

The Agony of the Cup

Scripture: Mark 14:32–42

Code: 41-75

Open your Bible to the fourteenth chapter of Mark...Mark's gospel, chapter 14. We are in the history of Mark, in the Passion Week of our Lord Jesus Christ, the week of His crucifixion and resurrection. As we come to chapter 14 of Mark and verses 32 to 42, we come to a very familiar account of our Lord's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane as He wrestles with the reality of the coming cross later that day. This is set on Friday, in the middle of the night, the very day He was crucified and died.

As we approach verses 32 to 42 in our ongoing study of our Lord's death and resurrection, it might be good for us to remember that the prophet Isaiah gave us a prophecy directly of the Messiah's suffering. In Isaiah chapter 53, that is a great historic prophecy, the prophet said many things about how that Christ would be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities and chastised for our peace with God, that He would suffer in our place. But He also said this, in Isaiah 53:3, he said, "The Messiah would be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief."

In the thirty-three years of our Lord's life in this world, as God incarnate in human flesh, He had been constantly exposed to the sorrows of life, very well aware of them as He was aware of absolutely everything not only what was visible, and what was knowable outside of Him, but what He knew because He knew what the heart of man was like, meant that He not only saw people suffer, but He felt their pain. He understood the grief and the sorrow that goes along with a fallen world, sin, disease, unbelief, ignorance, rebellion, rejection, disobedience, suffering, poverty, loss and certainly death. He saw and felt all of those exigencies of human suffering, even gave temporary relief to them, showing His compassion as He healed people, cast demons out of them, raised the dead, fed the hungry crowds. This was a kind of temporary physical reprieve from the sorrows of life, for the brief three years of His ministry. It was also a preview of His Kingdom. He will return to establish an earthly Kingdom and in that Kingdom suffering will be severely mitigated and diminished. Sorrow will be diminished with it. Life will be lengthened. Health will be increased. But that will, even at its best, only be a preview of heaven where there is no sickness, no sadness, no crying, no tears and no death.

But our Lord saw it all and felt it all. He was moved with compassion. The New Testament never says He laughed, never says He was happy. But it does say He was sad and it does say He cried. He experienced sorrow upon sorrow. He experienced the fullness of sorrow in the ways that we would never be able to, we can only feel our own pain and absorb so much of the pain that is outside us, but He absorbed all the pain that was both outside of people's lives and inside their hearts because He saw it all and He saw it all in everybody. But as much sorrow as He had, sorrow upon sorrow upon sorrow, grief upon grief, there was no sorrow and there was no grief ever in His life like the experience recorded in these verses. This has been called His last temptation, and it is that. This is so severe, this particular experience of sorrow and grief, that it almost kills Him. It is so severe that the Bible says it evoked out of Him loud crying and tears. It is so severe that He actually sweat blood. This is a momentous experience in the life of our Lord, in the middle of the night on that Friday in which He was to die.

Let me read it to you, starting in verse 32. "They came to a place named Gethsemane and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here until I have prayed.' And He took with Him Peter and James and John and began to be very distressed and troubled and He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and watch.' And He went a little beyond them and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, 'Abba, Father. All things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me, yet not what I will, but what You will.' And He came and found them sleeping and said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' And again He went away and prayed saying the same words. And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy. And they didn't know what to answer Him. And He came the third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough, the hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners, get up, let us be going. Behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand.'"

Matthew describes this, Mark describes it, Luke describes it and John describes it. And the full picture is the sum of all those descriptions. Again, this experience of our Lord in sorrow and grief and suffering defies comprehension, defies human understanding, surpasses our ability to grasp. This is sacred ground, this is a supernatural struggle. This is a private, divine conflict. And we could just walk away from it and leave it at that, but we would be cheated out of some of the richest and most profound insights into our Savior found anywhere in holy Scripture. In fact, here are deeper insights into His heart than have yet been written in the New Testament. You have to get to this point to see some things in His heart like you've never seen them before. Which leads me to say, at this point, that so many Christians have a superficial understanding of Christ and they never go the depths of Scripture's revelation and see the majesty and the glory that comes when you dig deeply.

