

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are  
Most Surely Believed Among Us  
An Expository Study of the Gospel According to Luke  
Chapter 22- Luke 22:39-46  
332- Jesus Prays the Greatest Prayer

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**Luke 22:39-46**

**39** And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.

**40** When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "**Pray that you may not enter into temptation.**"

**41** And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray,

**42** saying, "**Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.**"

**43** Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

**44** And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

**45** When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow,

**46** and said to them, "**Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation.**"

To the Glory of God

Prayer is the aroma of the Christian Church. In fact, the Church was birthed in a Prayer Meeting. 120 sacred and trembling souls met together in an Upper Room to pray and seek God for ten days so they might be endued with Power from on High. And the conclusion of that Prayer Meeting changed the world.

And as we read the New Testament, we find that the people of the Church prayed. O, how they prayed! They prayed and they prayed and

they prayed. When the Church was attacked, they prayed. When they came across something that confused them, they prayed. When they were threatened with complete annihilation, they prayed. When they were happy, they prayed. When they saw God move for them, they prayed. When they needed instruction, they prayed. When faced with difficult decisions, they prayed. They prayed, they prayed, and they prayed.

And as a result of the supernatural empowerment that came from prayer, the most bumbling, untrained, uneducated group of losers took a patently offensive and radical religion that condemned the entire human race and every other religion and human philosophy, and taught that Salvation could only be found through one Man, Jesus Christ, and they spread it around the world. And, in just three hundred years from the Resurrection, Christianity was the dominant religion in the civilized world! So the Word of God prevailed because the people of God prayed!

And everywhere the Word of God became established, prayer became an intricate part of that group and that people. And so, today, everywhere the Church is, everywhere that the Word of God is being rightly taught and fully applied, you will find people who value prayer and people who see the need for prayer, and you will find people who pray.

Prayer is the miracle where desperate people cry out to an infinitely Righteous and infinitely Powerful and infinitely Good God to do *for* them what they *cannot* do for themselves and what they are patently *not* worthy of receiving.

Prayer is one of the "Means of Grace" that God mercifully gave to the Church whereby patently unworthy sinners, made clean by the Blood of the Lamb and made Righteous by the sinless Life of Jesus, may commune with the Owner and the Creator of the Universe. And it is this internal desire to commune with God that comes about as part of the miracle of the New Birth that fuels our passion for prayer. Saved people seek to be near to God, they seek to be obedient to God, to fellowship with Him and know Him and be close to Him. Prayer accomplishes those things.

And that is why it is my conviction that Prayer should be as common and as frequent and as natural to a genuine believer as breathing. Bible Study should be as normal and natural and common as eating, and Prayer should be as normal and natural and as common

as breathing. And so even as natural breath is the very essence of life, so, too, prayer is the very essence of our life with God.

Prayer should be on our lips and in our hearts and on our minds, and coming out of our mouths all the time. We should whisper prayer and pray out loud. We should vocalize prayer and pray without speaking. We should pray standing up and sitting down and riding in the car and walking down the road and on our knees and in our beds and at the office and at the store. We should pray with our eyes open and our hands raised to God, and we should pray with our eyes closed with our face in the dust. We should pray in the morning and at noon and at night, and we should pray all day long.

But there should also be seasons in the life of every genuine believer where, when the cares of life become too much to bear, that rather than turn to the pagan world and television and video games and sin and vacations to get our minds clear, we should spend all night in prayer. And when the wickedness of a city or a nation or a people becomes oppressive, we should pray for several days.

You see, it is impossible to pray too much. The great scandal in the modern Church is that with all our conveniences and all our technology and all our collective wisdom and methods and models and clever phrases and techniques, we do not pray too much, we pray much too little. Because, *nobody* prays too much.

Now there are approximately 650 prayers in the Bible. And we took several years in this Church on Wednesday evenings where we studied every single one of them. And one thing I came away with from that season was that we do not pray much today like they prayed in the Bible. Our prayers are much different than their prayers. And I don't think that is because we are more advanced than they were, and I don't think that is because we are more spiritual than they were. I think our prayers are different from the prayers in the Bible because we are far too worldly and far too carnal minded and far too materialistic and far too self-centered and impressed with our own spirituality.

