

The Agony in Gethsemane

Mark 14: 32-42

As we continue to follow Jesus on His journey toward the cross, His impending betrayal and crucifixion are drawing closer with each passing moment. Supper has ended, and along with the eleven, Jesus makes His way from Jerusalem toward the Garden of Gethsemane. As they make their way Jesus spoke with them about things to come and offered the high priestly prayer we considered last week.

The struggle our Lord faced in Gethsemane is one we all know well, but we cannot begin to imagine the difficulty of these moments. It is here that Jesus began to suffer in agony under the load of sin, soon to be bore on Calvary. His agony was so intense that Luke's gospel describes His sweat becoming as great drops of blood. In a few hours time He will have been betrayed, brought before the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod. He will be condemned to death, scourged mercilessly, and crucified on the cross.

This passage offers insight to the agonies Jesus faced in His final hours before the cross. I want to examine the [details](#) of that faithful night as we consider: [The Agony of Gethsemane](#).

I. The Intensity of the Moment – These were very intense moments as Jesus struggled and suffered under the burden of sin. Notice:

A. The Lord's Affliction (33b-34a) – [And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;](#) ^[34] [And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death:](#) These words are very expressive, describing the agony He faced. Jesus [began to be sore amazed](#). This phrase means "*utter and extreme fright, horror, terror, bewilderment, or amazement.*" We can't begin to imagine what Jesus felt in His humanity as He began to look toward Calvary and the suffering He would endure. The physical torment is beyond comprehension, not to mention the agony of the holy, sinless Savior bearing the sins of the world. All that He was about to face was contrary to His very nature and deity.

- Also we find that Jesus became [very heavy](#). This is a phrase that also is very expressive. It means "*to be extremely troubled and distressed.*" A closer look at the original root word reveals another touching aspect. It has the idea of "*being away from home and out of one's usual surroundings.*" Jesus had never known a time when He was separated from God the Father. There had never been a time when that precious, holy fellowship had been broken. There had never been a time when the sinless Son had felt the effect of sin. Jesus was certainly facing a situation that He had never felt before. He began to feel the weight of sin and the separation it brings.

- There can be no doubt His deity was repulsed by what He felt. He reveals His anguish in [V.34a](#). Jesus endured that heavy affliction for sinners such as you and me!

B. The Lord's Separation (35) – [And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.](#) He brought the eleven to the Garden, taking Peter, James, and John to a special place within. Even the closest of the “inner circle” could only go so far. This was a burden that Jesus had to bear alone. He was the only One who was worthy to bear the cup. He was the only One who could atone for man's sin. Jesus went to bear the agonies of His suffering alone.

- We all know how it feels to face a trial or burden. We have all had times in life when it seemed as if our world was falling apart. It is in those times that we desire the comfort and companionship of a loved one. Jesus endured it alone!
- Matthew records that He [went a little further](#). When men had gone as far as they could go, Jesus went a little further. In fact, Jesus went all the way. He went a little further for you and me. He willingly bore the burden of sin within Himself. There were none to help bear the burden. Jesus did that for us! Aren't you glad that He went a little further for you? Had He not, we would have no hope tonight.

C. The Lord's Conversation (36) – [And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.](#) As Jesus suffered there in the Garden, He began to talk with the Father. There are a few things we notice. We see:

1. His Relationship – [Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee.](#) What a beautiful record of our Lord's conversation with the Father. He first addressed Him as Abba. This is the Aramaic word for “papa” or “daddy.” This was what a small child called his father from day to day. It was the address of a child's love and dependency.

- Jesus had an intimate relationship with the Father and was depending upon Him for strength in this time of need. Jesus knew the Father was in complete control and that all things were possible with Him. We can find comfort in these words of Jesus. We have been adopted into the family of God. We can call upon God as a child who needs His mighty hand of provision. With God all things are possible!

2. His Request – **Take this cup from me.** We must never view this as a sign of disobedience or unwillingness on the part of Jesus. One must consider the agony He endured. Jesus knew that He must die upon the cross. He had already confirmed that to the disciples. He knew He had come for this very purpose.

- However, in His humanity Jesus was not looking forward to the shame and suffering of the cross. As I said, Jesus, in His deity, was repulsed by what He was experiencing and what He would soon face. His deity cried out because of the sin and separation; His humanity cried out because of the suffering. If we ever fully realized all that Jesus endured for us, we would not be the complacent, apathetic people we often are!