Yes, His glory transcends our understanding, but there's much that we can grasp that makes Him all the more glorious, all the more worthy of our worship and obedience. This is precious, precious insight that I just read you. Apart from the cross, no greater agony has ever been experienced by any being who has lived in this world in human form, no man has ever suffered this way. This is the second greatest agony that our Lord would experience, the first being that which is to come on the cross itself. This is the second great agony. This is the apex of His life of sorrow and grief. This is the highpoint of torturous suffering. This is the night when He anticipates the drinking of the cup of divine wrath which will be His in full at the cross. And again, His sorrow was so severe, and the struggle is so massive, that it came close to killing Him. This is a conflict that is staggering to Him.

This is a conflict that He has never had before. It is far greater than the previous encounters with Satan that He's had. The first one, you'll remember, the Holy Spirit sent Him into the wilderness, you see it in Matthew 4, Luke 4, Mark 1, to be tempted by the devil for a period of 40 days and for 40 days Jesus never ate anything, He fasted, and Satan hammered at Him. Satan came at Him and said, "You're hungry, make food, You have a right to eat. You're the Messiah, You have a right to be accepted, and acknowledged, dive off the tower of the temple and everybody will know You're the Messiah and You'll receive the accolades in the honor that You deserve. And by the way, You're supposed to have the Kingdoms of the world bow to me, and I'll give them to You." Satan was trying to deflect Him from the cross. "Get rid of this humiliation, get rid of this deprivation, You don't need to be rejected. You don't need to die, You can have the Kingdoms now, You can have the popularity now, You can have the satisfaction now. You don't deserve any deprivation." That was the first temptation, and all of that was designed to keep Him from the cross.

The second time Satan really actually appears in a temptation is in Matthew 16 where Jesus says to the disciples, "I'm going to die." And Peter says, "Now You're not, no, Lord, no, no, that can't happen." And Jesus looked at Peter and said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Again, Satan's effort to keep Him from the cross came through the mouth of Peter.

This is very important for you to understand. Satan has always tried to keep Jesus from the cross. Satan didn't want Jesus crucified. Satan isn't behind the crucifixion of Jesus. That is the last thing Satan wants. He wants to keep Him from the cross. In the first temptation, he offered Him everything He deserved without the cross. Through Peter he said it's an outrage to think of You going to the cross and dying. And here, in the Garden, Satan shows up again. How do we know that? Because in Luke 22:53, Luke's parallel account, it says, "This is the hour of the power of the darkness." Three definite articles. This is the hour of the power of the darkness. This is the specific time for Satan to act. This is the very culminating effort of Satan to keep Jesus from the cross. The experience in the Garden, Satan's hope is, will drive Jesus to say to the Father, "No, I can't do it." And if Satan succeeds in that, then hell is the only place people will ever live forever. Heaven will be empty. God's Word will be untrue. The promise of salvation a lie. And Satan is really the sovereign. This is the great, great battle. This is the great battle.

And no wonder the struggle was so severe that Jesus said, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death." That's the overview of what's going on here. Let's go to the text, verse 32. "They came..." they meaning Jesus...and the eleven, Judas having left to go plot the arrest of Jesus which would come a little later. Jesus and the eleven leave the place where they had the Passover and the Lord's Table, verse 26 said at the end of that evening, Thursday night, just around midnight. They sang a hymn and they headed to the Mount of Olives. On the way, Jesus says, "You're all going to fall, you're all going to stumble, you're all going to be scattered, you're all going to end up denying Me." They don't believe it, verse 31, Peter says, "I will die before I will do that." And they all said the same thing. Jesus warned them about their weakness, warned them about the danger, warned them about coming temptation. That was the conversation as they headed to the Mount of Olives. They came then to a place named Gethsemane. This is a garden, people lived in a crowded city and had their gardens outside the city wall on the hillsides. This is somebody who owned a garden, who had given it to the disciples and to our Lord to use. The city is full of people, hundreds of thousands more than the normal population because of the Passover and they were accommodated in the garden. The garden maybe had an outdoor kind of accommodation, maybe some kind of a shelter where they could sleep at night. Sometimes going to the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, but perhaps not all of them could fit there, so this was a place they also went.

And not only at this Passover, but John 18:2 says, "Jesus often resorted there with His disciples." So it was a place to escape the crowds, a private place, a private garden where they could get away and spend time together. That is why Judas knew where they were, according to Luke 22:39, Judas who was betraying Him knew the place which means it was a place they went to frequently enough for him to know they would be there.

