

# The Garden & Betrayal – Part 1

## The Agony of the Garden

Matthew 26:36-45; Mark 14:32-41; Luke 22:39-45

It is in the Garden of Gethsemane that Jesus feels the weight of obedience to the Father. A careful look at the Scriptures shows the agony of His soul. Yet, He leaves the Garden moving to meet the betrayer in full victory and submission to His Father's will. Let's look at Jesus' struggle in this narrative, the disciples' apathy, and seek to glimpse at the truths of Christ's prayer that night.

**A Hymn** – The Passover Feast always ended with a hymn and so did Jesus and the disciples at the end of the Upper Room Discourse. In Christ's time, Alfred Edersheim, the converted Jewish scholar, taught that each household would finish the Passover with Psalm 118; in modern times Ps. 136 is used.

**A Brook** – Jesus lead the group over a little bridge crossing the Brook Cedron. (John 18:1) It was late winter and the water was at its highest point. The name Cedron means dark and murky, and it was especially discolored during Passover as the temple run-off of water and lambs blood flowed from the city.

So, the last discourse had been taught, the last prayer of consecration for Himself, His disciples, and even future believer's had been given, the last song had been sung, and now the trek to Gethsemane. The paths and roads of Jerusalem would still be busy as many were celebrating the Passover late into the night. But Jesus had a destination that night and a battle to win.

### I. The Garden

**“And he came out, and went, as he was wont ( accustomed, habit ), to the mount of Olives (“unto a place call Gethsemane,” Mark 14:32); and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation . (“Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.” Matt. 26:36)” Luke 22:39-40**

“Gethsemane” – The word Gethsemane means “olive press”. This garden or really an orchard is described to have been east of Jerusalem at the base of the Mount of Olives. What is toured today in Israel is much too small to fit the Biblical narrative (“stone's throw”) but is probably the real location in part. It does have some very ancient olive trees but these are not original to the time of Christ. Titus had destroyed all the trees during the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD according to Josephus. The church/shrine next to the present day Garden of Gethsemane holds a rock said to be the one Christ would have laid on to pray. This is found only in tradition for the Scriptures tell nothing of a rock in the garden. Jesus had many friends and followers. Tradition says that the olive plantation could have belonged to John Mark's family (Mark 14:51-21). Whatever the situation, it was a quiet and private retreat where Jesus and His disciples were accustom to go to camp or pray or both while in Jerusalem. Judas knew the Christ would be here that night (Luke 22:47)!

“and his disciples also followed him.” – Jesus led the way to Gethsemane from the Upper Room. Jesus “came out, and went” and the eleven followed. He continued to carry the activities and dialogue. Jesus was in control.

“Pray”/“Sit” – In Luke's text we find Jesus telling ALL of the disciples to pray. So in reality the same responsibility to pray for deliverance from temptation was given to all the disciples, not just to the inner-circle three. Their request was not so much deliverance from the temptation to sin as it was their great trial that lay

ahead---Jesus' betrayal, arrest, trials and crucifixion. In Mark and Matthew the eleven were asked to sit but were never given liberty to sleep. They were all to stay mentally and spiritually on guard.

## II. The Agony

**“And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and John), and began to be sorrowful (“sore amazed” Mark 14:33) and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.” Matthew 26:37-38**

Peter, James, and John – These are the same three that have had the privilege to see Jesus, the God-man, display His special power and glory. At the Transfiguration they observed the God-man's heavenly glory as He shown like the sun! In the home of Jairus they saw the God-man, Creator overpower death in the raising of Jairus' daughter. Now, they see the God-man in agony, as our sinless Christ, face the reality of carrying the weighty sin of the world.

Here these three were asked to wait and watch with Jesus – not sleep. He was in the agony of His life and He requested these special three to stay alert and pray with Him just as a friend or sick loved one might desire someone to be with them in a dark hour and say, “tarry ye here,”.

the agony described – The Greek words in this passage are full of both description and emotion. This is a trait of the Greek language. One word can describe action and emotion. When you take all the words used from the three Gospel passages one begins to get a glimpse of the terror of Christ.

- “sorrowful” – (Matt 26:38; Mark 14:34) This is the same thought as in Ps. 43:5. this word means grieved. As Jesus was moving toward His place of prayer, the grief waved over Him and intensified.
- “sore amazed” – (Mark 14:33) is very strong, meaning deep emotional upset and distress, completely upset, terrified, appalled, deeply agitated
- “very heavy” – (Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33) has the idea of threatens to pull Him under as a great lead weight on His soul, this thought was used by physicians to describe that time as an illness is taking hold of a body in fever and aches start to come and weigh the body down but here it speaks of the soul having a great weight, greatly troubled, deeply distressed, bewilderment, startled panic, this word seems to indicate that His agony, like a leg cramp, started and became increasing more intense
- “unto death” - (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:34) the distress and grief of the moment was to the point of death
- “agony” – (Luke 22:44) great intensity of emotional struggle
- “sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground” – (Luke 22:44) most believe this was not blood but perspiration flowing “like” = “as it were” blood flowing.

