

Jesus Prays In Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36-46 | (ESV)

Jesus Goes To Gethsemane To Pray (v36-38)

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, 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."

Jesus' 1st Prayer (v39-41)

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."

Notes

Jesus Goes To Gethsemane To Pray (v36-38)

V36-37 JESUS TOOK HIS 11 REMAINING DISCIPLES TO A SMALL OLIVE GROVE OUTSIDE OF JERUSALEM CALLED "GETHSEMANE" IN ORDER TO PRAY.

- Once they arrived, Jesus took his 3 closest & strongest disciples with him to a more private area.
- It was at this point that Jesus "began to be sorrowful & troubled" in a way he had never experienced before.
- The name "Gethsemane" means "oil press". It was a place where the life of the olives would be crushed and pressed out in order for their precious oil to be given to others for both light & life. (Oil was primarily used for lamps & food)
- In like manner, it is here that Jesus' soul "began" to be pressed out & crushed in order to give light & life to us. (i.e. Knowledge of Truth & Salvation)

V38 SPEAKING TO HIS 3 CLOSEST & STRONGEST DISCIPLES, JESUS NOW EXPRESSED THE IMMENSITY OF THE BURDEN BEARING DOWN UPON HIS "SOUL".

- Jesus explained the sorrow & trouble he felt in the strongest possible terms: "very sorrowful, even unto death."
- The reason Jesus' sorrow was so great is because it was here at Gethsemane that the wrath of God which our sins deserve began to be poured out upon Jesus Christ in our place.
- What Jesus was now facing was utterly pulverizing to his "soul." Beneath the mighty hand of God's righteous wrath against sin, Jesus felt like stones being ground against one another until they become but dust & rubble.
- And in this place of great suffering, Jesus looked to his closest and strongest disciples for help through prayer.
- **"REMAIN HERE, AND WATCH WITH ME."** | The word "remain" is the same word elsewhere translated "abide".
- It refers, in this case, to a close communion together, a deep relational bond of intimacy & solidarity.
- **IN V38 JESUS IS SAYING:** "Abide with me, my brothers. Don't forsake me now in my hour of greatest need. Call out to God on my behalf that I might be given strength to obediently walk the path of suffering that lay before me."

Jesus' 1st Prayer (v39-41)

V39 THE CONTENTS OF JESUS' PRAYER—THOUGH GIVEN TO US IN SHORTENED FORM—CONTAINS MANY PRECIOUS GEMS OF TRUTH.

1. **"MY FATHER..."** | PRAYER IS AN ESSENTIAL MEANS BY WHICH GOD SOBERS, STRENGTHENS & SUSTAINS HIS BELOVED CHILDREN.

- **Consider:** If the holy Son of God who did not have a sin nature like ours needed to earnestly depend upon God the Father by prayer, how much more must you & I need prayer in our Christian walk as weak & pitiful sinners?*

2. **"IF IT BE POSSIBLE, LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME..."** | THESE WORDS ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT & MEANINGFUL TO CHRISTIANITY.

A. **FIRST, THESE WORDS CONFIRM THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST AND HIS WORK ON THE CROSS AS THE ONE & ONLY MEANS OF SALVATION.**

- Jesus asked God the Father if there was any other way the work of redemption could be accomplished.
- He pleaded with the Father three times that if there was any other possible means to accomplish the salvation of his chosen people, then let that be the way it is done instead of the cross of suffering that lay before him.
- **We know how God the Father answered that prayer.** The "cup" was NOT taken away from Jesus.
- **But why was it not taken away from him?** Because there is no other possible way that the souls of sinful men could ever be redeemed except by the priceless blood of the God-Man Jesus Christ being shed in their place.*

B. **SECOND, THESE WORDS CONFIRM THAT THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S SAVING WORK WAS THAT OF SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT BY DEATH.**

- "This cup" refers to the wrath of God against the particular sins of God's particular people, the Church. (Eph. 5:25)
- The wrath of God that every true believer deserves for their sins is the "cup" Jesus Christ was about to "drink".
- And this metaphor teaches us exactly how we are to rightly understand the salvific nature of Jesus' death.
- Jesus did NOT die as a great moral example for us. He is that, but that was NOT the nature of his death.
- Nor did Jesus die b/c of the actions of evil men. Evil men did kill Jesus, but their actions were NOT ultimate.
- **Jesus died as the willing substitute for the sins of his people. Jesus freely chose to "drink" the "cup" of the Father's righteous wrath against us, for our sins, so that he might take away that wrath from us forevermore.**
- **Jesus was willingly crushed by the holy justice & anger of the Father against the evils of our hearts, so that by drinking that cup of wrath in our place, we could be spared from everlasting torment, fully forgiven, & redeemed.**
- **Jesus did NOT drink all of God's wrath for all the sins of all mankind.** (John 3:36; I John 5:11-12)
- **Jesus drank all of God's wrath for all the sins of all God's chosen people.** (i.e. the Elect, the Church/Bride, the Sons of Abraham)*

3. **"NEVERTHELESS, NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS YOU WILL."** | WE SEE THE VERY HEIGHT & GRANDEUR OF JESUS' PERFECT SUBMISSION & OBEDIENCE.

