

## LUKE 22:39-53

### "Empowered Through Prayer"

Why does the bible refer to Christ as the Last Adam (1 Cor 15:45)? Certainly we could come up w/more than one reason why the 2 could be compared. But suffice it to say for our purposes today we realize that Adam was the 1<sup>st</sup> perfect man, Christ was the last perfect Man. **We also realize and are thankful for the fact that if sin could be imputed to all of humanity through one man's sin (namely Adam) than even so righteousness can be imputed (or accredited) to all of humanity through one Man's righteousness (namely J.C).**

That's where our text finds us today. Human life began in a garden (the garden of Eden); it was in that garden that man failed; that man sin. So life began in a garden and sin entered humanity in that garden, even so it would be appropriate that the battle over sin would be won in a garden, namely the garden of Gethsemane. **Oh make no mistake the price was *paid* upon the cross, however the resolve was *made* in Gethsemane. In Eden a decision was made that resulted in *condemnation*; in Gethsemane a decision was made that resulted in *salvation*. Where Adam failed, Christ would prevail, where Adam *sinned against God's will*, Christ *submitted to God's will*. Adam's sin brought death, Christ's submission brought life.**

Family, this is where we take off our proverbial shoes for the place we're about to tread is holy ground. I want you to know that I don't pretend, nor do I presume to have a grip on the reality of what takes place here; we will never understand the depths of agony nor fully grasp the struggle inwardly that took place *in* our Lord *on* this night. **Nor can we fathom the love that would do for us what we could never do for ourselves in being made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ.**

The word, "gethsemane" means "oil press" or "olive press", it's the place where the olives would be crushed to extract the oil from them. It's here that Christ will be "crushed" in a "press" of grief/sorrow for you and me as He resolves in his heart to be "God forsaken" that God might never leave nor forsake us.

**In the Garden of Eden, the 1<sup>st</sup> Adam was sentenced to work the ground by the sweat of his brow. In the Garden of Gethsemane the Last Adam agonized so deeply that sweat (as great drops of blood) flowed forth on to the ground *from* His brow.**

It's one of those sections of scripture that if I only knew how to articulate it appropriately we would just all get on our faces & worship Jesus for His goodness, His grace, & the greatness of His work on our behalf. (So forgive me in advance for failing).

Let's look at Luke Ch 22 beginning in Vs 39 as our Lord (along w/His disciples) leave the upper room, & make their way to the Mt of Olives, specifically to the Garden of Gethsemane.

### Vs 39-46

It's not ambiguity nor is it obscurity that happens here, we recognize clearly the transaction that is taking place. However there is a mystery, there's a depth spiritually that we simply cannot comprehend. Jesus is tormented that we might be comforted, He drinks the wine cup of the wrath of God to the dregs so that we our cup might "runneth over" w/God's goodness & mercy. Oh how we should worship Him!

In Vs 40 Jesus brings us into a perspective on prayer that we need to be very aware of & that is this: Prayer is not only for our procurement, it's also for our protection. It's not just a means through which we might "have" but it's a means through which God often times will "hedge" our lives. The book of Proverbs declares, "*The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.*" Proverbs 18:10 So the point of prayer isn't simply to ask for things you want or even need, but through prayer we also receive protection from things we *don't* want or need.

When your prayer life takes a vacation I promise you that you will be visited by *temptation* unnecessarily. Stop praying & your children will become more vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy, your marriage will be attacked/bombarded constantly. Jesus says here very clearly that one of the keys to protection from temptation, (that is from trouble or testing) is prayer.

"Pray, that you may not enter into temptation." Is Jesus saying, "Make your prayer request that you wouldn't enter into temptation." Or is He saying, "Pray, & the net effect will be that you will be kept from temptation." I'm not sure but I'm good w/either of those. Here's what I want you to see. The word "Pray" is a verb (meaning it's an action, something we're supposed to *do*); it's in the imperative mood (meaning it's a command) & it's in the middle voice (perhaps passive) but either way it points to the same thing. The middle voice means that the subject is being affected by it's own actions. A passive voice speaks of the subject being acted upon. Either way Jesus is saying that prayer has a direct effect upon your life. Such the extend that if you *don't do it...*

...you invite temptation & times of testing unnecessarily upon your life. Note the difference even in the text, Jesus prayed & persevered in the Father's will. The disciples slept & they all scattered & fell distant from Christ. God often times employs the means of prayer as the mode through which He empowers us & strengthens us in the inner man.

#### Vs41-42

We know from Matt & Mark that He initially brought all the disciples to given place, then He pulled Peter, James & John in further w/Him. At that point He began to become sorrowful & deeply distressed & He spoke w/them saying, *"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."* Matthew 26:38 From that point He w/drew from *them* (as we have here) & He knelt down & began to pray (ultimately in like manner 3 times).

