

The Warrior

The Warrior Prays

Matthew 26:36-46

March 27, 2022 a.m.

HDBC

What comes to mind when you hear the word **Warrior**? **Viking**. **Gladiator**. **Native American**. **Revolutionary**. **Navy Seal**. **Captain America**. **Steph Curry**. **Mom & Dad**. **Nurse**. **Teacher**. **Aid worker**. I've shared these images to remind us that warriors come in all kinds of bodies, use all kinds of weapons, and fight all kinds of battles. The most important of all is the warrior who has secured our salvation.

This morning we begin a new series. It is a look at history's greatest warrior: Jesus Christ. We will be looking at the last few hours of his life on this earth as He squared off against Satan, sin and death. His victory is what enables us to have our sins forgiven and to be made right with God. We start with one of most surprising scenes in all the Bible. In it we see a depth of emotion in Jesus not seen anywhere else. We also hear a prayer that we would not have expected to come from His lips. It is only hours before His unspeakable suffering and death. It took place in a garden. There, **the Warrior Prayed**.

Read Text – Matthew 26:36-46

1. The Place (36)

Set the stage. This is Jesus' last night on the earth before his crucifixion. At 9:00 the next morning he would be nailed to a cross. He knew this. He was acutely aware of everything that was to transpire during the next 15-18 hours.

He met with his disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem to observe the Passover celebration with them. This was an annual Jewish celebration that was accompanied with great joy and festivities. It commemorated the great deliverance of the people by God when they were in slavery in Egypt.

After supper in upper room, they walked through the city gate, into deep gorge and over bridge spanning Kidron Brook. Swollen with winter rains, darkened from the constant flow of blood. Lambs by the thousands were being slain for Passover. They entered the Garden called Gethsemane.

Gethsemane was a familiar spot. Lovely olive trees. There are today 8 old olive trees still standing there. Some would say they were there in Jesus' day. They were not, though they are clearly very old. Great place to retreat. A place where Jesus spent time.

Gethsemane – means olive vat, or oil press. It was in the oil press that the olives would be crushed to allow the oil to flow out. It was in this place that Jesus experienced the crushing pressure of agony as he was moving toward the cross.

We all need a Gethsemane. Place to get away to rest and pray. Place to **wrestle with our tendencies toward sin**, to **grapple with the plan of God**, and to **win the battle over self** as we seek to yield to the will of God. A place to gain the victory over our great enemy, Satan.

2. The Friends (37)

Jesus knew that he was about to enter into a time of deep agony in prayer. He was facing the cross and he knew it. **He included his closest friends with him.** He enlisted them to pray with him and for him.

These were His last moments with disciples before his arrest. He knew it. What would he do. 8 were told to wait at gate. 3 enter with him. It is true that He actually separated himself a little and prayed alone, but he had others praying for him at the same time that he prayed. **When you are facing a crisis situation or a time of agony, it is vital that you enlist additional prayer support.** Some things are better faced with friends.

3. The Agony (37b-38)

Jesus experienced great internal conflict and struggle as he prayed in the garden. **Luke the physician** wrote that Jesus' sweat was as drops of blood as it fell to the ground. Some blood vessels and tiny capillaries just under the skin burst, and Jesus' blood mixed with his sweat. This demonstrates the intensity of Christ's agony. Luke even adds that an angel came to Jesus to strengthen Him. He was about to walk into the fire of suffering and the anticipation was excruciating.

Three words or phrases give insight into the depth of His agony:

A. Deeply Grieved (37)

Comes from a word that would mean something like **not at home**.

Uncomfortable. Agitated. Concerned. The denotes intense discomfort.

Perilupos. Literally, surrounded by sorrow.

B. Distressed (37)

To be sorrowful. This does not fully capture the meaning of the word.

Crushed with anguish. Mark adds a word that means **terrified or astonished**. He was in deep agony.

C. Point of Death (38)

Jesus was so overwhelmed that he was at the point of dying.

Once we see the content of His prayer we will understand more what this agony was all about.

4. The Request (39)

Knowing what we now know about God's plan of salvation, it is amazing to read this prayer of Jesus. Leaving his closest friends to watch and pray He moved a short distance from them, then fell on his face and began to pray.

The amazing thing here is not that He prayed, but **what He prayed**. He asked if there was any way that he could escape the coming suffering. If there another plan? Can we alter things?

They had never heard Jesus pray like that. He had always been in perfect sync with the Father's will and had never flinched from it. But not now, His praying took on a perspective that they had never seen. Listen to His words:

My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me . . .

What was the cup? And why did Jesus wish to avoid it.

The cup is the symbol of divine wrath against sin. God's wrath was about to fall on Him. He knew it. The Father was offering Jesus the cup which meant his own suffering and death for sinners. As Jesus looked into that cup, He saw the ugliness of sin and the wrath that would come upon it. He knew that it would hurt, physically, emotionally and spiritually. He knew that His fellowship with the Father would be impacted in a way that neither had every experienced. The agony that He anticipated almost crushed Him.

