

PROVING YOURSELF: A Time to Rise (Part 2)

We've taken time to talk about the importance of rest; remembering to be with Jesus over doing for Jesus. We took time to break through the bonds that have been holding us captive (again, let's note that the work done at the altar serves as a milestone and still requires daily action to fight the urge to pick up what has been broken).

Today we're going to highlight a well-known story in the Bible and it's honestly only really talked about during Easter time. Before we jump into that story (reminder to get your Bible ready), I want to take time to note what we talk about today will review what we talked about last week (remember, I said resting and rising go hand-in-hand). Along with our story, I also want to highlight some people in the Bible who really existed, who had real problems, who experienced real emotions, and who had real encounters with God in their darkest times. They had the choice of whether or not to rise up to the challenges of life. They chose to look to God in those times and each encounter was different.

1. Hannah struggled through years of infertility and longed for a baby (1 Samuel 1:1-20)
2. Elijah experienced burn out and sought the Lord at Mount Horeb. (1 Kings 19)
3. Job literally lost everything (Job)
4. David felt deeply about many different things, both from his sins and being caught in the crossfires from other people's decisions. He felt heartache from the death of a child, being hunt down like a fugitive, and even marital crisis (you can read a lot about this in the book of Psalms)
5. Jonah wanted his life to end (Jonah 4)
6. Jesus experienced extreme stress that his sweat was like blood (Luke 22:41-44)
 1. Hematohidrosis: sweating blood due to high levels of stress or fear. It's when the tiny blood vessels burst from the stress and exit the body through sweat glands.

Remember, their stories are impactful to us today, but in the moment, can you imagine what they felt? The heartache, the depression, the sorrow, the agony. These aren't fictional characters, hypothetical situations, or parables for life examples. It's all real.

Let's dig into our story today: Matthew 26:36-45 (you can read this story in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. We'll be doing a small comparison of each Gospel. I

usually read in ESV, but feel free to read in whichever version you prefer). It says this:

36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." **37** And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [James & John], he began to be sorrowful and troubled. **38** Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." **39** And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." **40** And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? **41** Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." **42** Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." **43** And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. **44** So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. **45** Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. **46** Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

So let's dive in a little more to this passage and learn from it. Last week we talked about how to Rest in the Father, this week we're going to talk about:

How to Rise with the Father:

*I was originally going to have the same 3 categories we discussed last week (physically, mentally/emotionally, and spiritually). However, as I was doing my research and study it came to my attention that they all started blending together. So, we're going to note 5 ways to rise with the Father that covers those 3 things.

1. Pull Away from the Crowds

1. Jesus knew and taught us the importance to "pull away from the crowds" to spend time with His Father. We read it usually after he's spent a lot of time doing for the Father (miracles, discipleship).
2. He also pulled away from the crowds to spend time with his Father when he knew something big was coming and he needed God-given strength to get through it (crucifixion, taking on the sins of the world).
 1. So whether we've gone through something, we're going through something, or will be going through something, we should always return to Jesus. If I could choose a word to express it all, it would be:
consistency.

3. Note: pulling away from the crowds is both physically and spiritually. We need to literally be alone with Jesus as well as spiritually incline yourself to Him.

“But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6)

2. Sharpen Your Sword (The Word of God)

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” (James 1:22-25)

1. Let us be attentive to what we say and what we do. Part of sharpening your sword is not only reading your Bible, it's knowing what it says, and then actually doing it.
2. What does The Word tell us to do? Lots of things, but here's a few big ones:
 1. Love God, Love Others (Matthew 22:37-39)
 2. Forgive as you have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32)
 3. Put on the full Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18)
 4. Seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)
 5. Seek justice, love mercy, walk humbly (Micah 6:8)
3. Note: The Word of God is also the Living Word, which means it's always applicable for anything in our lives. It was for us then, it's for us now, it's for us tomorrow and all the days following.
4. However, it's also personal. It's a place for you and Jesus to meet together. All I can say is what the Bible says, it's up to each of us individually to learn from it, grow from it, put it into practice.

3. “The Trusted Three”

1. Have a group of trusted, prayerful friends. Jesus had the 12 disciples, but he had 3 whom he trusted even more: Peter, James, and John.
 1. He brought them to pray with him in the Garden of Gethsemane, he brought them to the Transfiguration (Matthew 17) where they got to see Jesus in his fullness.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him — a three fold cord is not quickly broken.”