So here is another nameless person who provides something for the Savior, like the man who provided the colt is unnamed, like the man who provided the upper room for the Passover is unnamed, here is a man with a garden, and a very large one at that, as we will see. And this is a place where he has provided for the Lord Jesus, this would be another unknown nameless follower of Christ.

They arrived at this garden, it's named Gethsemane, which means olive press. It's the Mount of Olives. They grow olives there, they do even to this day. And this would be named for the press that was used to get the olive oil. This is the garden.

"When He arrived there, He said to His disciples, 'Sit here until I have prayed.'" Sit here until I have prayed. That's what He said to them, but that's not all He said. According to the parallel account in Luke, Luke 22:40, He also said this, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." He's just warned them of the danger they're in, of falling away, scattering and denying Him. "Pray that you may not enter into temptation. Use the means of grace." Now that should have been instruction very familiar to them, because the first time they ever asked the Lord to teach them how to pray, "Lord, teach us to pray," they said, Matthew chapter 6, Luke chapter 11, He said to them, "When you pray, pray like this, Our Father..." and He went through all of those and eventually He came to this line, "Pray like this, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'" He had taught them they needed to pray to be able to overcome temptation and evil.

How many times had that lesson been repeated to them? Pray that you not enter in to temptation and be overcome. Don't depend on your own strength. Call on the Lord. The means of grace to overcome iniquity, to be victorious, is vigilant prayer. Yes, we have a High Priest praying for us that our faith fail not. Jesus said that with regard to Peter, "I have prayed that your faith fail not." It won't be a total failure, a total collapse. We have an interceding High Priest. We have an example of His prayer in John 17, "Keep them, Father, from the evil one. Bring them to glory that they may see Your glory and My glory." Yes we have an interceding High Priest and we are secured from a total failure by His prayers. But we will lose the battle with temptation along the way if we don't pray and depend on divine strength, rather than be overconfident in our own human strength. So they should have been praying because of what was coming, the most dangerous moments in their experience up to this point.

Well, with that as a background, let's look at the scenes that unfold in these few verses, just briefly. First, we see a transcendent affliction...a transcendent affliction. This is an affliction that comes to Christ. This is an affliction that comes to Christ in this hour that really transcends anything we would know. I'll explain that to you. Verse 33, He took with Him Peter, James and John. Why? Why did He take them? He left eight of them by the entrance, took Peter, James and John deeper into the Garden, which is the first indication that it was a large garden, deeper into the Garden? Why? They were the leaders. James and John, you know, were the ones who were...came to Jesus with their mother and said, "Could we sit on Your right and Your left hand?" They had the sense that they were...they were the prime guys. They had the sense that they had the intimate track with Jesus. And then there was, of course Peter, who as the recognized leader as far as everybody was concerned and not the least of which was Peter. So they go along.

What is this about? Well these are the three main leaders. These are the guys that are going to be the influences on the other, so they need to learn a lesson. So Jesus says, "Come with Me, cause you have something to learn. And if you learn it, you can teach it to the rest."

By the way, they were going to learn a lesson. They were going to learn how important it is to pray so that you will be triumphant in temptation and they were going to learn it by failing to pray and falling to the temptation. So they were going to learn the way that we learn the best, by failure. They were going to learn out of the disaster of their prayerlessness.

So the inner circle goes, in order that their weakness may be exposed cause these were the ones who were so confident they think they ought to sit on the right hand and the left and Peter would have been even surpassing them, thinking him to be the most elevated and exalted of all.

So He takes them in to pray. Now let me tell you something. If Christ Himself needs to pray in the face of temptation, how much more do we need to pray? Cause He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He drew on the Father's power and protection. How much more do we need to? So in the three go with Jesus to a certain point.

On the way, verse 33 says, He began to be very distressed and troubled. Distressed is a very interesting word. It is a compound form of the verb to be amazed...to be amazed. And you would ask yourself, what could amaze Jesus? He is omniscient. He knows everything. What is going to amaze Him? What is going to stun Him? What is going to shock Him? Is there any experience He's never had? Is there anything He doesn't know?

Answer: yes, there is an experience He's never had and He's about to have it. There is the knowledge of that experience that He has never had and He's about to have it. And He is amazed at what He is experiencing because it is totally alien to everything He has ever experienced and ever known. In fact, it causes Him to be troubled, a very strong word meaning to be astonished. This is amazement and astonishment in anguish. The word troubled means to be anguished, to a level of really incomprehensibility. So He is amazed and astonished at the level of anguish that He's feeling over this. This is something new to Him.