Would he drink the cup of death that was poured for us? Would He continue down that road that would involve Him being made sin on our behalf? Would He step into the place where the wrath of His Father would be poured out not on those who deserved it but upon Him? Would He suffer the Hell that we deserve? That was the battle that was raging in the garden.

Think about all He was facing?

1) The betrayal of his friends

He was about to experience betrayal at multiple levels. First, there was the betrayal of his friends not being able and willing to stay awake and pray with him. Three times he left his prayer vigil to go to them and each time he found them sleeping. How sad that must have made him.

Second, there was Judas. He knew about it. But the idea of it actually happening must have been sickening to him. There would be the **betrayal by the crowds** who would call for Him to be crucified. Then there would be the **betrayal by Peter** in the courtyard, as Peter would deny Him three times. Finally, there would be the betrayal by the **rest of the apostles** as they would scatter.

b. The presence of our sin (1 Peter 2:24)

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

My sins and yours were placed on His body. All that he detested was attached to His body. He was repulsed by the thought of it. I remember a scene in the old classic movie, ***The African Queen***, starring Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn. The two are working their way up an African River in an old steamboat. At one point the water gets shallow and Charlie has to climb out the boat and literally drag the boat up the river while slogging through the chest-high water.

When he got out the water he discovered that his back was covered with leeches. You can see the horror in his face as he works to get them off. After a few minutes of relief and rest he realized that he had to get back into the water to again pull the boat. With the prospect of more leeches he faced his fears and slipped back into the water.

In a similar but more serious way, **Jesus allowed all of our sins**, along with our guilt to be attached to His body while on the cross.

When He looked into that cup He saw **jealousy, anger, hatred, murder, envy, profanity, lust and every other sin** conjured up in the mind of sinful men and women. He saw your **wicked thoughts, hurtful words, your sexual immorality**. He saw it all. And it was revolting to Him.

C. The wrath of the Father

This certainly involved the physical, psychological and emotional suffering that came with the judgment of God. But it also resulted in the Father **forsaking** the Son, during those hours. I don't know what all that meant. Like trying to understand the incarnation or the Trinity. All I know is that it was something that hurt Jesus, badly.

There is a great NT word that is not found here, but in Romans.

Propitiation. In Romans 3:25 it says **God presented Christ as a propitiation**. A propitiation is something (or someone) who's actions satisfy the wrath of God. He satisfied God's wrath, so we don't have to. God is holy. We are sinful. It is because of God's holiness and our sinfulness that His wrath must be satisfied. The penalty had to be paid. On the cross, Jesus received the wrath that we deserved.

Jesus was not a coward afraid to face the Roman soldiers. He was a warrior about to satisfy the wrath of God for sinful people, becoming the Savior for all who would trust in Him.

5. The Resolve (39, 42, 46)

He completely yielded to the Father's will, even though it was a thing of great dread. Sacrificed His own desires in order to obey the Father. Why?

A. That is His Nature

His nature was to do the **will of His Heavenly Father**.

His nature was to do that which **would benefit others**.

His nature was to **give and not get**.

B. He Knew We Needed a Savior

He knew that all people are under the sentence of spiritual death because of sin. He knew that apart from divine deliverance we would be lost forever.

C. He knew that He alone could be our Savior

No angel could do it. No other human could do it.

No other force on earth could break the power of sin and hell.

So, what did this **warrior** do in the garden? He set His face toward the cross to win our salvation. He walked courageously onto the field of battle to face our greatest enemy, death, and to secure our salvation.

Tim White shared the following account related to his son.

In the first 15 years of his life, our son Ryan had over 30 surgeries. When he was about eight years old, he was in the hospital for another surgery. As they rolled his bed to the operating room, we accompanied him to the two big doors leading to the OR. That is where we stopped, and told him all would be okay. This day, as we got to the doors and they opened, he sat up in the bed, looked me in the eyes and pleaded, "**Dad, don't let them take me!**"

At that moment, my heart was broken. I would have done anything to take him off that bed except for the fact he had to have the surgery. That knowledge didn't ease the pain in my heart at all. I just stood there trembling as the doors closed, and he disappeared. That is when I broke down into tears.

Shortly after, when I was asking God how such a good love could hurt so much, I realized that he had gone through the same thing. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed: Father, if there is any other way, let this cup pass from me. Translated into the language of a child, "Daddy, don't let them take me."

I allowed the surgeons to take my son for his own good. God allowed the crucifiers to take his Son for our good. That is how much God loves us. By going to the cross for us, Jesus showed just how much He loves us.

Jesus entered the garden to pray.

He walked out of the garden to die.

Without the cross we would be enemies of God for all eternity.

Because of the cross we can be friends of God for all eternity.