When you read the prayers in the Bible, you sense a deep seated desperation. And the best way I know how to describe it is that their prayers resemble a *cry* and a *plea*. The people in the Bible actually begged God, and that crying out and that pleading and that begging comes out of a penitent and broken mind and heart that is truly

desperate to see God move and to see God's Will come about and to see God glorified.

But, today, the prayers that seem to be the most common are focused on us and what we want and what we need rather than what God desires and what is God's Will. And I think that the great difference that we sense in our prayers and the prayers of the people in the Bible is emblematic of what is wrong in the modern Church that has become successful rather than godly, worldly rather than holy, pragmatic rather than humble, and sensual instead of being spiritual.

One of the most common themes that runs through almost all of the prayers in the Bible that we almost never hear today is the concept of repentance. When the people in the Bible prayed, they confessed their sins to God. But it is rare today to see God's people crying out to God out of deep and profound conviction over sin in their lives when they pray. And this is why we almost never see this going on in the Church today:

**James 5:14b**

**... confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.**

The twin evils of pride and gossip hinders many people today from being obedient to what the sacred Scriptures command us to do here, and that is a real shame. So we should work hard to root out the many displays of human arrogance and self-righteousness, and cast out the loose tongues and the gossip so that we may be submitted to God's Will here.

Now I've gotten into trouble in the past for saying this, but I absolutely believe this, and so I will repeat it this morning. Every single man in the Bible prayed early in the morning. All of them. And I think that is significant. No, I don't think it is a law or a requirement, and yes, of course you can pray at night or at noon or all during the day. Thank God that is true. But there is something special when a soul so values the Savior that he sacrifices his entire life and pushes things out of the way so that he may spend time with God early in the morning, before the phones ring, and before he has to make decisions and do something.

Abraham did. Moses did. David did. And the Bible tells us that Jesus rose up early and prayed. And the best I can determine, "early" meant before it was light. Jesus also prayed all night on occasion, and so should we. Now you can say that this was just the way that God moved on the men who are in the Bible, but this habit or this wonderful gift of rising early and seeking God's Face didn't stop when the Bible was completed. No, history tells us that all those who led the Church immediately after the death of the Apostles all rose up early and prayed. Augustine did, and Irenaeus and Tertullian and Origen and Justin Martyr and Polycarp all spoke of this. All these men rose up early and prayed.

Martin Luther and John Calvin and those that God used to bring about the glorious Reformation also led a life of prayer that included praying often and early, and even all night long. The Puritans did, too. And those spiritual giants that we talk about and admire and value today like Jonathan Edwards and William Carey and Charles Spurgeon and John Newton and many, many others, all rose up early and they prayed.

In 1727, Nicholas Van Zinzendorf led a small group to pray early on a Saturday morning, and God came down, and that was the beginning of a Prayer Meeting that went on 24 hours a day and 7 days a week for 100 years! And the outcome was that men and women were so transformed that they sold themselves into slavery in order to preach the Gospel to the slaves and the slave owners.

But it was not just the men who God used to lead the Church who did this. It was also the men who God used to form this nation. George Washington rose early to pray and wrote his prayers down. And even the bombastic and worldly womanizer, Benjamin Franklin, said that he was taught by his Puritan parents to pray often and early, and in his last days, Franklin returned to this way of life again.

In 1856 a small group bowed their knees in prayer in New York City at noon to pray for revival and an end to the violence and wickedness of that growing city, and within two years, hundreds of thousands joined this prayer meeting all over New England, and the Word of God increased in the nation and the Gospel was preached with great results.

But, the greatest example of someone who prayed was Jesus Christ. And so Jesus sets the standard for how to pray and what to

pray for. The disciples saw Jesus do what He did and say what He said, and they wanted what He had. And so Jesus taught them to pray.

Now Jesus Himself prayed many, many times, and in many, many different ways. So we should know that Prayer was a major component of Jesus' Ministry. And prayer should be a major component of our ministry as well, because, prayer is the only way to bring humans into contact with God. And it is this lack of personal, intimate contact with God in prayer from where all of our trouble and all of our failings flow.