Jesus has long known the cross of sin, shame, and separation from His Father was before Him. John 12:27-33 His suffering of soul was predicted in the Old Testament. Ps. 22:14; Is. 53:3-4; 10-11; These emotions of panic, intense grief, and distress were the most terrifying moments of Jesus' life. But this will not be His reaction in the judgment halls, standing before the empty cross; or even hanging on the cross. The victory of the cross is won here in the garden!

### III. The Prayer

#### A. The Position

**“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down (“and fell on his face,” Matt. 26:39; “and fell on the ground,” Mark 14:35), and prayed,” Luke 22:41**

Jesus went on into the inner part of the garden ---- Gethsemane means “olive press” many believe that in the center of the olive grove was the work area where the olive press would be set up. It was here Jesus left the three disciples and went on perhaps 75-100 yards beyond. In a simple Google search you can learn that the average man can throw a baseball this far. It was away from the disciples, alone with His Father, we are told that Jesus **kneeled down, fell on his face, and fell on the ground.** Do these contradict each other? No, our Lord probably did all three in the course of His three prayers. These positions show humility, submission and great sorrow.

#### B. The Petition – Prayed Three Times

**“And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba (Aramaic - daddy; papa), Father, all things are possible unto thee (“if it be possible,” Matt. 26:39); take away this cup from me (if thou be willing, remove this cup from me:” Luke 22:42): nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.” Mark 14:35-36**

“Abba Father,” – This Aramaic word is the household name for father. Jews would not have referred to God in such a relationship like term. Jesus’ relationship was different. But now we have that same relationship! Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6-7

“all things are possible unto thee” – Jesus knew all things were possible with God BUT not all things were in God’s will. This is true for us to understand too! We must go through life knowing that with God all things are possible. Yet, balance it with faith in our all wise God.

“this cup” – Much has been written about the meaning of “this cup”. The cup is the cross but that is very general. The content of that cup was our sin and the reaction of God to the cup is His wrath and separation. The word “cup” is found many times in Psalms and Revelations and almost always refers to the wrath of God. This was what the precious Son would most suffer. This separation came because our sin was put on Him (2 Cor. 5:21). The cup is climaxed on the cross with the statement, “My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me.” (Matt. 27:46)

Jesus had used the word “cup” before referring to the cross which lay ahead in Matt. 20:22 and He would refer to the cup was being from God not Satan. This was God’s plan, the cup given to Christ by God. (John 18:11) It was going to be on the cross that the penalty God had intended for sinners was to fall on His Son. More than the death itself and the terrible sufferings of crucifixion, there is something else we need to realize. It was this: Jesus the holy, harmless, separate from sinners, Son of God, was made sin for us! This was not done academically, electronically, or in word only but in true reality. Such horror for the Son for God ...Such darkness!! I Peter 2:24; I Cor. 15:3-4; Hebrews 2:9; 9:27-28; Gal. 3:13

“if thou be willing,” – Here Jesus is expressing His true feelings. These words are not in rebellion to the plan of God but honestly asking if there was another way to gain back humanity. Jesus’ desire was always His

Father's will and to bring Him glory (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:49; 18:11). His question of letting the cup pass was still directed with the desire to be within the will of God.

“nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.” – All three Gospels record the prayer and the desire of Christ for God to “remove this cup from me:” Along with the prayer is also recorded His resolve to obey the plan of God. The word “nevertheless” was not used with a grudgingly attitude or even resignation to the task but a spirit to readily receive and accept the will of God. He grounds His own willingness upon the Father's will and resolves the matter wholly into it. This was always His heart (Mark 10:33-34; Luke 9:51). Jesus reaffirmed His desire and willingness to trust and obey the Father's will. Phil 2:6-8; Heb. 5:7-9

### III. The Disciples

“And (“when he rose up from prayer,” Luke 22:45) he cometh, and findeth them sleeping (“for sorrow,” Luke 22:45), (“and said unto them,” Luke 22:46) and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready (“willing,” Matt. 26:41) but the flesh is weak.” Mark 14:37-38

“sleeping for sorrow” – These disciples were in reality worn out both physically and emotionally. The day had been long, the Upper Room's teaching was full of emotional highs and lows, and they were exhausted.

them/Peter, Simon, - This was not the first time disciples were asked to stay awake and pray and they were found asleep (Luke 9:28-32) It happened earlier on the Mount of Transfiguration. Now in the garden, it is recorded in Mark that Christ spoke directly to Peter. Perhaps because of His boastings early that evening, Jesus gave him a gentle rebuke, even using his former name, Simon, “sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?” Peter had said in the Upper Room that he would die for or with Christ. But here Peter couldn't even stay awake for an hour. Luke records this statement said to all of the disciples. Jesus had asked them all to pray so it makes perfect sense He would have rebuked all their disobedience.

