

THE CALL TO FOLLOW JESUS - 5

(Mat 26:36-46) 8/19/18

Grace Bible Church, Gillette, Wyoming

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I. THE PLACE OF JESUS' PRAYER (GETHSEMANE)

A. Path to Gethsemane

B. Place Called Gethsemane

1. The garden of Gethsemane (*probably from the Aramaic Heb. gath shemanim - "oil press"* ISBE) was an olive orchard located near the foot of the Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem.
2. It was very likely a piece of private property since the Greek word is, *chorion (Grk)*, which usually means a private field (Act 1:18-19) or private land (Act 5:8).
3. Tradition suggests that it may have been Mary, the mother of Mark, who was its owner and gave Jesus and His disciples special permission to use it.
4. It was not uncommon for people in that day to sleep either on rooftops or somewhere outdoors.
5. Today the garden is approximately 1440 square feet (120ft X 120ft) and is occupied by eight ancient olive trees (which still yield olives and are pressed).
6. It is doubtful that they are the exact trees that Jesus prayed under because according to Flavius Josephus, all the trees around Jerusalem were cut down by the Romans when they destroyed the Temple in AD 70. Research reported in 2012 that most of the trees dated back to the 12th century. Radiocarbon-dating tests on some of the root material from Gethsemane dated back some 2300 years ago.
7. Some have supposed that Jesus and His followers slept in a nearby cave where an oil press would have been kept and operated (Cave or "Grotto of Gethsemane"). However, Joh 18:1 described the spot as a "garden" (*kêpos - any place planted with herbs and trees ([Luke 13:19; John 18:1, 26; 19:41; Sept.: Deut. 11:10; Amos 4:9;] Zod.)*).
8. In either case, no one disputes that this event took place in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ or that it was one of the most defining moments of His ministry.

II. THE NECESSITY FOR JESUS' PRAYER (Mat 26:36-39a)

A. Description of Jesus' Prayer (*proseuchomai*) (36)

1. Jesus spoke to eight (Judas had already left, Joh 13:27) of the disciples to stay at the entrance of the garden. Peter, James, and John were asked to go farther into the garden (Mat 26:37).
2. The Greek word for "**prayer**" is *proseuchomai* and is the same word used in all references to prayer in this section (Mat 26:36, 39, 41, 42, 44). All of the cross references use this same word (Mar 14:32-42 cf. Luk 22:41-46).
3. Though it is the general word for prayer it can refer to praying in the depths of agony as the context will show.
4. In addition, it can refer to the soul's need for frequent or continuous times of prayer (*proseuchomai*) (Mat 26:39, 42, 44).

B. Motivation for Jesus' Prayer

1. "**Grieved**" (37) - "Grieved" is the Greek word *lupeō* and means more than sorrowful. It can mean to be grieved over sorrowful events or even sin (1Th 4:13; Eph 4:30).
2. "**Distressed**" (37) (*adēmoneō*) means to be in anxiety or deeply troubled (Php 2:26).
3. "**Deeply grieved**" (38a) (*perilupos*) afflicted beyond measure (38a). This has the same root as vs. 37 ("grieved") but it is intensified to show the mounting agony.
4. "**Point of Death**" (38b) - In this context, the phrase "point of death" was not a gesture of hyperbole. Many believe that our Savior's grief was so magnified that He literally was at the "point of death". In fact, some maintain that if the angel had not ministered to Him, He may have physically succumbed to death (cf. Luk 22:43; 38b).
5. "**Fell on his face**" (39a) - Either because of Jesus physical condition or His distressed soul (or both), Jesus started out on His knees (Luk 22:41) but ended up on His face prostrate before the Lord (Mat 26:39).
6. "**Drops of blood**" (Luk 22:44) - *This suggests a dangerous condition known as hematomidrosis, the effusion of blood in one's perspiration. It can be caused by extreme anguish or physical strain. Subcutaneous capillaries dilate and burst, mingling blood with sweat. Christ Himself stated that His distress had brought Him to the threshold of death (MSB).*

7. Not only was Jesus' soul compelled to pray three times, but each agonizing prayer may have lasted up to an hour. Jesus stated that the disciples "could not keep watch with [Him] for one hour" (Mat 26:40).

