

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, He went to a place called Gethsemane in order to pray.

KNOWING THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO SUFFER FOR THE SIN OF THE WORLD, JESUS WAS IN DEEP AGONY, BUT HE WAS STRENGTHENED TO STAY THE COURSE OF THE WILL OF GOD BECAUSE HE SOUGHT THE FATHER IN SERIOUS PRAYER.

I'd like for us to study this topic tonight by asking and answering 10 questions.

Question #1 - Where does the Bible describe Jesus in the Garden?

This event is described in detail in the synoptic gospels - **Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, and Luke 22: 39-46. John 18:1** only briefly mentions the fact that they were in a garden before Jesus was arrested. John does not go into detail about Jesus' prayer like the synoptic gospels do.

Question #2 - Where is the Garden of Gethsemane?

This Garden was roughly 1 mile east of the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus and the disciples crossed the Brook Kidron (John 18:1) and came to the garden which was near the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30). Jesus and the disciples did not travel there from the temple, they traveled from the upper room, which was a house Jesus had reserved for them to share in the Lord's table together on the night of the Passover meal.

Question #3 - What does Gethsemane mean?

The word means "oil press." That would tell us this was probably a place full of olive trees, especially since it was at the base of the Mount of Olives. James Strong described it simply as a garden near Jerusalem. I don't really know if there is significance to the meaning of the name and its theological connection. What I do know is that Matthew and Mark tell us they went to a place called Gethsemane. They both gave the details of the location. They wrote their gospels during a time when people who witnessed the arrest and death of Christ were still alive.

Question #4 - What transpired during this event?

There are many actions that took place, and we will use all four gospels to tell us exactly what took place.

- Action #1 - Jesus left the upper room with the disciples after the Passover meal and went out to the Mount of Olives. Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Luke 22:39
- Action #2 - Jesus went with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane. Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32; John 18:1
- Action #3 - Jesus told the disciples to stay where they were while He would go and pray. Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32; Luke 22:40
- Action #4 - Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him further, and He began to get very distressed. Matthew 26:37; Mark 14:33
- Action #5 - Jesus went a stone's throw from the three disciples and knelt down to pray, and the writers would indicate that Jesus would pray for one hour. Matthew 26:39-40; Mark 14:35; Luke 22:41
- Action #6 - Jesus prayed regarding the possibility for this cup to pass from Him but also prayed for the will of God to continue. Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42

- Action #7 - Jesus came back to the three, finding them asleep, and He told them to stay alert and pray in order to not enter temptation. Matthew 26:40-41; Mark 14:37-39; Luke 22:40
- Action #8 - Jesus went away again to pray. Matthew 26:42; Mark 14:39
- Action #9 - Jesus continued to pray the same prayer as before. Matthew 26:42; Mark 14:39
- Action #10 - Jesus came back again to the three, finding them asleep again, so He left to pray a third time to pray the same prayer. Matthew 26:43-44; Mark 14:40
- Action #11 - Jesus was strengthened while praying by an angel from heaven. Luke 22:43
- Action #12 - As Jesus' agony increased, His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. Luke 22:44
- Action #13 - Jesus arose from prayer and went back to the three, finding them asleep again. Matthew 26:44; Mark 14:41; Luke 22:45
- Action #14 - Jesus told the disciples to wake up, because rather than it being time to sleep, it was time for Jesus to be betrayed and arrested. Matthew 26:45-46; Mark 14:41-42
- Action #15 - Jesus was met by Judas and a great crowd which came to arrest Jesus. Matthew 26:47; Mark 14:43; Luke 22:47; John 18:2-3

Question #5 - What does Jesus mean by asking the Father for this cup to pass?

It appears that when Jesus used this phrase in the gospels (Matthew 20:22; Mark 10:39; John 18:11), He used it to say that "this cup" is the cup of humility and suffering that Jesus would have to metaphorically "drink" in order to be glorified. Jesus would have to suffer physical, mental, and emotional turmoil to the point of death in order to accomplish the will of God for His life. This theme of a cup of suffering is consistent throughout Scripture (Psalm 11:6; Isaiah 51:17; Ezekiel 23:33).

When Jesus asked for this cup of His suffering to pass, what was He getting at? Jesus did not have to suffer. He did not deserve the wrath of God. Jesus is the only man to ever live that has not deserved the wrath of God. Everyone else has sinned and earned God's wrath. Only Jesus did not deserve punishment for sin, because He had no sin.

The option appears to be legitimate. Positionally speaking, Jesus could have walked away from suffering the wrath of God upon the sin of the world. He did not need to go to that cross. He could have avoided His death for the sin of the world if He chose to, and it would have been legitimately okay for Him to do so. He had done nothing that deserved God's wrath, and He could have walked away from it.

God doesn't need to save anyone. In fact, God would be perfectly just in letting every single person who has ever sinned burn in torment for eternity. God has a right to do that, and that is exactly what everyone deserves. If Jesus chose not to go to that cross.. If Jesus chose to escape the wrath of God.. everyone would leave this world and go into eternity in the condition in which they've earned for themselves - separation from God.

