

**THE BETRAYAL**  
*The Garden of Gethsemane*  
**Matthew 26:36-46**

It's probably near *midnight* on the *Thursday* of **Passover** week...**A.D. 33**...the last night that Jesus would be alive in human form. His *three year ministry* was nearly completed. He had *preached His last public sermon...performed His last miracle...and taught for the last time in the Temple and synagogues*. He has just *celebrated His last Passover with His disciples* before He becomes the *final* and *ultimate* **Passover Lamb**...the *perfect* and *only sacrifice* for the *sins of the world*.

As we look into the last night before His death...we can only grasp a glimpse of this powerful moment. The divine, yet human *agony* and *grief* that He experienced was *excruciating*. The hymn [Man of Sorrows](#) proclaims...

*Man of sorrows, what a name,  
For the Son of God who came,  
Ruined sinners to reclaim!  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!*

This description of Christ is based on [Isaiah 53:3](#).

*“He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”*

There is no mention in Scripture of Jesus ever *laughing*...but there are numerous accounts of His *grieving*...His *sadness*...and even His *weeping*.

- He was *grieved* at the *hardness of hearts* ([Mark 3:5](#)).
- He *wept* at the *grave of Lazarus* ([John 11:35](#)).
- He *wept* over *Jerusalem* at the time of *His triumphal entry* ([Luke 19:41](#)).

He knew *sorrow* and *grief* like no other person who has ever lived. But the *grief* and *sorrow* He experienced in the **Garden of Gethsemane** on the last night before His crucifixion seemed to be an accumulation of all the *agony* and *grief* He had ever known...an *agony* and *grief* which would accelerate to a climax the following day when He would *become sin* on our behalf.

Like every other event and detail of Jesus' life and ministry...His *agony* in the garden was an integral part to the *preordained, plan of God* for *redemption*. It was all part of Jesus' *preparation for the cross*...where the climatic event in the work of *redemption* would take place.

**I. HIS SORROW: (vs. 36-38)**

**Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” (vs. 36)**...Gethsemane was a garden on the **Mount of Olives**...and was a place where Jesus had often met with His disciples ([John 18:2](#)). Because it was often used by Jesus...the garden was probably owned by a believer who allowed Him to use it as *a place of retreat* and *prayer*.

**Gethsemane**...means *olive* or *oil press*. In a field covered with *olive* trees, *oil presses* were used to extract oil from the fruit. [John](#) records that there was an *olive* grove there in **Gethsemane**.

**Pray**...Jesus didn't use the normal word for **praying** (*euchomai*) which was used for *asking* or *petitioning*...instead, He used the Gk. *proseuchomai*, which is *a very intensive word only used when praying to God...coming before God*.

**And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and John), and began to be grieved and distressed (vs. 37)**...

**Grieved**...Gk. *lypeisthai*, means *to be deeply grieved, sorrowful* or *troubled...to be sad to a point of distress* ([Matthew 14:9](#); [Matthew 17:23](#); [Matthew 18:31](#); [Matthew 19:22](#)). Jesus was experiencing *grief* and *trouble* such as He had never known in His earthly life.

**Then He said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.” (vs. 38)**...

**Deeply grieved**...Gk. *perilupos*, it carries the idea of *being surrounded or consumed by sorrow*. It's the idea of someone *dying from a broken heart*.

**Keep watch with Me**...**Keep watch** literally means *to stay awake...be alert* (also in [vs. 40, 41](#)).

With everything that had recently transpired with the multiple warnings that Jesus had given the disciples of their *falling away* and *denying Him*...they were at a *crisis point* even though they

didn't know it. They should have seen this request of Jesus as a time for *deep concern* and *fervent prayer*. But there's no indication anywhere in Scripture that they ever said a single word in **prayer** during this time. It only says that they were **sleeping**. As Jesus retreated to *pray*...the disciples retreated to *sleep*.

In this hour of His greatest need, the Lord wanted those closest to Him...those who had a *sympathetic understanding*...to be praying with Him. But like many believers throughout the history of the church...the disciples may have had *good intentions*...but they were *weak* and *weary*.

Jesus had a *desperate need for communion* with His heavenly Father. But his *weak* and *weary* disciples...as is often the case today with believers and the church...they *felt no desperation*. They were more concerned with their *own needs*. In this case, a need to **sleep**.

Every Christian will at some time in their life, face *temptations*, *trials*, and *grief* that threaten to overwhelm them. But these are the times when only *direct, intimate communion* with the Lord in *intense* and *fervent prayer* can provide the strength to meet our desperate need.

## II. **HIS SUPPLICATION**: (vs. 39-45a)

The *intensity* of Jesus' prayer *increased* with *each of the three sessions* and it's reflected in the *positions* and *posture* He took.

