

Lighthouse Bible Church

April 13th, 2014

Matthew 26: 36 - 46

Scripture Reading: Mark 14: 32 – 42

‘He had the right to remain silent’

Stand – Read – Pray

As we have been looking at the book of John, we have seen all the events that have been taking place in the upper room. We are going to leave the book of John for a while and jump ahead to what happens after they leave the room. We will come back to what happens in the room and after they leave, when we return to our study of John in June.

But for now, because this is the week before our celebration of Resurrection Sunday, Easter Sunday, I want to look at one specific event that happens just before Jesus is taken away to be crucified. It is His time in the garden with His disciples just before Judas comes with the soldiers.

Verse 36: then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane

In the context of Matthew and the other gospels, Jesus has just finished His time with the disciples in the upper room and they have left there and are walking to the Mount of Olives called **Gethsemane**. It is a place **Luke 22: 39** said He was **accustomed** to going. That is probably how Judas was able to find Him and betray Him there.

When they get to the Mount of Olives, Jesus **said to the disciples ‘sit here while I go and pray over there’**. Jesus knows the importance of what is about to take place so He does what He always does, goes to His father in prayer.

He knows that what is about to happen is the culmination of everything written about His suffering, crucifixion, death, burial and eventual resurrection. He knows that this is the fulfillment of **Genesis 3: 15** and **Satan bruising His heel and Him crushing Satan's head**. He knows that this is the fulfillment of **Isaiah 53** and Him being **the lamb led to the slaughter**. He knows that He will soon experience the excruciating pain of crucifixion that was written about in **Psalm 22**. So He wants to pray to His Father.

Verse 37: and He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, which are James and John, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

He leaves the rest of the disciples in one place and takes Peter, James and John with Him to another place. Jesus chooses Peter, James and John because they are the leaders among the 12 and probably the closest to Jesus. He took those 3, you remember, in **Matthew 17: 1** to the Mountain and was transfigured before them. In **Luke 8: 49 - 56** they were the only ones allowed to witness the raising of **Jairus' daughter**. They are usually listed first when all the disciples are listed together. So He wants to teach them a valuable lesson here.

It says that Jesus **began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed**. 'sorrowful' is the word *lupeo* and it means to be grieved or affected by sadness. It is the same word used in **Matthew 26: 22** where Jesus told them that one of them would betray Him and it says **they were exceedingly sorrowful**.

Jesus was also **deeply distressed** *ademoneo* and it means to be greatly troubled or in deep anguish about something. And that something for Jesus that caused His grief, sadness, trouble and anguish was that He was about to go to the cross and feel the full fury of God's wrath against sin. As a matter of fact He says in Verse 38.

Verse 38: My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.

Jesus became so **exceedingly sorrowful** over what was about to take place that it could have even taken His life and probably would have, much like someone could die of fright or anger, but He had been ordained to another more severe type of death.

This was such a severe temptation by Satan and willful obedience to the Father's will in dying, that Jesus agonized in prayer in the garden. As a matter of fact in **Luke 22: 44** it says **and being in agony He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

He agonized and was exceedingly sorrowful and distressed, not about dying on the cross, but having to become sin and bear the wrath of God for it. This was unbearably excruciating to Christ that caused these emotions and physical reactions of sweating blood.

Verse 39: He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed saying 'O My Father if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will but as You will.

Jesus always address God as His Father because that is the intimate relationship they had, which, by the way, was foreign to the Jews of that time, as a matter of fact do you remember in **John 5: 18** where they wanted to kill Him **because He called God His Father, making Himself equal with God.**

There was only one time when Jesus addressed God as God and that is when He was on the cross and He quotes **Psalm 22: 1** where He says **My God My God why have You forsaken Me.**

Jesus says **if it is possible**, let this cup pass from Me. Jesus isn't asking if it is possible to escape the cross. He could have done that anytime He wanted to. In **John 10: 17 – 18** Jesus said **I have the power to lay My life down and take it up again.** He says later in **Matthew 26: 53** that **He could call 12 legions of angels** to stop this.

So He is not asking 'if it is possible' to stop this, He is asking if there may be another way to go through with your redemptive plan to save mankind and deliver them from their sin.

He says if it is possible, **let this cup pass by.** What does He mean by the **cup?** He is talking about God's wrath and judgment and full fury against the sins of mankind poured out on Him so that He must suffer their punishment. You can see different places in scripture where the **cup** is God's judgment like in *Jeremiah 49: 12, Isaiah 51: 17 – 23, Psalm 75: 8.* Listen to what **Revelation 14: 10** says **he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone ...**

Jesus finishes by saying 'Father if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me' then **nevertheless not as I will but as You will.** Jesus always yields to the Father's will, but you can see the conflict and temptation going through and that He is resisting. Then when Jesus gets done praying look at verse 40.

Verse 40: then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter 'what, could you not watch with Me one hour?'

In the midst of Jesus most agonizing spiritual conflict as He is about to go to the cross, when His disciples could be the most helpful in praying for Him and interceding on His behalf, what are they doing? They are sleeping.

It is just like when Jesus took the 3 of them and was transfigured before them. Matthew and Luke record that **His face shown like the sun and His clothing became white as light** and then all of a sudden **Moses and Elijah appear in glory and speak with Jesus**. And what are the disciples doing. **Luke 9: 32 says they were heavy with sleep**. In a time when Jesus could use them the most, they are sleeping.