But God is a God who keeps His promises. God is a God who is faithful to His word. He does not go back on what He said. He will do what He said He will do. Jesus had already explained to the disciples, "I must suffer and die and rise again" (Luke 8:31). Jesus willingly chose to take God's wrath on that cross even though He didn't have to.

Something else we can learn from this is that the omniscient God, who completely knows all possibilities, determined, in order to maintain His attribute of justice and to justify sinners, that there was no other way to accomplish salvation unless the sinless Son of God took sinful man's place in God's wrath. The only possible option for God to save anyone included the cross that Jesus suffered and died on. There was no other way. Jesus could have walked away, but that option would forfeit God's opportunity to save sinful humans.

Question #6 - Why was Jesus in such deep agony and distress?

Jesus knew the plan. He knew He would rise again. He knew what would happen in the long run. Why was He so distressed? Well, I think the answer is rather simple. Jesus was so sorrowful, so troubled, and in so much agony because He knew what the wrath of God entails. He knew what separation from God entails, and He knew what a breach in fellowship with God entails. Jesus, being God Himself, knows how bad that wrath of God really is on sin.

He knew how much God hates sin, but He Himself had not yet experienced it. The stress that Jesus was facing nearly killed Him as He just thought about the fact that He was hours away from experiencing the weight of the sin of the world upon Himself, bearing our sin, becoming sin for us, and taking on the full brunt of the wrath of God as a sinless substitute for others.

Question #7 - What can we learn from the blood like sweat that Luke wrote about?

Luke wrote that Jesus' "*sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground.*" The KJV says, "*his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*" And the NASB says, "*his sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.*"

Here's what we can learn from what Luke wrote:

Jesus did not shed His blood in the garden. His sweat dropped to the ground like it was blood. His sweat was severe. That is what Luke is telling us. He was in so much stress that He was sweating like no other. His blood was not shed in the garden. It was sweat that fell to the ground, not blood.

If the sweat had any symbolic meaning, I think it could have simply been pointing to what was to come. Jesus was going to shed blood the next day when they put that crown of thorns on His head. He was going to shed blood the next day when they beat Him severely, and He was going to shed blood the next day when his open wounds scraped against that rugged cross. And the sweat that looked like blood in the garden may have been a preview to the disciples of things to come.

Question #8 - Did Jesus drink the cup of suffering, the wrath of God in the garden?

No, and I'll give you 4 reasons why.

- Reason #1 - Jesus anticipated "drinking" "the cup" of His suffering after this event in the garden. **John 18:2-11**
- Reason #2 - When Jesus was sweating severely, He was accompanied by an angel, but His suffering needed to be done alone. **Luke 22:43**
- Reason #3 - The emphasis of Scripture is that man's reconciliation with God is accomplished through Jesus suffering on the cross, bleeding on the cross, and dying on the cross. Scripture does not emphasize man's reconciliation with God to be from the agony of Gethsemane.

Colossians 1:20 - Peace with man and God is offered through the blood of the cross.

Romans 5:6-11 - Reconciliation, forgiveness, and salvation are all connected to Jesus' death on the cross.

1 Peter 3:18 - Jesus' suffering in order to make people alive is connected with His death.

Reason #4 - Never once do the New Testament epistles mention the garden when the authors are explaining Christ's sacrificial work to save sinners. According to the Bible, the salvific work of Christ happened on the cross, not the garden.

Question #9 - When did Jesus finally drink the cup of suffering?

Jesus drank the cup of His suffering when He shed His blood in the beatings, when He shed His blood with that crown of thorns, when His body was lifted up on a cross, when He said, "it is finished," and when He gave up His life in death on that cross. The events that happened on Friday were the events of His suffering. **1 Peter 2:24:** "*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.*" Where did Jesus bear our sins? On the tree. On the cross is where Jesus became sin for us so that we might be made righteous in Him - **2 Corinthians 5:21.**

Question #10 - What is the dominating theme of this event?

The overwhelming and overriding theme of this event is actually **prayer.**

Jesus went up with His disciples to pray. Jesus told His disciples to pray. Jesus spent three, one hour sessions in deep agonizing prayer. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all emphasized the fact that Jesus, anticipating what was to come for Him, went away to pray. The message that the gospel authors wanted to communicate to their audience was the incredibly important role that prayer plays when a person of God is in deep distress. That is the emphasis - prayer.

David Thompson said, "prayer is an extremely important key to survival in a Satanic world. It is a key to survival in a world filled with trials, troubles and temptations. That point is demonstrated by the very life of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught this critical point in His final hours of life before dying on a cross. He was about to face the ultimate trial. He was about to be taken prisoner, He was about to die and take on Himself the wrath of God and the sin of all people. He wanted His people to understand this important truth: you survive through prayer."

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