Couple of things I'd like to point out about that. #1 We note His posture; that He knelt. This reveals to us the enormous strain that He was under in that the common posture of prayer in that day was to stand & raise your eyes & lift your hands to the heavens. The fact that Christ couldn't (or perhaps wouldn't) stand but took to His knees is a very profound picture for these guys to behold. He is experiencing an enormous emotional/spiritual strain at this point.

Which leads me to my 2<sup>nd</sup> point, it seems significant that Jesus w/drew from them in order to spend time in solitude seeking after & being ministered to by His Father who is in Heaven. Why do I say that? Because what I want you to see is that there was a need in Him that was deep that no human being could possibly meet it. There comes a point whereby the deepest human sympathy naturally fails. God has designed it that way because He desires that we (like Christ) would come to & fall upon Him. Peter said it like this, *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."*<sup>1</sup> & If you haven't, you will experience a time in your life whereby try as they may people just can't help you. It may be over the death of a loved one, or a sickness that doctors can't help with. Could be facing a situation that you need direction & no one can really sense or see the significance of it & you're just all alone in it. Any number of things can bring you to this point.

It's the irony of humanity... (what do you mean?)

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Pe 5:6-7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

I can't tell you the # of times that I have heard from someone, "I know I should have my needs met by God, but He's not w/me physically, He's not communicating w/me audibly..." Yet the fact of the matter is that there comes a time when the need is so deep that it transcends human touch or sympathy, there are no words & nothing that can be said. You don't want anyone to touch you or to try & be there for you, you're crying out to God in Whom alone you can place your hope, hope for healing inwardly, emotionally, physically, spiritually or whatever.

Jesus is in that place, He asks His friends to watch & wait w/Him, to pray (& that's sufficient for Him) but as for finding His strength or receiving encouragement inwardly He turns to His Father exclusively... & He says...

Vs 42

Here it is right? "This cup." What "cup" is He talking about? Simply put the "cup" in many ways speaks of destiny. There are a few references in the OT whereby the "cup" is a reference to manifold blessing. Ps 16, "*O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Yes, I have a good inheritance.*" <sup>2</sup>Most of us are familiar w/the 23<sup>rd</sup> psalm, "*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, you anoint my head w/oil, my cup runs over...*" Ps 23:5

So it's as if the "cup" that's allotted to us is filled by the motives & actions that spill forth from us & God deals w/us on that premise. Have we looked to Him, trusted in Him, are we satisfied by Him; or do we do what we want, when we want, w/whomever we want & whoever gets hurt in the process is simply acceptable collateral damage? What it boils down to is, are our lives marked by righteousness or wickedness? Our ways, or God's ways? There is a wine cup of the wrath of God that is filled through wickedness & when a person or a people fills that cup to the brim (via sin in their lives) God will press that cup to their lips & they will be forced to drink it to the dregs.

The 75<sup>th</sup> Psalm says it like this, "*For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is fully mixed, and He pours it out; surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain and drink down.*" Ps 75:8 Isaiah 51:17 calls it the "Cup of His fury" & "the cup of trembling".

Here's the point. Jesus became as it were the enemy of God, He would drink the cup of God's fury to the dregs & drain it down as the sin of the world was placed upon Him & the wrath of God was poured out upon Him for you & for me.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 [Ps 16:5-6] Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This is the cup that He sought to be taken from Him if it be the will of the Father. It wasn't the suffering that caused His soul to shrink back so much as it was the separation from the Father, Him who knew no sin being made sin...that was the struggle, the source of agony on that night. The fact that all of my sin would be placed upon Him was repulsive to Him, it caused Him to recoil (in a sense) as He was confronted w/that reality. The enemy tempting Him to forsake the cross...

But here's what we need to see, throughout the entirety of the struggle there was a submission to the Father's will. "If it is *Your will*", "nevertheless *not My will, but Yours be done.*" This is where the decision was once & for all resolved, He would drink the cup at Calvary, but the resolve to drink it took place in Gethsemane as Jesus on His knees submitted to His Father's will for Him personally & for all of humanity.

George Muller speaking on prayer said this: "I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that **it has no will of its own** in regard to a given matter. 90% of the trouble with people is just here. 90% of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is."

Or simply said another way? 90% of the problems that want to keep us from walking in God's will are found in our will. There's a wrestling match that takes place between what we want to do Vs what God may want us to do. But when we will truly yield our own will, our own way, 90% of the problems that keep us from walking in God's will disappear. It's a simple matter (if you'll allow me to call it simple) of submission.

But as we submit to God in prayer, great power can result, resolve to be about Your Father's business, not *my will, but Thy will be done*. There are those who would say that to pray, "Not my will but Yours be done" is a lack of faith. Jesus models it as the highest form. Saying in essence, "It's not about what I want, it's about what You want & I will submit to that regardless of what it may be or what it may cost me personally."

**Vs 43-44**

Luke alone shares w/us the angelic encounter in order to minister to & strengthen our Lord in His humanity. We noted an angel that appeared to Jesus as He commenced His earthly ministry to strengthen Him after His temptation, here we see an angel appearing to Him as He concludes His earthly ministry as well.