In a time when Jesus told them that one of them would betray Him and in a time when Peter was told that he would deny Jesus 3 times and in a time when Jesus said the ruler of this world is coming; this is the time you would think they would be most alert in prayer...but they were not. But in all fairness to them **Luke 22: 45 says they were sleeping for sorrow**. So Jesus says to them in Verse 41

Verse 41: Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.

Jesus tells His disciples to be watchful and prayerful on a continuing basis, the Greek structure of the sentence, so as to not enter into temptation. He is telling them that they are in a spiritual battle and they need God's help to resist the adversary. One writer put it this was 'Jesus is warning them of the danger of self-confidence which produces spiritual drowsiness' *MacArthur Matthew page 176*.

Peter would learn this lesson well and write later in **1st Peter 5: 8 be watchful, be vigilant for your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour**. Peter also wrote in **2nd Peter 2: 9 that the Lord knows how to deliver the godly from temptation**. And Like Paul wrote in **1st Corinthians 10: 13 there is no temptation taken...**

Then Jesus says to them **the Spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.** You've been there haven't you? Desiring to serve the Lord but you end up yielding to the flesh. We are sometimes like the Apostle Paul in **Romans 7: 13 – 25** for what I will to do that I do not practice ...

Verses 42 – 44: again a second time He went away and prayed saying 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done. So He left them, went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Jesus leaves the 3 again and goes off and prays again to the Father. He again prays that **if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.** Jesus says 'if it is not possible to redeem sinful man apart from My suffering and dying, then I will drink the cup so that Your perfect will can be done.

As you think about Jesus prayer to the Father in the midst of His anguish and sorrow and overwhelming emotion, it is a good pattern of prayer for us. Like our Lord, we too can ask God to **take way** or **heal** or **strengthen** or whatever in the midst of our trials, whatever they may be, but must always resolve that His will be done no matter what. His will be done in allowing the trial to continue or His will be done in taking away the trial.

Well, Jesus comes back, Verse 43 says, **and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.** Heavy with sorrow, heavy with the lateness of the hour, they were asleep again. So Jesus, Verse 44 says **went away again and prayed the third time saying the same words.**

It is interesting that Jesus prayed three times in the most agonizing time before the cross with the greatest temptation of the devil, just like He did with Satan when He was being tempted in the wilderness in **Mt.4: 1 – 11.**

Verses 45 – 46: then He came to His disciples and said to them ‘are you still sleeping and resting? Behold the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going, see My betrayer is at hand.

Jesus comes back again and finds His disciples sleeping and then He says to them **the hour is at hand**. He says ‘get ready, for everything that I have told you is about to take place’. **The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going, see My betrayer is at hand.**

As a matter of fact verse 47 says that while Jesus was still speaking they showed up. Jesus says **let us be going**. Let us meet the enemy, my betrayer because He is resolved, **that for the joy set before Him, He would endure the cross and despise the shame** as **Hebrews 12: 2** says.

And of course, we know what happens from here; Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss and then all the events of the betrayal will be set in motion. As we close, I want us to look at something in this passage and the reason I titled this message ‘He had the right to remain silent’.

Several times in Scripture when Jesus prays, His Father answers and He even answers Him audibly as we have seen in John. But in His most desperate hour, when the Son prays to the Father, we hear no response from the Father and we know that the Father’s answer to letting the cup pass by is a silent no.

Why does the Father remain silent and answer with a silent no? Well there are several reasons:

1) **Hebrews 2: 14** that through His death He might destroy him who had the power over death, that is the devil.

- 2) **Hebrews 2: 17, 1st John 4: 10** so that He can make atonement for the sins of the people.
- 3) **Romans 3: 23 – 26** so that through His death God might display His righteousness and justification of sinful mankind.
- 4) **John 13: 31 – 32, 17: 1, 4 – 5:** so that both the Father and the Son could be glorified through His death and resurrection.
- 5) **1st Peter 1: 18 – 19** we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus.
- 6) **Luke 24: 26 – 27** and many other places so that the scriptures could be perfectly fulfilled
- 7) **Luke 9: 21 – 22** and many other places so that the words of Christ can be believed because He told them exactly how He was going to die and be raised again.

Because the Father remained silent we have One who is our High Priest, who can atone for our sin, who can redeem us to God, who knows all things, who affirms the Bible as God's word, who offers eternal life to everyone.

Gospel here.

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Luke 22: 39, Genesis 3: 15, Isaiah 53, Psalm 22

Verse 37:

Matthew 17: 1, Luke 8: 49 – 56, Matthew 26: 22

Verse 38:

Luke 22: 44

Verse 39:

John 5: 18, Psalm 22: 1, John 10: 17 – 18
Matthew 26: 53, *Jeremiah 49: 12, Psalm 75: 8*
Isaiah 51: 17 – 23, Revelation 14: 10

Verses 40 – 41:

Luke 9: 32, Luke 22: 45, 1st Peter 5: 8, 2nd Peter 2: 9
1st Corinthians 10: 13, Romans 7: 13 – 25

Verses 42 – 44:

Matthew 4: 1 – 11

Verses 45 – 46:

Hebrews 12: 2, Hebrews 2: 14, 17, John 4: 10
Romans 3: 23 – 26, John 13: 31, 17: 1, 4 – 5
1st Peter 1: 18 – 19, Luke 24: 26 – 27, 9: 21 – 22

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