What was it? What was causing this? Was it a rejection to the nation Israel? Was it the defection of Judas? Was it the desertion of the eleven soon to happen? Was it the injustice of those mocked trials to come later in the morning? Was it the mockery? Was it the spitting? Was it the punchings in the face? Was it the scourging? Was it the crucifixion? Was it dying? What was it that caused these kinds of amazed feelings of anguish?

Well it was something more than those things. Those things caused Him a great amount of sorrow. But the anguish and amazement that captures Him now is something beyond that. It is the anticipation of experiencing the Father's will and embracing the role of becoming a sacrifice for sin, to become the sin's bearer. He is facing something completely alien to Himself. He has never known sin. He has never known the wrath of God. He has never known alienation. As God, He is not temptable. James 1:13 says, "God can't be tempted." As God, He is not temptable, not able to sin. As man, He is temptable. He was tempted in all points like as we are, Hebrews says, and He was able not to sin. As God He can't be tempted, but because He's the God/Man, He can be tempted. Can He be tempted successfully? No. He is not able to sin, but He is able to be tempted. His struggle is not like ours, not like ours, not like ours. We are tempted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, the Bible says. He had none of those. He had no human sinfulness. He was fully man but had no human sinfulness, nothing in His nature that would be drawn to sin. His temptation, therefore, is not attacking Him at the point of sin, as His vulnerability like it is for us, it is attacking Him at the point of holiness. In this temptation, Satan is on the side of His holiness.

Let me explain what I mean. We struggle because the power of evil is so strong in us, right? We struggle with sin because the power of evil is so strong in our nature. We battle against ever-present,

unholy resident impulses internal and strong, and we struggle to do what is right, to grasp righteousness. Our battle is to fight against the compelling impulses of evil that are in us. Not so, Jesus. He struggled in the exactly opposite way because of His holy nature, because of His sinless purity, because of His total righteousness, because of His perfect love and obedience to God. He struggled because the power of holiness was the only thing in Him, that righteousness was the sole single motive and impulse of His holy soul is clearly indicated in Scripture. And what God was asking Him to do was to embrace sin as a sin bearer...not as a sinner, but as a sin bearer, to take the wrath of God for sin, to receive divine punishment. We struggle because the power of sin is so strong in us. He struggled because the power of holiness was the only power that existed in Him. How can He possibly become a sin bearer and receive the wrath of God.

And the level of divine wrath is staggering because our Lord will embrace eternities of wrath, eternities of divine punishment. What do you mean by that? I mean that for every sinner for whom He died, He took that sinner's eternal wrath. For the millions of sinners for whom He died, He took a million eternities full of wrath. And He was holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners, and how could this be? That's why the struggle was so immense. And verse 34 says it, "He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved,'" *perilupos*, literally surrounded by sorrow, surrounded by grief. *Peri*, perimeter, periphery, He's engulfed in this grief to the point of death...to the point of death.

He had never said yes to alienation from His Father. He had never said yes to guilt. He had never said yes to sin bearing. He had never said yes to punishment. It almost killed Him. In fact, His anguish is so immense in this struggle of His own nature, then aided and abetted in some way by Satan, trying to get Him to avoid the cross, that Luke 22:43 says, "God sent an angel to strengthen Him." A mighty angel came to save Him when He came to the point of death.

How severe was it? Luke 22:44 says, "The struggle was so immense, the stress on His physical form was so great, that He began to sweat drops of blood." There's a clinical name for that, hematomatosis. What happens is, under immense stress, the capillaries gorge, inflate and explode and the blood comes out the sweat glands. This is the maximum point of human stress. The anguish was so profound that an angel had to save His life, He might have bled to death from the sheer struggle and stress of it. Remain here, He says in verse 34, and keep watch. And He left the three and further into the Garden and He went a little beyond them, verse 35. He went a little beyond them, and Luke 22 verse 41 says, "He went a stone's throw," as far as you could throw a rock. "And He fell to the ground and He began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by...the hour." The hour of the power, the hour of the power of the darkness, all the suffering and leading up to and including His cross.

