives and we’re not ready or prepared to step fully into what God is asking us to because we didn’t do the soul work beforehand.

Listen to me, if Jesus failed here, if Jesus said, “God! Is there any way I CAN’T do this?!” And then Jesus was like, “Yep. Heard from God, he said I’m good.” The sacrifice of the cross would have been a failure. If Jesus hadn’t done the hard work of suffering and anguishing and loathing his feelings before God, he wouldn’t have had the emotional capacity to handle what happened to him on that cross. If Jesus wasn’t able to battle through the intensity of the spiritual warfare he was facing—so fierce that God sent angels to him in that Garden that night to tend to him—there’s NO WAY he would have been able to take on the weight of the world—the weight of all sin, shame and brokenness on the cross!

Hear me students, God is using those soul-crushing moments, God is using your adverse circumstances, God is using the hurt, the pain, the darkness, God is using the war that is waging inside your soul to prepare you for the ultimate purpose of your life—bringing Him glory the only way YOU can.

Will you be ready?

**Landing:**

How will you submit to sacrifice now in order to prepare you to blaze the trail called is calling you to go first in?

* Will you pass on the red solo cup when all of your friends are begging you to drink?
* Will you stop your boyfriend or girlfriend when you’re in the back of their car pushing boundaries?
* Will you trust God even when your friends turn their back on you for making wise choices?
* Will you put your name on the line and leave that party or refuse to go altogether for the sake of representing Christ well?
* Will you trust that God didn’t cause it but is going to use your parent’s divorce, he’s going to use your mom’s cancer diagnosis, he’s going to use your brother’s death to further propel you into becoming the influencer and Trailblazer you were always meant to be?
* Will you trust that God is going to use your worst mistake and turn it into the mission of your life?
* Will you trust that God is going to redeem your past and restore your future?
* Will you trust that GOD IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS?

You have to make the choice. Submission to sacrifice must be decided now. The hope and future of the world depends on it.

**Closing:**

And so as we close, I’m simply going to offer you the chance to reflect and take inventory of your life. I believe there’s a lot of you in here who are feeling pressed and you have some soul work to do with God. Man, can I just encourage you—if the Son of God could get before His Father and be honest…shouldn’t we?

Let’s stop playing church. Let’s stop pretending like we have it all together. Let’s get real and raw with God and lean into the soul-crushing aspects life, knowing that on the other side is trail that will forever be paved side by side, by you and God forever.

Response Song