“one hour” – This was not an all night prayer meeting. Here Jesus reveals that it had only been about an hour. He was not asking them something they could not attain. His need was great, His sorrow was deep, and He asked these followers to pray with Him.

“Watch ye and pray,” – “watch” – stay on guard, beware, stay awake, be alert AND pray! These men were not asked to pray for Him, but for themselves. The two words “enter not” is interesting to note. In the Greek these words indicate that there is a door which opens to more temptation. But that is often the case; you go through a door of sin, lying, boasting, complaining, disrespect, laziness, and not far behind comes more sin built on the foundation of the first!

“spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.” – The sweetness of Jesus our Blessed Savior comes through in Jesus' rebuke of the sleepy disciples. He knew their hearts and their love for Him, their desire to please, and to honor Him. Yet, Christ also understood the weakness of their sinful flesh. This is the same for all humankind. Galatians 5:17 tells us, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” But we have a Helper within us the

disciples did not have: we have the Holy Spirit to direct, convict and encourage us! Christ gives us the power to overcome our natural pull away from the will of God. (Rom. 7:18; 21-25)

#### IV. The Second Petition

**“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, (“the same words.” Mark 14:39) O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” Matthew 26:42**

“if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” – As the waves of sadness and agonizing grief came over Christ He repeated His prayer. J Vernon McGee said three different times in his commentary, “The victory of Calvary was won in Gethsemane.” We must learn that asking God a request more than once is not a sign of rebellion to the will of God. This was Christ’s pattern here in the garden. BUT our heart must be one of submission to the will and plan of God. Dr. McGee went on to say concerning our life trials, “Though we may pray to God to prevent and remove an affliction, our chief errand must be that He will give us the grace to bear it well.” JVM p.1508

**“And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.” Mark 14:40**

“neither wist they what to answer him” – This was getting embarrassing; the disciples didn’t know how to answer Christ! They just could not stay awake, and I will add, they must not have been trying! These disciples had failed but Jesus had succeeded.

#### V. The Third Petition

**“And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.” Matthew 26:44 “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were (lit. - like) great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” Luke 22:43-44**

“appeared an angel unto him from heaven” – Three times Jesus prayed the same petition and three times Jesus submitted to the will of His Father. Jesus would pray even “more earnestly” as the waves of agony grew greater! As the sweat flowed like the bleeding of an open wound, He sought His Abba Father for the possibility of a different way. Away that didn’t involve a severing of the relationship He had know for all of eternity! In every prayer that night, Jesus reaffirmed His commitment to do the Father’s will: that is why He left the throne room and heaven, that is why He walked the roads of earth, that is why He preached the Good News to men, He came to die, to “save his people from their sins.” Only Luke mentions an angel coming from heaven. Once before in Matt. 4:11 it is recorded that after the temptations of Christ at the beginning of His ministry that angels came and ministered to Him. Now at the end of His ministry an angel is summoned again by God to strengthen Christ. Not to remove the cup but to give Him encouragement to go forward. We are not sure what this angel did for Christ; perhaps minister to Him physically by wiping his brow, helping Him up, giving him water, or perhaps just sitting with Jesus quietly. Maybe he talked with Christ, reminding Him of His followers who did love Him, the many that will be brought to God through the work of the cross, the angel might have spoken of the glory He would return to at the right hand of God. We don’t know but we do know it gave Jesus strength. Jesus was not delivered from His sufferings but supported by God in them.

“And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

**Mark 14:41**

“Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come;” – Here we will see that while Christ’s friends were asleep His enemies were awake and plotting! Jesus tells His dozing disciples that they don’t have to feel guilty any longer, go to sleep. The time of their usefulness in watching with Him was past. The verification of the plan of God was set, obedience to His Father was sure. The Greek for “is betrayed” is actually present tense meaning, at that very moment He was being betrayed into the hands of sinners! Jesus had told the disciples this very thing in Luke 9:44 shortly after the Transfiguration. Jesus had said this several times in the last few days in Jerusalem....It was the hour! (John 12:23-27; 13:1; 17:1) The hour was come for the act of redemption of man to begin!! In Hebrews 5:7-9 we find the writer reviewing this event in the life of Christ, and the victory He won.

“ Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; <sup>8</sup> Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; <sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;” Hebrews 5:7-9

## **Believer’s Application:**

**1. How Jesus Faced Great Trials** – When the trials and difficulties of life overwhelm us we can look to Christ’s example

- 1. Jesus gathered three of His closest men to sit, pray, and watch with Him.** We too can gather a few dear godly friends and family to pray, watch, and even sit with us. There is found comfort to our soul when we are close to those who we love and know they love us. Trials and difficulties is not a time for total solitude. This was not Jesus’ pattern. Isolation from those who care is the seed of a faithless walk which comes by listening to our own heart and not the truth of God’s Word. Godly friends should be ready to spend time with us, pray for us, and give Biblical hope in the face of trouble. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was truly alone for His friends forsook Him for sleep.
  