We're not holy, so we can't relate to this. Some people say, "Well wait a minute, doesn't this show weakness on Jesus' part? Doesn't this show reluctance to obey His Father?" Look, if He didn't react like this, we would wonder whether He was holy, right? This is the only possible response of a holy person to the thought of bearing sin and guilt and judgment. This is the most acceptable, normal, expected response. We don't have a perfect hatred for sin, He did. Everything in His being was repulsed by the thought of iniquity. His plea is absolutely consistent with His nature as God. He's too pure to look on things that are sinful, can't even behold them, Habakkuk 1:13 says. No wonder He came almost to the point of death, blood loss, so severe that an angel had to come and rescue Him in some way.

His words are even given here. This is His actual prayer, that takes us to a second point, a

passionate supplication or passionate petition. He was saying, "Abba, Father," Abba meaning papa, daddy. It's a term of familiarity. No Jew would ever even call God Father, let alone call Him Abba. But our Lord calls on the affectionate, intimate, personal name of God as if pleading for that intimate love to rescue Him. All things are possible for You, He says, all things are possible for You. Theoretically that is true, that is an absolute fact. All things are possible for God. There is nothing that God doesn't have the power to do, and the privilege to do, and the prerogative to do. He can do whatever He wants in all the earth, Scripture says that. You could do it, You could do anything. That is true theoretically.

However, it's not true actually. God couldn't allow Him to miss the cross. When He says all things are possible for You, remove this cup from Me, that is a problem. If He doesn't go to the cross, then we have some big problems. Satan wins. Heaven is empty. Hell is full. The Bible isn't true. The promises of God are lies. There is no salvation. Theoretically, God can do anything He wants, but God has already put Himself on record that salvation will come through blood sacrifice. "Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins." God can't go back on His Word. And while God can do anything He wants to do, one thing He doesn't want to do is do what He says He would never do, or not do what He said He would do. That is, He is never inconsistent with His promises.

The request, nonetheless, is clear. We know what's on Jesus' heart. "Remove this cup from Me." Cup is a symbol from the Old Testament of divine wrath, the cup of wrath. You see that in Psalm 11; Psalm 75; Isaiah 51; Jeremiah 25; Isaiah 51; Jeremiah 25; Jeremiah 49; Lamentations chapter 4, other places. "Let this cup of wrath pass from Me, remove it."

Our Lord referred to it earlier, Matthew 20:22, and He was talking to the disciples who wanted to be elevated. He said, "Can you drink the cup that I'm about to drink?" John 18:11, He said, "The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" So it's the cup of divine wrath. He has to drink the wrath of His Father. That is something He had never experienced.

He knew it was coming. Of course He knew it was coming. Earlier in the twelfth chapter of John which records an earlier time in His life and ministry, the issue came up about Him dying. He said, "I'm going to die," and He even gave an illustration. "If a grain of wheat doesn't fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it dies, a seed goes and dies, it brings forth fruit." And He was saying I need to die to bring forth the fruit that God has ordained. And then He said this in John 12:27, this is earlier, "My soul has become troubled." He's beginning to think about it. "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour." Here He is saying, "What am I supposed to say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour." He knew that. He said, "Am I going to say that?" And guess what? He did say that. In the throes of the horrors of that, save Me from this hour. Remove this cup from Me.

But then comes His triumphant resolution. "Yet not what I will, but what You will." Not what I will, but what You will. In the end, that's what He always said. He said over and over, "I only do what the Father tells Me, shows Me, desires of Me, and what I see the Father do, I follow only His direction." It's because, as He said when He was twelve years old, "I must be about My Father's business."

Well, in the horrors of that agonizing struggle, He starts to think about the disciples. Amazing. And that takes us to a third scene here. We see transcendent affliction, and passionate petition, and then we see affectionate exhortation. Verse 37, "He came and found them sleeping." Goes back to the three, Peter, James and John. He said to Peter, "Simon," He always called him his old name when

he acted like his old self. "Are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?" They're sleeping.