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

2. Am I saying you need to have a literal group of 3? Not necessarily, but finding a trusted “someone” or “someones” whom you can rely on, relate to, and receive from. Someone who will sit with you in the mud, celebrate with you on the mountain top, and walk with you through everything in between. Mainly, someone who will pray with you and for you.
3. You might have heard this verse at a wedding ceremony, “a cord of three strands is not easily broken.” (We had it our wedding). It’s not just a “wedding verse” for married couples. It’s talking about keeping Jesus in middle of relationships; He’s that “third” person.

4. Seek & Surrender

1. We need to seek and surrender to His Will. It’s about building our foundations on The Rock.

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” (Matthew 7:24-27)

2. This does go hand-in-hand with reading the Bible and doing what it says. Sharpening our swords.
3. Do we really believe that the Will of the Father is better than our own?
 1. That’s a hard one for me personally. As someone who likes to have control over what I’m doing, where I’m going, etc. the anxiety of releasing that control is strong.

2. While there may be some stress that comes with releasing that control, we should definitely feel a sense of peace that comes from the Father. That means that we are in His Will.
 1. Will there be hesitancy, worry, concern? Sure. But peace pushes out fear. Rest in the peace that comes with being in the will of the Father.
4. Surrender is a lifetime commitment. Can you remember the day you said “yes” to Jesus? Maybe it was years ago, a year ago, very recent, or maybe you’re still deciding if you want to say “yes.”
 1. For me: I was 7 years old when I said “yes” to Jesus. I remember it very clearly. It was just me and my mom in our brown Volvo that had sun-bleached seat cushions and always smelled like Taco Bell. It was on a Sunday after church and we were in the parking lot outside a Burger King. That day changed my life forever, but it’s also a daily surrender and commitment to follow Him.

“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?’” (Matthew 16:24-26)

5. Seek His Kingdom first in all that we do. Again, we should do this every day.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33)

1. Then in this verse, Jesus talks about not allowing ourselves to be anxious (we talked about that last week).
6. To seek and surrender will rise us up physically, mentally/emotionally, and spiritually.

5. Pray

1. It’s the “Jesus/Sunday School” answer...but it’s true! Prayer is one of the most effective ways that can help rise us to the challenges of life, but don’t pray just to pray...
 1. Pray in a way that’s both surrendering ourselves and seeking God’s Will.
 2. Pray in a way that releases anxieties, worries, and stress.
 3. Pray in the quietness and privacy with just you and Jesus.
 4. Pray in a public forum as a testimony for others.
 5. Pray when you rise in the morning and before you go to bed at night.
 6. Pray in full humility...including in our posture.

7. Pray in strength and confidence knowing the One who you're praying to hears you.
8. Pray to remember what the Lord has promised you.
9. Pray to release the things you don't have control over.
10. Pray in remembrance of what Jesus has done for you and will do for you.
11. Pray in full reliance that God's got you!
2. Be open and honest with the Lord in your requests.
 1. While we talked last week about not "pray-telling," (telling God what to do), as we bring our requests to God, we should end our prayers like Jesus did, "Your will be done."
3. Seek the Father in your emotional distress. Don't allow the mental strain to overtake you, but while enduring it - turn to the Father.
 1. Note: God did not take away Jesus' pain, but rather strengthened him to get through it.
4. Lastly...Do you believe God hears prayers?
 1. God heard Hannah's prayer for a child - and He answered her prayer with the gift of her son Samuel.
 2. God heard Elijah's cry of despair and at Mount Horeb - and God answered him in a whisper.
 3. God heard Job's cries for days and days - and God replenished what was lost and revived his soul.
 4. God heard David's prayers (and confessions) throughout his life - and God comforted (as well as reprimanded) David.
 5. God heard Jonah's prayers from the belly of the fish (and in all his complaints), and didn't leave him through it all.
 6. God the Father heard Jesus's prayers in the Garden of Gethsemane and strengthened him for his upcoming crucifixion.

WORSHIP TEAM

For the rest of our time, we're going to spend time with Jesus. I encourage you to take time to reflect on where you're needing to rise today. In this moment, you may be experiencing any of the things we've talked about today. Where are you needing the rise in the Father?

- Are you needing a Willing Spirit? The Holy Spirit is willing. The Holy Spirit is at the ready and inclined to the Father's will.
- Are you feeling weak (physically, mentally, or spiritually)? Our physical bodies come with its own ailments, stress points, and shortcomings, but God is ready to meet you where you're at today in that reality.

If you're ready to rise with Jesus today - in His strength, in His salvation, in His Will - please stand. Come forward and have some time with Jesus.