

Christ - Submitted to the Father (Self-Control)

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My name is Gladys DeBruyne. I am a member of the River Church along with my husband who is the pastor of visitation. I am a retired educator, having worked over 25 years, primarily in kindergarten and first grade. We are natives of West Michigan living there for 35 years before we moved to California in 1991. We have two grown children, 5 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren.

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-43

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". He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled, Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.

Going a little further, 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."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping "Couldn't you keep watch with me for one hour?", he asked Peter. Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

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."

We are focusing this week on Christ, submitting to the Father (self-control). The Garden of Gethsemane is another pivotal point in Jesus' journey to the cross. Read the scripture again and this time, put yourself in Jesus' shoes. Feel his pain. Breathe His words as if they were your own. Try to feel the emotion of the moment. It is intense, isn't it? In this situation, we see the ultimate act of submission, of giving up control, of letting God do His work. Yes, it involved sacrifice, yes, it involved intense pain and agony, yes, the very act of submitting to God's will was insanely difficult.

But, what he did, he did for you and for me. He gave up his control, his life so that we might have life and have it abundantly. Are there difficult places in your life that are looming in your future? You don't know the outcome -unlike Jesus - but you know Jesus who holds the outcome. You can depend on him - let go, submit those hard areas of your life today and focus on the God who holds you and gave His life for you that you may live.

We know the outcome of this excruciating circumstance - Jesus did face death - but it didn't end there, did it? He conquered death and was raised to life. Now, we can have His spirit walk with us, we can have a relationship with Him - but the key is submission, giving up control of our very soul and letting Him fill us with His presence.

Now, let's look at the opposite of self-control or submission. Let's turn our focus to the other characters mentioned in this Scripture - the disciples. Jesus asks them to keep watch with him. When he returns to them, they are sleeping. The human body takes over. They are unable to stay awake, they give in - lacking self-control. Whether they did not understand the severity of the situation, the deep troubled

spirit of Jesus, or they just gave in to the lateness of the hour, they could not stay awake. I feel for them, don't you? As Jesus said the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

There are many times where my body won't cooperate and the need for rest is overwhelming. That is just one area where we can fall short - other areas might include eating, the discipline of devotions, praying, and the list can go on. We, as humans, struggle within ourselves to live up to what Christ wants for us. Paul says in Romans 7:19, *"For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do - this I keep on doing."* We all face that same dilemma - we can't seem to get it right. But the good news is Jesus sees us through the eyes of His righteousness. Once we have been redeemed, He has set us free and we no longer have the robes of the sin that constantly plague us. We are washed in His blood and are clothed with righteousness. What does righteousness mean - it means we are right with God. Praise His holy name! He has set us free - we submit to Him to gain freedom from the bondage of our sinful nature. As Jesus said the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

What may you be struggling with today? Is your human nature grabbing control of you? Submit to Him. Give up control and let Him guide you through this day. You might mess up - we all do. But the good news is that Jesus accepts you - and he covers you with his robe of righteousness, all you have to do is ask. Just pray and talk to Him, giving over what is troubling you. Let His peace wash over you.