You say, "Well, it was a long day, it's in the middle of the night. Come on, give them a break, they had a big meal. They made a long walk up a hill and they're just waiting for Him, and they don't know what's going on." Well Luke actually adds something very helpful for us. They were asleep, Luke adds, "For sorrow...for sorrow." Things were not going the way they wanted them to go. Where was the Kingdom? Where was all the glory they anticipated? And now there's a betrayer among them, he's gone off to do his dirty deed. Now they've been told that they're going to flee, they're going to fall away, they're going to deny Him. It isn't looking good. The nation's turned against them. The leaders hate Him. They want Him dead. He pronounced judgment already on Jerusalem, said the whole temple's coming down, not one stone is going to be left on another. This is not what they expected. It's all sad. And Luke adds, "They went to sleep for sorrow." Sleep is a tranquilizer, isn't it? Do you ever go to sleep when you just want to escape? Sorrow will put you to sleep. And their sorrows were exceedingly heavy..heavy sorrows.

But our Lord gives them a warning in verse 38, "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation." Don't you understand the danger you are in? Keep alert and praying. That's an old lesson, "Lead us not into temptation," again. Matthew 6, Luke 11. Many times in the New Testament, Matthew, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, Romans 13, Colossians 4. Watch and pray, watch and pray, be on the alert, use the means of grace.

Peter learned this lesson. I told you these lessons were learned by these guys and they were learned negatively by their failure. Peter, I think, refers to this in his mind when he writes in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be on the alert, because your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." And he had been devoured, turned into a sniveling denier 'cause he hadn't been prepared through prayer and he trusted in his own strength.

Good intentions aren't enough. Our Lord gives us this simple lesson, "The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." The new man, the regenerate nature, the inner man has noble aspirations, but the flesh is weak. That's why Paul said, "O wretched man that I am, I have the inner man longing for the things that honor God, and I have another principle operating in me, the principle of sin," right? It's like a body of death attached to me. You better depend on divine power.

But what is the point of this? The point is this, and this is such a profound thing to understand. In the middle of the most consummate agony of His entire existence as an eternal being, He is concerned about these guys. Now that's the kind of High Priest you need, right? A sympathetic, merciful, compassionate High Priest who in the middle of a cosmic supernatural struggle of epic proportions, incomprehensible to us, breaks his prayer off and goes out because he's concerned about the spiritual vulnerability of His friends, His disciples. That's our great High Priest.

So just in case you wondered whether in the busyness of Jesus' activities in life He forgets you? Don't wonder anymore. No matter how intense the struggle is, He has you in His heart. My name, said the song we sang, is graven on His hands...My name is written on His heart and He ever lives to make intercession for us. Beautiful.

Again He went away and He prayed saying the same words. What words? Back in verse 36, "Abba,

Father, all things are possible for You. Remove this cup from Me, yet not what I will, but You will.” And it wasn’t that simple, He didn’t say it in six seconds. He repeated those words, agonizingly over, perhaps a protracted period of hours. But He went back to pray the same prayer. He only interrupted the prayer because He was concerned about them. And again He came back, still concerned. He stops praying again and comes out of this immense struggle and He found them sleeping again for their eyes were very happy, and they didn’t know what to answer Him. I guess not, no excuses, huh?

What could they say? And then He went back in to pray some more. And He said the same thing again. Three times He poured out His heart saying, “Remove this cup from Me.” And it’s reminiscent of Paul in 2 Corinthians 12 going before the Lord three times to ask that the thorn in the flesh be removed, right? And finally, saying no. That’s it.

The third time He came and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting?” Wow! His prayer was only interrupted because of His compassion. This is our great High Priest who cares for us.

So, we see the affliction, the petition, the exhortation, there’s a final consideration coming in the last couple of verses. Let’s just call it triumphant submission. He yields to the will of the Father in each of those three cycles of prayer. But He finally comes out triumphant. The last temptation is over. He is resolved triumphantly, majestically, unhesitatingly to do what His Father has asked Him to do, He’s going to go to the cross. Verse 41, in the middle, it says, He says, “It’s enough, it is enough.” Temptation over, struggle finished, prayer done, answer clear...the hour has come. The hour has come. What He means by that is it’s now, it’s here, it’s present. The proof, He says, “Behold, or better, Look,” actually I think He said, “Look, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

What did He mean by that? They were up on the slope of the Mount of Olives, there was an entourage coming, made up of the leaders, the Sanhedrin of Israel, and assorted other dignitaries and followers of Judaistic religion, there were the temple police who were the ones who policed the crowds in the temple on behalf of the temple operation and then there was a cohort of Romans which could be as many as 600 soldiers. There could have been a thousand people coming up the hill with torches. He sees it. “Look, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.” How do they know where we are? How would they know where we are in this private garden in the middle of the night, how would they know? The betrayer.