- At first, He *knelt* (Luke 22:41).
- He then *fell prostrate on His face* (vs. 39).
- Finally, He was praying with such intensity that *His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground*. (Luke 22:43-44).

**And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." (vs. 39)...**

**My Father**...Except when He quoted Psalm 22:1 as He cried out from the cross, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Matthew 27:46), Jesus always addressed God as **Father**. In doing so, He was expressing *an intimacy with God* that was *foreign to the Jews* of that day...and it was an *abomination* to the religious leaders. **Mark** also adds that Jesus addressed Him as *Abba Father*

(Mark 14:36). *Abba* is an *Aramaic* word of *endearment*...equivalent to *Daddy*. Such an address was unthinkable to the Jews...and was considered *presumptuous* and *blasphemous*.

**If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me...this cup**...refers to *His imminent death* and *everything associated with it*...His *suffering*...His coming *separation from the Father* (Matthew 27:46)...and His *becoming sin* for mankind. Jesus was asking if avoiding the cross was **possible** within the Father's *redemptive plan* and *purpose*.

**"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**

~II Corinthians 5:21

A **cup**...figuratively in the Old Testament, refers to *wrath* and *judgment*. Here it symbolized the *judgment* Jesus would endure on the cross.

**Yet not as I will, but as You will**...The significant thing about this prayer was that the Lord *submitted* His **will** to the **will** of His Father.

**And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?" (vs. 40)...**

When Jesus *returned to the three*, He **found them sleeping**. It was probably around *midnight* and the need for sleep at that hour was natural. Plus, Jesus and the disciples had just had a long and hectic day...and they had just finished a large meal. Yet...these *three* were asleep at the moment of the *greatest spiritual conflict* in the history of the world.

He woke them and reprimanded **Peter**...*not the other two*...but **Peter** for his inability to abide with Him in prayer. This is to further point out to **Peter** that only a short time before, he had twice said that he would never forsake the Lord (vs. 33, 35)...yet he couldn't even pray with Him in His greatest need.

**Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (vs. 41)...**

Jesus encouraged them...

**Keep watching and praying**...both are *present imperatives* and carry the idea of *continuous action*...indicated with the word **keep**. The need for spiritual vigilance *isn't occasional*...but *continuous*.

You...*plural*...referring to all *three*.

**The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak**...Doing what is right is often difficult. We may have the best of intentions, but we end up like **Paul**...doing exactly what we know we shouldn't do, while not doing that which we know we should be doing (**Romans 7:15-20**).

**He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."** (**vs. 42**)...

As Jesus prayed a **second time**...He recognized that the **cup** (**vs. 39**) could **not pass away unless He drank it**.

**Your will be done**...again, He affirmed a **second time** that **God's will** must be accomplished...*whatever the cost* (**vs. 39, 42**).

**Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy** (**vs. 43**)...

The disciples had fallen back asleep, even after He had awakened them. He returned and **found** the *three disciples* asleep **again**, but this time *He didn't wake them*.

**And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more** (**vs. 44**)...

For a **third time** Jesus **prayed** the same *prayer* while the disciples slept.

**Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting?"** (**vs. 45a**)...

The disciples **sleeping and resting** was in *stark contrast* to His *agonizing* (**vs. 37**) and *praying*...to the point of *exhaustion* and *perspiration*.

*"Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground."*

~Luke 22:43-44

Jesus was alone. Even though the disciples were nearby, they were useless with their lack of intercession. They were controlled by the

*flesh* rather than by the *spirit*. And yet, Jesus evidenced *steadfast obedience*...a determination to follow the Father's **will regardless of the cost**.

### III. HIS SEIZURE: (**vs. 45b-46**)

**Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners** (**vs. 45b**)...As Jesus walked back to the three disciples, the men coming to arrest Him were already within sight. In fact, they were approaching *while He was still speaking* to the disciples (**vs. 47**).

**The hour is at hand**...the time had come for Him *to become sin*...to be *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* (**John 1:29**)!

**The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners**...When Jesus *returned to the disciples* the **third time**...He woke them up with the news that His **betrayal** was coming and they must go meet him.

**Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"** (**vs. 46**)...Instead of waiting for His enemies to come to Him...He went out to meet them. Jesus made the ultimate and final act of commitment to His Father's will. A prime illustration that...

*"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."*

~John 10:17-18

### LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- The two weapons that Jesus used when facing trials and temptation were *Scripture* and *prayer*...the same weapons the Lord provides each of His children (**Ephesians 6:17-18**).
- The first step of a believer's falling into sin is *pride* and *self-confidence*...the belief that he is able to be faithful to the Lord in his own *strength* and *power*. The disciples never believed that they would fall away and deny Jesus. They never intended to fall asleep when they should have been *fervently praying* and *keeping watch* with Him.