III. THE WORDS OF JESUS' PRAYER (39b, 42, 44)

A. Your Will be Done

1. All three of Jesus' prayers were concluded with the Father's will. Regardless of anything Jesus said, His most agonizing prayers were most concerned about the Father's will and not His own.
2. It is also a comfort to know that Jesus did not sin because He expressed struggling emotions. Praying about struggling emotions is not sin if our ultimate desire is for God's will and not our own.

B. If it is Possible

1. Jesus used the words "if" and "possible." Technically, He was asking if there was another way for salvation other than drinking this cup (vs. 39b).
2. Jesus' second prayer explained His thoughts in detail. If the cup was the only way and Christ was the only one to drink it, then our Lord was compliant with the Father's will.
3. The third prayer was the same but, in each prayer, Jesus was strengthened in the will of the Father (44). Prayer is not twisting God's arm to do our will but aligning our wills with His.

IV. THE MEANING OF JESUS PRAYER

A. Sorrows of the Man

1. What was it that caused the Son's agony? He was after all the "man of sorrows" (Isa 53:3). The Son certainly had much cause to agonize. He had been betrayed by one of His disciples. He would be forsaken by virtually all of His disciples. The people that He came to minister to would cry out for His death. He was about to be arrested, beaten, and experience the Roman's worst form of death, crucifixion.
2. Though the Son felt all those things, these were not the cause for His immeasurable agony.

B. Sin-bearing and Wrath

1. The Holy One, the Son of God, was about to become the sin-bearer for the world (2Co 5:21). He was about to bear the wrath of God for the sins of the world (Rom 8:3). While there could be no separation within the members of the Godhead, the Son would experience the Father's forsaking displeasure (Mat 27:46) and wrath toward the sin which He bore.
 - a. *[Christ] knew perfectly that He faced the indescribably painful prospect of taking upon Himself the sin of all mankind, of becoming sin for their sakes. And for that He would suffer the wrath of His heavenly Father which that sin deserved.*
 - b. *When Christ was forsaken by the Father, their separation was not one of nature, essence, or substance. Christ did not in any sense or degree cease to exist as God or as a member of the Trinity.*
 - c. *He writhed in anguish not from the lacerations on His back or the thorns that still pierced His head or the nails that held Him to the cross but from the incomparably painful loss of fellowship with His heavenly Father that His becoming sin for us had brought (MacArthur).*
2. The metaphor "**cup**" was in many cases a reference to the judgment of God (Psa 11:6; Jer 25:15; Isa 51:22 cf. Rev 16:19). It now became a personal metaphor to the Son (Mat 20:22; Joh 18:11).

V. THE INABILITY OF THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

A. Accompaniment of the Disciples

1. These same disciples who were present at the Transfiguration witnessed Christ's highest exaltation (Mat 17:2, 5). Now they would witness Christ's lowest point and agony (Mat 26:37). Jesus desired that His disciples would understand the magnitude of the moment.
2. Jesus desired that His disciples would watch and pray so that they would not fall into temptation (Mat 26:41a).
3. Jesus desired His disciples to know that prayer was the strength of a willing spirit over the weakness of sinful flesh (Mat 26:41b).

B. Applications for Following Christ

1. The disciples experienced sleep deprivation (cf. Luk 9:32), but there are times when sleep must be sacrificed for the sake of prayer (Luk 6:12 cf. Luk 9:32).
2. The disciples were loyal, but loyalty to Christ does not come through self-confidence (Mat 26:31-35). Rather, loyalty comes through yieldedness to the Spirit, vigilance, and prayer.
3. The disciples were indifferent to the needs of the Savior, the magnitude of the moment, the power of the enemy, battle at hand, and the consequences of indifference.