

BIBLE STORY: JESUS PRAYS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE
Matthew 26:36-56

Central Thoughts

- Jesus confessed His love for the Father when He asked, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will but as you will.”
- We have no spiritual strength of our own; we flee in the face of suffering.
- Jesus died for us because He loved His Father and all sinners.
- Jesus trusted His Father in the midst of His suffering and prayed that the Father’s will be done.
- Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, suffering, death, and abandonment by His disciples happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures, so that our faith and understanding of Jesus’ work would rest upon God’s Word.

Discussion Questions

Who went with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane?

All the disciples, except Judas

Whom did Jesus take with Him into the Garden to pray?

Peter, James, and John

What did Jesus tell Peter, James, and John?

“My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

What did Jesus pray?

“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

How many times did Jesus pray this prayer?

Three times

What does this teach us?

He loved His Father. He was devoted and committed to the Father’s will, even though it meant His own suffering and death. Unlike Adam, who willingly left the Father by following the lie of Satan, Jesus held fast to His Father.

What does the cup represent?

The Father’s wrath against sin, and the bitter suffering and death that He was called to endure for us.

With what words will Jesus express this agony upon the cross?

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Psalm 22:1)

How is Jesus’ prayer in the Garden similar to the Lord’s Prayer?

He prays to His Father (the introduction) and He prays that the Father’s will be done (third petition)

What does the image of drinking the cup signify?

That He will take all our sin and the punishment that we deserve into Himself for our salvation.

What were the disciples to do while Jesus was praying?

They were to watch (pay attention to God’s Word) and pray

What question did Jesus raise when He found the disciples sleeping?

“Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

How does Jesus answer His own question?

“The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

What does this mean?

They desired to watch and pray according to their faith in Jesus, but their flesh was sinful and weak and gave them no strength of their own to resist temptation.

What is Jesus referring to when He says, “Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners”?

The purpose for which He came into the world, to suffer and die for sinful man, has now arrived.

Who came with Jesus?

A multitude with swords and clubs came from the chief priests and elders of the people

What sign did Judas use to betray Jesus?

A kiss

What does Jesus call Judas?

Friend

What prophecy does Judas's betrayal fulfill?

Psalm 41:9—"Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." (See also Psalm 55:12-14).

How did one of Jesus' disciples respond?

He drew a sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.

How does Jesus respond to the violence of this disciple?

He tells him to put away his sword "for all who take the sword will perish by the sword," and that if it were God's will for them to fight in this way, the Father would send Him more than twelve legions of angels (that is 72,000 angels).

Why doesn't Jesus send for the angels to fight His enemies?

Because He must suffer and die according to the Scriptures. Jesus suffering and death is the only way that the kingdom of God is established and the only way that forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are won for the whole world.

What does Jesus say about His nighttime arrest by the violent crowd?

He asks them why they had not arrested Him when He sat with them daily in the temple teaching the Word of God.

Why didn't they arrest Him when He taught in the temple?

The Word of God prevented them from arresting Him, because all things had to be done according to the Scriptures

Why did the disciples forsake Him and flee?

Because their Good Shepherd had been struck and they were scandalized by His suffering just as Jesus and the Scriptures had foretold.

Meditation on the Bible Story

Jesus is the man of faith for us who are weak and without any spiritual strength of our own. He continues to trust in the Father's good and gracious will, even though it means His own bitter suffering and death for the world's salvation. He loves His Father and He loves us more than He loves Himself. In love He denies Himself and takes up the cross of suffering and death from the Father in order to redeem the world from eternal condemnation. The sinful flesh is scandalized by such suffering and avoids it at all cost, because suffering for someone else's benefit always involves the denial of self. No sinner ever wants to deny himself anything. But Jesus willingly denies Himself and drinks in the cup of bitter wrath to save the world that had gone astray. The sinful flesh is always scandalized by Jesus' suffering and death, that the Son of God had to die in our place, and that our salvation comes only through the gift of His suffering and death. To accept this message means that we must let go of ourselves, deny any attempts to save ourselves, and follow Him by faith alone. The depth of human sin and depravity is seen in the fact that one of His own disciples betrayed Him and that all forsook Him and fled. All the events of Jesus' passion unfolded according to the Scriptures, because the Scriptures alone speak the truth concerning man's sin and the free gift of salvation that God accomplished through the suffering and death of His Son. Faith rests upon what the Scriptures teach and upon what Jesus accomplished for us according to the Scriptures.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Almighty God, grant that in the midst of our failures and weaknesses we may be restored through the faithful suffering and prayer of Your only-begotten Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



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