3. His Resolve – **Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.** Jesus desired to have the cup removed, but He wanted the will of God to be completed more than He wanted to avoid the cross. Jesus willingly submitted Himself to the sufferings of the cross to fulfill the will of God and redeem sinful men. In His deepest agony, Jesus never wavered in His love and devotion for the Father's will or His commitment to provide the means for our salvation! [Heb.5:8-9 – Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; ^{\[9\]} And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;](#) The obedience of Jesus was necessary for Him to stand as the sacrificial Lamb for the sins of the world.

II. The Necessity of the Moment – This was a difficult time for Jesus and the disciples, yet there was much that Jesus wanted them to accomplish.

A. The Instruction (34b) – In His time of suffering Jesus gave a simple command: **tarry ye here, and watch.** He hadn't asked them to accomplish some great or difficult task, just to tarry and watch. He wanted them to remain with Him and be diligent for Him. Jesus knew He must bear the cup alone, but yet He desired them to watch and pray for Him in His difficult moment. They couldn't bear the burden with Him, but they could offer their prayers and support.

- There is much we can learn from this simple command. We often get so wrapped up in the "big things," those things we feel are so important, that we fail to do the simple things that are really important. Let us be diligent to accomplish what the Lord has called upon us to do: pray, study, witness, love, and serve Him.

B. The Expectation (37) – **And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?** As Jesus returned from His first prayer, He found

the disciples asleep, rather than doing what He had instructed them to do. We can assume by His addressing Peter, that Jesus regarded him as a leader among the disciples. There is no doubt that Jesus was disappointed in the three. He had asked a simple thing of them, something that each of them could have done, and He fully expected them to have done what He asked.

- The saved have no excuse for abandoning the work we've been called to do. Jesus fully expects us to remain faithful to the task. [Jam.4:17 – Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.](#) Are we doing all God expects of us? If not, we are willfully disobeying the Lord and sinning in the process!

C. The Explanation (38) – [Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.](#) Jesus had not asked them to watch and pray just to remain busy. He was in His hour of need. If He ever needed the support of the disciples, it was now. But Jesus had a greater reason for asking them to pray. He knew what they would all soon face. Their faith was about to be put to the test and they needed to be prepared.

- Prayer and supplication before God was the only way they would obtain the strength they needed. In themselves they would surely fail. We need to understand that it is for our benefit to pray and seek the Lord. We'll never make it without Him!

III. The Complacency of the Moment – This has been an intense situation. The Lord will soon be betrayed. The disciples will be scattered and fearful. Their opportunity for preparation had been squandered as they slept. Notice what their complacency brought.

A. A Loss of Words (40) – [And when he returned, he found them asleep again, \(for their eyes were heavy,\) neither wist they what to answer him.](#) As the Lord rebuked them for their failures; they didn't know what to say. The men had failed the Lord and there was no excuse. He had asked them to support Him and pray for themselves and they had not done it. There was nothing to say. There was no way they could justify their lack of commitment.

- When we are confronted by the Lord in His holy conviction, there is no excuse for our lack or failure. There is no need to try and convince the Lord that our actions were justifiable. There is no need to argue with the Holy Spirit. The best thing to do is admit that we have failed and submit to His will for our lives. I can assure you the Judgment Seat will be a scene of silence for those who stand before the Lord. There is no excuse for our lack of commitment.

B. A Limitation through Weakness (41-42) – *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.* ^[42] *Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.* The time had come for the Lord to be arrested and taken away. The last moments for intercession had been spent sleeping. Rather than finding strength and help for their hour of need, the disciples found themselves weak and unsure. When Jesus is arrested, they will all flee in fear. Their complacency and lack of commitment hindered their walk with God. Had they spent time in prayer as Jesus commanded, their reaction to His arrest may have been far different.

- It is important that we spend time with the Lord and seek His strength and guidance. In the good times we must be preparing for the storm. It will hit soon enough and the time for preparation will be gone. If we fail to gain strength and wisdom on the mountain, the valley will be most difficult. Don't allow an attitude of complacency to bring weakness to your life.

Conclusion: We have been reminded of some of what Jesus endured for us. He provided the means of our salvation through His great sacrifice on the cross. Do you know Him as your Savior?

Christian, Jesus is calling upon us to tarry and watch in this difficult day. How have you responded? Have you grown complacent, content with things as they are?