- 2. Pray**
  - Honestly – Jesus poured out His heart honestly to His Father. He knew all things were possible with God and honestly asked if there was another way. His sorrow and grief was honestly open before His Father
  
  - Desiring only God’s Perfect Will – Jesus was very clear that God’s will and His submission to it was first on His heart. The way of the cross was going to cost Christ the last bit of His glory, and that was His ongoing relationship with His Father. Yet, He was willing to obey God the Father to secure everlasting life for all of humanity. John 12:27 His obedience came because of His love and relationship with the Father. Hebrews 5:7-9
  
  - Don’t be Afraid to Repeat your Prayer – Three times Jesus repeated the same prayer in the garden. This is not “vain repetition” as Jesus taught against in the Sermon on the Mount, this is a deep, agonizing prayer request that is given in anguish of soul.

- 3. Submit to God's Answer** – We must trust God's wisdom and plan for our lives. He has our best and the greater good for the Kingdom in mind. As Christ left the garden in victory moving toward the betrayer, we too must willingly submit to the bitter cups, keeping eternity and our eternal God in view. Our deepest desire should be to receive the strength to bear our burden with grace and to bear witness to the world and follow believer's God glory through it all. The apostle Paul also brought a great need to God three times in 2 Cor. 12:7-10. The passage tells us that he ultimately resolved to God's will for his life, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Cor. 12:10)

James 5:13-17; Psalm 50:14-15;

- 2. Obedience to God (in the big and small)** – Jesus had asked the disciples a small thing, "tarry here, watch and pray." Remember, just hours before, Peter boasted to Christ and all the disciples that he was willing to die for Jesus. Surely staying awake and praying would be an easy task in comparison to martyrdom! Perhaps in the mind of Peter and the other disciples, they found this request insignificant, not see the importance of it. Perhaps in their minds they justified their rejection of it and their direct disobedience. They did have a really busy week, the day was long, the next day would be busy, this was the middle of the night, they were where they usually went for rest.....all and many of these things could have gone through their minds. **Did Jesus ask them something they were incapable of doing? Were they powerless to stay awake and pray!?** This was not the first time Peter, James and John had been asked to come with Jesus for a time of prayer and was found sleeping, it had happened on the Mount of Transfiguration too. We're they incapable of not sleeping during prayer!?

When God asks us to do something; He gives us the power and ability to do it with His strength. These disciples plainly lacked the discipline and commitment to obey the commandment of Christ! WOW! Same for us so many times! There in the garden the Holy Son of God wrestled with the reality of sin being laid on Him. It was terrifying to Christ. Yet, we think little of our known sin, try little to win the battles against our besetting sins, and don't believe we could have habits, cultural norms, or thought patterns that have crept into our lives that are grievous to our Lord! Christ's strength to obey His Father's stemmed from His love relationship with His Father (John 14:31; 15:10) and that is the same for us! (John 14:15, 21-24; 15:14; I John 5:3; 2 John 6) BUT we are also told in the Scripture to "watch and pray"!

### **3. "Watch and Pray" –**

Watching and praying is a God-given tool to victory over sin! What do we watch for?

1. Watch for the possibilities of temptations. The word "watch" means to stay alert or on guard; the context of the passage is to watch concerning the temptations of the Devil, "that ye enter not into temptation."
2. Watch and be sensitive to the Devil's tricks and lies. I Peter 5:8
3. Watch and equip yourself with the Word of God to fight. Ps. 37:31 119:11; Eph. 6:17

Prayer is essential – Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2; I Peter 5:8 Ever wonder how do we put pray and put this need into words? When Jesus taught His disciples to pray in what we call the Lord’s Prayer, this principle is there. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:” Matt. 6:13. So simple just ask God to help in our daily confrontation with sin.

The disciples were unaware of the great trials that lay just minutes away, but Jesus did know! He told them to be alert and pray, yet they slept. In times when storm clouds seem to be on our horizon, or we are already under great stresses, realize we are vulnerable to temptation, even if we have a willing spirit to please God! Jesus gives us the exhortation of what to do; watch and pray!

In Luke 21:34-36, after Jesus gives a list of worldly sins that can steal away the attention of believers, He concludes with watch and pray. We must be alert to the possibilities to temptations, sensitive to the Devil’s fiery darts, and be fluent in the Word of God!

The writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 12:1-3, penned these words to encourage us in the example of Jesus while we travel our earthly journey. He is our example of endurance in all things.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”  
Hebrews 12:1-3