- The prospect of betrayal, humiliation, torture, & gruesome death were utterly repulsive to our Savior.
- No true man in his right mind "wills"/desires to face such things. And as a true man, neither did Jesus Christ.
- **BEFORE OUR SAVIOR WAS THE GREATEST TEMPTATION OF HIS EARTHLY LIFE:** Will you trust & obey God's will even when doing so leads to your humiliation, suffering, & death? Do you believe the Father's will is best even when it hurts?
- **v39 is Jesus' answer.** Jesus is not sadistic; he does not enjoy suffering. But Jesus loves & trusts his Father &

	Notes
<p>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?”</p> <p>⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”</p>	<p>V40-41 ALL 3 OF JESUS’ CLOSEST & STRONGEST DISCIPLES WERE SLEEPING—NOT PRAYING—BUT JESUS SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSES “PETER”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You just told me how strong & devoted you are Peter, but ‘could you not watch me for [even a single] hour?’” • Jesus’ warning of their looming denial (^{v31}) should have led them to cry out to God for spiritual strength. (^{v41}) • But instead, they were <u>slumbering comfortably & prayerlessly in their misguided overconfidence</u> in themselves. • This is a picture of many of our own lives. The Bible tells us everywhere that both our own hearts & this world are full of great deceptions, temptations, & trials that will constantly threaten our spiritual fidelity. • Yet, like these disciples, we go on slumbering comfortably as if we are not vulnerable to such spiritual dangers. • How needful we are of the words which Jesus here spoke! “<i>The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.</i>” • When we are walking in the flesh we cannot truly know if our heart belongs to Christ or to the world. Thus, the 1st sorrow of the spiritually apathetic & proud is that <u>they forfeit the grounds of any true assurance of salvation.</u> • But in this present case, the problem was not that Peter’s faith was disingenuous. The problem was that Peter was still <u>walking with confidence in himself & in the flesh</u>, rather than in <u>submissive dependence upon God.</u> • Thus Jesus once again urges these men to enter into a season of prayer, & he himself returns to prayer also.
<p>Jesus’ 2nd Prayer (v42-43)</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ 2nd Prayer (v42-43)</p> <p>V42 IN JESUS’ SECOND PRAYER WE FIND AN ECHO OF THE FIRST PRAYER—THE THREE CORE PILLARS OF HIS PRAYER REMAIN UNCHANGED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We see the question of <u>any other possible means of salvation</u> being once again answered: <i>There is none.</i> • We see that by his death Jesus will be the <u>wrath-bearing & wrath-removing Substitute</u> for God’s people. • We see the total <u>submission, trust, & obedience</u> of Jesus to the will of the Father—<u>even in the face of death.</u> <p>V43 BUT IN CONTRAST TO CHRIST’S TOTAL SURRENDER & PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO GOD WE SEE THE WEAKNESS & FAILURE OF THE 3 GREATEST DISCIPLES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Jesus specifically called Peter, James, & John to come with him during this hour of prayer, he was calling his <u>closest, strongest, & most devoted disciples.</u> But the purpose of this was not what men first think. • Jesus did NOT call them in order to show us the greatness of men so that we might be proud & have confidence in flesh. • Rather, he called the best, brightest, & strongest so that we might see that even the very best of men fall woefully short. • <u>We see in these 3 greatest disciples that there is no such thing as a man so strong, so good, so devoted as to be able to provide even one good spiritual thing for himself.</u> • All men, without exception, are but weak & failing sinners even in the midst of their best intentions & efforts. • On their own, without the presence of the indwelling Spirit of God, even the greatest disciples LACKED the <u>faith, humility, resolve, strength, sobriety, wisdom, & power</u> to stand firm for the Lord even for “one hour.” • <i>These disciples are meant to show us that there are absolutely no exceptions. All men stand in desperate need of what Christ alone can provide for them—no one can provide even the least of these things for himself.</i>
<p>Jesus’ 3rd Prayer (v44-45a)</p>	
<p>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.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Jesus’ 3rd Prayer (v44-45a)</p> <p>V44 THE PURPOSE OF THIS 3RD REPETITION IS TO SHOW THE COMPLETENESS & ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY OF THE TRUTHS PREVIOUSLY SET FORTH.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This threefold repetition is intended to communicate that we may have the highest certainty & confidence that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jesus’ death is the one & only means of salvation for sinners. 2. Jesus’ death is the only way for God’s righteous wrath against our sins to be removed from us. 3. Jesus did all this in perfect obedient submission to the holy will of God.
<p>Jesus Manfully Rises To Meet His Betrayer (v45b-46)</p>	
<p>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.”</p>	<p>V45A BUT JESUS’ PRAYER IS NOT THE ONLY THING THAT IS REPEATED. THE DISCIPLES’ FAILURE IS ALSO REPEATED & FOR THE SAME REASON.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just as the repetition of Christ’s prayer is intended to give us the utmost confidence in Christ’s saving work, so the threefold repetition of the disciples’ weakness & failure is intended to rob us of all vain confidence in ourselves. • The day will come when these men will stand firm for their Lord & be used mightily in his name, but that will not happen until they are emptied of all confidence in the flesh & learn to walk in true dependence upon God. <p style="text-align: center;">Jesus Manfully Rises To Meet His Betrayer (v45b-46a)</p> <p>V46 GOD HAS HEARD JESUS’ PRAYERS & YET HE HAS NOT REMOVED THE CUP FROM HIS HAND. HOW DOES THE LORD JESUS CHRIST NOW RESPOND?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus does NOT run away from the hour at hand. Jesus does NOT hide from the sorrow & humiliation ahead. Jesus does NOT even wait for his betrayer to come to him. • Stepping over his sleeping disciples, Jesus manfully rises to meet them face to face & though he could call legions of angels to rise & deliver him, <u>by faith he willingly submits himself to the Father’s will even unto death.</u>*

Proposition:

Behold the weakness & inability of men alongside the perfect submission of Christ who offered himself in our place.