The Sorrowful Praying Christ

Mark 14:32-42
October 4th, 2026
Pastor Francis Bezzam

[26] And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "*Sit here while I pray*." [33] And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. [34] And he said to them, "*My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch*." [35] And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. [36] And he said, "*Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will*." [37] And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "*Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? [38] Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*." [39] And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. [40] And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. [41] And he came the third time and said to them, "*Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. [42] Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand*."

Ever wonder how divine was Jesus? Fully and truly divine.
How sinless was Jesus? Absolutely sinless.
How human was Jesus? Fully and truly human.

Here we see Jesus, in his divine omniscience, aware of what was about to happen to him soon. Jesus is about to be betrayed. And yet in his humanity Jesus longs for human company and his disciples to pray with him. But he finds none. Jesus goes to the garden to bear the shame, the weight of sin, the humiliation all by himself.

I do not think there is a passage sadder than this passage.
No one should have a casual, flippant or an apathetic disposition when you see a passage like this. There are some who feel that Jesus' suffering is only a means to their betterment. Such an attitude should be detested.
As we expound this passage, my prayer is that you would sense the gravity of the significance of the sufferings of Christ.

Last week, we saw Jesus's prediction for his disciples that they would all stumble and be scattered. And we also saw Jesus's personal prediction for Peter that he would deny our

Lord *three* times. What was Peter's response including the rest of the disciples? They asserted that they would never deny the Lord Jesus Christ.
And what follows after their response is our Lord leading them into the garden of Gethsemane. This was a place frequented by our Lord with his disciples.
This is the last time the Lord Jesus would go to this garden.
This would be his last prayer in the garden before he is betrayed and arrested.
This would be the last time Jesus would have any fellowship with his disciples before his death.
Jesus knows all that. Jesus had been preparing for this hour for a while.
The disciples, however, are somewhat clueless as to what might transpire that night.

I've divided this passage into three major observation and implications.

Observation#1: Be acquainted with the sufferings of Christ.

Why should you be acquainted with the sufferings of Christ?

- Because Jesus's grief was innocent grief for my guilt and yours. His grief was your relief.
- Second: Grieving for sin is always better than grieving for the consequences of your sin.

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Here Jesus takes his eleven disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. Judas Iscariot is not with this group because he had already conspired with the elders, scribes and the Pharisees to arrest Jesus. Judas is a few moments away from betraying Jesus with a kiss. Judas found thirty pieces of silver very appealing in order to betray his Maker, the Lord Jesus Christ. How could you put an amount to the Maker of the universe? Judas saw the Lord Jesus heal the sick, the lepers, raise the dead, still the seas, feed the hungry and much more. None of the good that Jesus did doesn't matter to him because Judas was consumed by evil and vice. He was a thief. His heart was filled with greed. And now Satan had fully occupied his heart to betray Jesus. Jesus knows all that in his divine omniscience.

And yet in his humanity, Jesus is like you and I. Jesus was tired, experienced hunger, thirst, frustration, anger and joy. He experienced human emotions as any normal human being would. But now, at this moment, Jesus experiences a kind of emotional distress and agony and anguish that is hard to describe. The English language doesn't do justice to

what is written. Jesus confides in his three disciples Peter, James and John that his soul was very sorrowful. This sorrow or sadness refers to a grief-stricken pain or anguish to a point that you feel like dying. Verse 33 tells us that Jesus was greatly distressed and troubled. Hebrews 5:7 tells us that Jesus offered up loud cries and tears.

Why?

Jesus was so grieved because he would soon give up his untainted and innocent soul to carry the weight of the sin of the world. His conscience knew no ounce of guilt, evil or sin. His heart was the purest of the pure. Jesus knew he was going to carry upon himself the burden of every evil and sinful thought that you ever thought. Every repulsive or ungodly deed you would have ever done, Jesus was going to carry upon himself. Jesus was grieved knowing that he would be condemned for the sake of sinners.

And in that heightened sense of anguish of his soul, Jesus longs for the company of his disciples. Jesus knew that his disciples would abandon him yet he wants them to be alert, not lose faith and succumb to temptation. Jesus knew that he would have to walk alone in his journey to the cross. That is why he said to his disciples "Sit here while I pray".

Notice, however, Jesus wants his disciples to pray as well. Jesus wants his disciples to share in his burden. But will they remain and pray?

You see many people seek blessing, the favor of God and eternal life without ever grieving for their sin. Without being united to Jesus in his death, there is no eternal life. Recall the words of Paul "*For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his*" Romans 6:5.

You want eternal life, want the favor and the blessing of God? Share in his sufferings! Deny self and self-interest. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:10 "*that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death*" This is not a popular teaching. Nobody wants to suffer and deny themselves but that is the way of Christ.

Implication#1: Share in the sufferings of Christ.

Observation#2: Jesus painfully prayed to do God's will.

[35] And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. [36] And he said, "*Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will*."

If Jesus was distressed, troubled and was sorrowful to the point of death, it gets worse in verse 35. Jesus fell to the ground. The word used in the original is as if Jesus fell to the ground to embrace the ground. Jesus was so consumed with grief and sapped of physical strength that he could not stand any more. He fell! Peter, James and John have very little clue of what exactly was going to happen next. Yet the Lord Jesus knows that his Father had not left him alone. Jesus prays. Notice, this is such a personal prayer from Jesus to his Father, he says, "Abba, Father". His prayer is that if there was any way possible that God the Father would remove this hour of trial, this "cup" from him.

