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Matthew 26:40-74
3/20/24

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do we sometimes think spiritual maturity means we can go through difficulty alone? Does Matthew 26:38 support this?
 2. What disciplines have you found that strengthen your spiritual life? Are there other disciplines you think could help you?
 3. Judas may still be possessed by the devil, why do you think he kisses Jesus? What can we learn from that action?
 4. Jesus did not deny the suffering or the future hope. How can we live in the balance of those two realities?
 5. What strikes you most about Peter's denial?
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Jesus has had the Last Supper.
He told His disciples one of them would betray Him.
He goes out to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray.

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." **37** And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. **38** Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

As we noticed last week, Jesus doesn't walk this alone.
He doesn't hide His feelings.
He doesn't deny His need for help and companionship.

39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

Jesus submits Himself to the Father.

Submission isn't submission until you do what you don't want to.

40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

Jesus has been praying for an hour.

He then exhorts Peter...

41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

The flesh needs to be strengthened by the spirit.

He will **not** have the physical ability to be spiritually strong.

Our spiritual life is strengthened by our personal disciplines.

Prayer, fasting, solitude, watchfulness, meditation, service, giving.

42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” **43** And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

Same prayer repeated, same prayerlessness repeated.

44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Jesus prayed 3 times, Paul 3 times and both received a “no.”
Elijah prayed 7 times before it rained.

Matthew 7:7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you

What the men couldn’t do because of physical weakness...
...the angel supplied from spiritual strength.

45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. **46** Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

The 3 couldn’t do anything more than sleep & rest...

...And after their sleep and rest...
...they will not be able to stand in the hour of need.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the **b**wiles of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of **c**the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

There is a time for us to be spiritually prepared, but when we...
...are not prepared, we cannot get prepared and still be ready.

47 And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize

Him.” **49** Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him. **50** But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

One of His own betraying Him kisses Him with a greeting of rabbi, teacher.

51 And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Jesus had said to have a sword.
But this was not the time or the place to use it.

52 But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. **53** Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? **54** How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

Jesus here gives us insight into His perspective and powers.

The sword comes with a cost. Jesus says He can call angels from heaven.

The issue is not being unwilling to defend or fight...
...it is about a willingness to obey and submit to God.

55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. **56** But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Jesus questions them but knows the Scriptures will be fulfilled.

57 And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. **58** But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

And Peter follows, but from a safe distance.

His spirit is willing, but his flesh is weak.

59 Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,

They are seeking, wanting, desiring to be lied to.

If we do not have love, we do not know God.

60 but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward **61** and said, “This *fellow* said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ ”

62 And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?” 63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

Ultimately, they didn’t need the false testimony.
Jesus finally makes it clear...

64 Jesus said to him, “*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Jesus didn’t deny His feelings or the pain of the moment.
But He also didn’t just focus His thoughts on the present.

In our suffering, we cannot deny where we are, but we shouldn’t think that is always how it will be.

Hope sees the empty tomb on the other side of the cross.
Hope looks to the power that will come after the pain has gone.

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! 66 What do you think?” They answered and said, “He is deserving of death.”

This is not blasphemy...
...this is the first and truest testimony that was given.

But their lack of faith and their predetermined malice...
...blinds them from the truth.

67 Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, 68 saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”

There is no just reason for this.

This is pure demonic hate and malice coming out.
Jesus has entrusted Himself to the Father and will endure it.

69 Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.”

70 But he denied it before *them* all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.”

71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, “This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

72 But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!”

73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are *one of* them, for your speech betrays you.”

74 Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, “I do not know the Man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster

crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter had such confidence that he wouldn't deny Jesus.
Yet, not once but 3 times in one night he failed.

Peter finally came face to face with his own weakness.
Heartbreaking, miserable regret is the result of spiritual weakness.

But it can also be the first step in repentance.