But here we have the Father's answer to Jesus' request. He wouldn't remove the cup, but He would strengthen Him that He might drink the cup & bear up under the weight what was to be placed upon Him. I'll say it again; God will empower us through prayer.

When we read Matt's gospel we find our Lord falling on His face. From kneeling (we know that He checked on His disciples & found them sleeping more than once while He was agonizing in the garden) to falling prostrate on His face. Perhaps He began by kneeling, then He checked on His disciples & when He came back feeling the growing intensity of inner anxiety/agony He fell on His face.

But here's what I want you to see. How did He respond to His agony (this increasing conflict/sorrow inwardly)? Did He freak out & fall into a panic attack? No, He *prayed more earnestly*, w/an even greater intensity. His sweat becoming like great drops of blood falling to the ground.

Now we know that there is a medical condition whereby the capillaries in the sweat glands can rupture under extreme stress & your sweat can mingle w/blood. This very well could be what was happening here or it could be that Luke wasn't saying it was blood but that His sweat was so profuse on this cold night in early April that it was like blood dripping from an open wound. Either way there was a tremendous physical reaction taking place to the agony & conflict that confronted Him.

But that's not really what I want you to focus on, what I want you to sober up to & be in awe over is the fact that He (being God in human flesh) shed His blood for you & we bow in reverence & worship Him for that. He is worthy of all blessing & power, & glory & honor. He paid a price for us we could never secure for ourselves. In the words of a poem I ran across, "But none of the ransomed ever knew How deep were the waters crossed, Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through, Ere He found His sheep that was lost:"

FROM "THE NINETY AND NINE"—ELIZABETH C. CLEPHANE

**Vs 45-46**

They were emotionally drained...in that we sympathize but Jesus doesn't excuse the weakness of the flesh. He says, "Don't sleep, rise & pray lest you enter into temptation." He's not saying that sleeping is bad, He's saying that not praying is bad. Don't slip into the sin of prayerlessness, you will invite unnecessary times of testing & temptation into your life.

### Vs 47-48

Here's what we'll see. Jesus had prayed therefore He was prepared for what was about to happen. The disciples hadn't prayed & consequently were ill prepared & quite frankly they panicked...no prayer, no power.

But here Judas demonstrates the fruit of a seared conscience as he takes what would seem to be the quintessential sign of affection & through that betrays our Lord into the hands of the enemy. Just like when Joab took Amasa by the beard w/His right hand to kiss him & then plunged his sword into his stomach (2 Sam 20) Judas seeks to draw Jesus in w/the symbol of affection & then plunges the sword of betrayal into His heart.

### Vs 49-53

God willing we'll comment on this section of scripture a little more fully next time (for now we'll wrap up & wind down).

Here's what I want you to see. Jesus exhorted them to pray lest they enter into temptation, lest they fail the test that awaited them. Did they pray? No, now what's happening? This thing is coming down; & rather than wait on the Lord or respond in obedience to the Lord there is a knee jerk response to the flesh & somebody gets hurt.

When we refuse to pray that invariably exudes what? Self-confidence. When we refuse to pray we're effectively telling God that we don't need His help, we don't need His strength nor do we need His sufficiency but rather we're completely competent in & of ourselves. Next we seek to stand on our own & act or react to a situation in a manner that we think seems best in the moment. Peter isn't acting out of obedience to the Lord here, he's acting out of his own initiative. It yields the typical result of someone getting hurt.

How much better things would've gone had Peter simply waited on the Lord & obeyed His word. How much better things would've gone had Peter been prayed up & empowered to resist the temptation & pass the test that's only just begun.

Be a people of prayer, that the power of God might both protect you *from* & prepare you *for* any temptations or trials that await you. Don't presume upon tomorrow, prepare through prayer today...

### Prayer Points:

Lord Jesus words fail us to be able to express the eternal gratitude that we desire to offer up to You once again today. May we never take for granted the work of redemption on our behalf. May we heed both Your example & Your exhortation to be a people of prayer. We want to be empowered, equipped & prepared for the battle that lies ahead of us, a people of humility who depend upon You whole heartedly. Teach us to walk in Your ways.

Of course if you don't know the Lord, if you've never opened your heart to the Lord then all this talk about power through prayer doesn't really apply to you because it's a tool that equips the child of God. You are (if you'll allow me to be blunt) w/out any hope, no defense, just like a pawn ready to be played by the enemy whenever he should so choose. God desires to empower you, to equip you to have victory over the sin, the struggles & temptations in your life. That power is available to you, but only in Christ. Jesus died to give you life, victory over sin & death, He shed His blood for you & it's my prayer that you wouldn't take that for granted, but that you'd receive the gift of everlasting life that's available to you in Christ today... Just believe upon the Lord J.C. & you will be saved.