What is the "cup" Jesus mentions in his prayer? The "cup" represents the wrath, the judgment, the terrible fate and fury that you and I deserved for our sin. In Revelation 14:9-10 we see a very graphic terrifying picture of this "cup" symbolic of the wrath of God – "And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "*If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb*"

So, Jesus prays to the Father to remove the "cup". And yet he prays not what he wills but what the Father wills. What was the Father's will?

The Father's will was to strike the Shepherd. Jesus knew that. The Father's will was for His Son to drink the "cup".

John 4:34 "*My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work*"
John 5:30 "..*I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me*"
John 6:30 "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me*."
John 6:39 "*And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day"*

The Father's will for Jesus was for him to take God's Holy Righteous anger upon himself.
Have you wondered what is God's will for your life?

Implication#2: Pray for God's will to be done.

1. Firstly, if you are not a believer, a disciple of Jesus Christ, or a Christian, God's will for your life is that you believe in the Jesus Christ as Savior and Sovereign. You will never regret putting your trust in Jesus. God's will for your life is that you would *repent* of your sin and *trust* in Jesus' death as payment for your sin. And believe in his

resurrection for forgiveness and eternal life. Hear the words of Jesus himself - "*For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day"* John 6:40

2. As a believer, God's will for you is that you would live a life of holiness and godliness. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 – "*For this is the will of God, your sanctification (holiness)*". How much effort do you into godliness? When was the last time you prayed to be more godly?
3. God's will for you also is that you live life as a thankful and grateful person. "*Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*" 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Is thanksgiving and praise a regular facet of your life? Or is grumbling, complaining, murmuring, bickering or being critical of others a facet of your life? Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:17 *"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is"* And he writes in the following verses that you give thanks and sing praises – "*addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart*" Ephesians 5:19. Sing with your heart!
4. God's will for you also is to change your thinking to starve, strain and suffer your flesh from human and worldly passions. Peter 4:1-2 – "*Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God*".

We could go on but here are a few reminders about God's will for you.

Final observation and implication#3: Prevail in prayer.

[37] And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "*Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? [38] Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*." [39] And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. [40] And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. [41] And he came the third time and said to them, "*Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. [42] Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand*."

Notice, Peter hasn't even denied our Lord yet. But Peter, James and John are already stumbling. How? By neglecting to pray. Jesus told Peter he would deny him three times. Now he is reminded by our Lord *three* times about his need to pray. Jesus doesn't want you to stumble and he wants you to pray. Not a "fast food" sort of prayer. Not nominal prayers. Not prayers before meals where you give thanks to God but *prevailing* prayer.

This is where the battle lies in the Christian's life – Secret prayer. Closet prayer. Personal

prayer. Private communion with God.
Neglecting prayer and meditation on the word of God is a sure way to stumble and fall into temptation. Jesus tells Peter, "the spirit indeed is willing the flesh is weak".
Jesus did warn Peter beforehand that he would stumble. And yet our Lord lovingly reminds Peter three times that he should pray.
You wonder why Peter stumbled so quickly? Neglected prayer.

E.M Bounds writes about the necessity of prayer this way – "*A travailing spirit, the throes of a great burdened desire, belongs to prayer. A fervency strong enough to drive away sleep, which devotes and inflames the spirit, and which retires all earthly ties, all this belongs to wrestling, prevailing prayer. The Spirit, the power, the air, and food of prayer is in such a spirit*."

"There is nothing that tells the truth about us as Christian people so much as our prayer life. Everything we do in the Christian life is easier than prayer" Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The Lord Jesus was a man of toiling and prevailing prayer. And yet he finds no comfort or prayer companionship even with the closest of his disciples. Jesus came to Peter James and John three times and yet they were apathetic to his agony, his distress, his anguish. Last week we saw that Peter asserted so confidently that he would never abandon his Lord. All the disciples said the same. And yet here we see they can't even pray for one hour when our Lord is preparing for his Darkest Hour. The Darkest Hour of his soul being betrayed by one of his own.

Jesus did not have to suffer. Jesus did not have to experience such anguish, sorrow or sadness. Jesus could have stayed in heaven in the bliss, the joy and the worship with his Father with all creation, adoring him. Yet Jesus came because this world is fallen and broken and there was no other way to redeem a world so broken by sin. Jesus came because this was God's way to glorify himself in the suffering, the death and vindication of His Son.

As we conclude this morning's message, you see this inner circle of the disciples' sound like a liability to Jesus and his mission. They make big claims of faith and loyalty to Jesus. And yet they stumble so quickly. You wonder why are they even there?
Answer: Because Jesus *loved* them. Jesus loved them *in spite* of them. Jesus loved them to the *end*. Jesus loves you!
John 13:1 "*when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end*"

Let us be acquainted with the sufferings of Christ and share in his sufferings.
Let us learn to do God's will in Christ. Let us learn to pray like Christ.

---------- Discipleship Questions----------

MESSAGE SUMMARY: The Sorrowful Praying Christ. Mark 14:32-42
HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. Why was Jesus so troubled and distressed? Why did Jesus pray to be spared of the hour and yet pray for God's will?

2. HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

    - Do you know and believe what is God's will for your life? Why is godly grief necessary? 1 Corinthians 7:10

    - What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.
HANDS For personal reflection: What would you change to do God's will in your life?