The emphasis in that statement, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners,” is on the word sinners. This is what made the struggle so immense. How is it that He could be turned over to sinners? How is it that God would allow Him to be turned over to sinners who would kill Him? This whole thing was so foreign to everything in Him. That was precisely the issue that He struggled with.

And then to be turned over to sinners who would kill Him, for God who in that would punish Him. But He steps up triumphant, verse 42, “Get up, get up, your sleep is over. Get off the ground.” The cup is in His hand and He is not trembling. He stands, bloody sweat coursing down His exhausted face, soaking His clothes, He is bloodied but He is unbowed and He gives the triumphant order, “Get up. Let’s be going.” And He didn’t mean out the back, He meant right toward them. John 18 records what happened. He went right at them, “Let’s be going. Behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand. I can now see Judas coming up the hill.”

Verse 43 describes Judas leading the entourage of the crowd, swords, clubs. Why? Because they were all afraid that if the crowds of Jerusalem found out what they were doing, there could be a massive kind of revolution take place to protect Jesus, and they would need this kind of force to quell the riot.

There they came with swords and clubs. The Romans are included, John tells us, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, all the officials, Judas is leading. Jesus doesn't go the other way, He confronts them. He says to them, according to John 18, "Who do you seek?" They say, "Jesus of Nazareth." He says, "I am He," and they all fell down flat on the ground, all of them, as many as a thousand of them hit the dirt just by the sound of His voice when He said, "I am He." They crawled back up again. He said it a second time. He is triumphant. He is majestic. But the disciples? Not so. They're going to flee for their lives, unprepared, prayerless and unprepared. So in triumphant resolve, He goes to face His betrayer, goes to face the religious enemies of Judaism and the Roman soldiers and all the rest of the crowd.

Now the rest of the story of that very moment is critical for us. And I'm going to look at that next Sunday morning, but before we do, I want to just close this with a very important and compelling question. What was it that caused Jesus to come out with that triumphant submission? Why would He say, "I'll go to death." Why would He do that? Why would He accept this from God?

The answer comes in Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 7 where the writer of Hebrews looks back at this event and he says this, "In the days of His flesh, in the days that Christ was on earth, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears." Okay? That was at the Garden. Listen to this, "To the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His holiness."

What does that mean? He entrusted Himself to God who was able to save Him from death and would do so because He was holy. In other words, Jesus trusted the promise of resurrection. God would save Him from death. He wouldn't prevent the death, He would save Him out of it. This is a reflection of Psalm 16:10, a prophetic statement concerning Christ that says this, "You will not let Your holy one see corruption, but will show Him the path of life." The promise of the resurrection, that His body would not corrupt in a grave, but it would be raised. So with supplications and loud crying and tears, He prayed to the one able to save Him from death who heard Him because He was the Holy One. And on that Sunday morning, raised Him from the death. Romans 1:3 and 4 says, "The Father raised Him, thus declaring Him to be the Son of God with power through the resurrection." God would raise Him because He was the Holy One. It was our Lord's trust in the Father's promise of resurrection, Psalm 16, and the Father's power of resurrection that enabled Him to accept this from His Father, go to the cross and look past it to His own resurrection.

Father, we thank You for Your truth. The Word is light in the darkness and this is...this is like putting a miner's light on our hats and going down deep into the belly of the earth and seeing things that are hidden in the darkness from most people. We thank You that You've let us put on the light of Scripture and go down deep into the sorrows and sufferings of our own Savior. Remind us that He did this for us...that He did this for us. But it only applies to those who believe in Him. We remember it was said of John in the scriptures we read, "He saw and believed." May we see and believe that the One who died who bore our sin, who received eternities of punishment, absorbed them all in a three-hour period, went into the grave and on a Sunday morning came out of the grave triumphant, glorifying His Father who had raised Him as He promised. May we know that because He died bearing our sins because He rose again in newness of life, we too can rise to walk in new life if we

put our trust in Him. Lord, I pray today that there would be folks here who would bow the knee in repentance, turn from sin and embrace Jesus Christ as their own Savior and Lord. Do a mighty work in the hearts of folks that are here, the same power that raised Christ can raise them from their own spiritual deadness and give them life in Him. And give us a good day as we celebrate the rest of this day, our Living Lord in whose name we pray. Amen.

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