

# 30 January morning sermon

Staying with Him (Mark 14:32-50, Daniel 19:1-9).

## (Sermon Summary)

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus poured out His whole being in impassioned prayer to His Father. His sweat was like drops of blood as he took to heart what lay ahead for Him on the Cross, where the wrath of God would be poured out on Him. He longed for the companionship of the disciples and asked them to watch and pray with Him, but it proved too hard for them - weighed down with sorrow, they fell asleep and missed their moment. Christ reproached the disciples, particularly Peter, who a short time ago had been protesting his loyalty but would soon deny the Lord.

We also feel that reproach. We sometimes set ourselves to pray and fall asleep; and even when we're awake, our prayers lack urgency and vitality. We fail to appreciate the privilege of being able to come to our Father as His adopted children. We want to do better - to be more vigilant and urgent.

### **A great need to pray**

Prayer is so important! If God counts for everything, why do we pray so little? Though Christ is now in Heaven, He has not lost His humanity and is not detached or too busy to care about us. He feels for us, and carries our burdens, knowing how the culture bears down on us.

Today there is much upheaval in the world and in the churches. There are disturbing trends around the world such as the loss of liberty, authoritarianism and the enthusiasm for globalisation. The epidemic of fear created by Covid shows how easy it is for the authorities to secure compliance. Recently we have seen the emptiness of our political leaders and the feebleness of other churches which closed their doors throughout the pandemic. Like Daniel, we have a great need for understanding.

We must pray that we will be servants of God and be strong. We must be found watching and alert, grounded in the Bible like Daniel and having discernment and wisdom.

### **The battle to pray**

Prayer is hard work: we get tired, we struggle to find the right words, and we are discouraged by unanswered prayers. We may feel that we could never pray like Daniel, Nehemiah or the apostles, so we don't even try. But 'Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees'. Our great High Priest takes and improves our weak prayers. The results of prayer are always good: more faith, holiness and the capacity to love.

The disciples lost the battle! Their lack of prayer made them weak, so when Judas arrived with the guards they all fled. The same applies to us: if we don't pray we will be weak, preferring the world and unable to resist temptation.

### **Will you pray?**

The Lord values our companionship, just as he did that of the disciples. He wants us to draw near to Him and is pleased as we express our faith and love. If we stay with Him the gains are immense - we will take away wisdom, having a word in season for other people. As we share our burdens with Him, He will share with us His burdens for His people. So seek the Lord with all your heart!