Now several people have come up to me over the years to tell me that they don't feel comfortable praying because they don't know how to pray. And I always tell them the same thing. Prayer is not about style, it is about being serious and desperate to contact God. Prayer is about things like earnestness and honesty and truthfulness and anguish of soul to see God honored, and to see His Will carried out in the earth to same degree that God's Will is carried out in Heaven. And so prayer isn't effective because it is beautiful or poetic; God doesn't answer prayer because He is impressed with our style. No, God is impressed with His Own Delight in answering the prayers of His people. And we also need to know that Prayer is not about us informing God about things He doesn't already know about. No, in His Omniscience, God understands more about what we are asking Him than we do.

Now God *could* have chosen to move in the earth any way He wanted to. But He didn't. The Bible reveals that God has chosen to operate throughout His Creation and throughout History by answering the prayers of His people. In other words, God does what He does in *response* to His people asking Him to do what is His Will.

Let me say this another way. God has predetermined to do many things. And God has been Good to reveal many of those things in the Bible. And so by reading and studying the Bible, we learn what is God's Will. And because we are saved, we want God's Will to be done more than we want anything else. And so we discipline ourselves, by the Power of the Holy Spirit, to love what God loves, and to want what God wants, and to find the fullness of joy and the highest and best expression of genuine satisfaction in that which is God's Will. And our prayers flow out from that. And so we cry out to God, in accord with God's Will, and we pray that what God has already revealed to be His Will will come to pass. And then God moves and answers those prayers

by doing what He has already said He wants to do. In fact, those are the *only* prayers that God answers.

### **1John 5:14**

**This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.**

So, the reason we have so many unanswered prayers is because we are praying in rebellion to or in opposition to God's Will. Please turn with me to read what James said about this in **James 4:1-10**:

**1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?**

**2 You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.**

**3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.**

**4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**

**5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?**

**6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "**GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**"**

**7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

**8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.**

**10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.**

So, part of what Prayer is and what Prayer does is designed on purpose by God to change us, to alter the way we think, and to change what we love and what we want and what we desire, so that we will want and love and desire God's Will to be carried out so that God will be honored and magnified. And this is why Jesus told us to pray:

## **Matthew 6:10b**

**... Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.**

... and nobody carried out God's Will in the earth better than Jesus.

Now does that mean that God will *not* move in the earth unless we pray? Yes. But because it is His Will to do certain things, He will *assure* that His people pray. And so God will sovereignly *burden* the hearts of His people to cry out to Him what He has already said is His Will so that He may graciously and wondrously *move* on those prayers that are in full accord with His Will and do what He has already said He wants to do. That is how this works.

Now this particular setting of prayer that Dr. Luke recorded for us in the eight verses that Brother Andy just read to us is fascinating. So let's look again at what Dr. Luke told us:

## **Luke 22:39-40a**

**39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.**

**40 When He arrived at the place...**

Now the good doctor was very careful to tell us, as he was moved along by God the Holy Spirit, that Jesus "**came out**". So Jesus came out of the Upper Room where he was taking the Last Supper and He proceeded up to the Mount of Olives. And so this is approximately late Thursday evening or early Friday morning of the last week of Jesus' life.

And Luke says that the disciples followed Jesus into the Mount of Olives. So from this we know that every evening, after Jesus had taught down in or by the Temple in Jerusalem, he went back up to the Mount of Olives at night to pray and rest.

Now the Apostle Levi gave us a much more detailed account of this very event, and in **Matthew 26:36**, Levi says:

**Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."**



So evidently, there was a place *within* the Mount of Olives called "Gethsemane". And this would have been a garden area that was thick with olive trees that could have very well belonged to a believer. So this man had allowed Jesus to use his garden to hide from the authorities until it was time to be captured and killed.

Now keep in mind that Judas had already left the group to betray the Lord, and so when Luke tells us:

**... the disciples also followed Him**

... he was referring to the other eleven men who were still with Jesus.

Now look again at what Luke says in **Luke 22:40**:

**When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."**

Now, once again, Matthews Gospel gives us additional details:

**Matthew 26:37-38**

**37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed.**

**38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."**

Now the way I understand this is that when they got to the garden, Jesus told the entire group of eleven faithful disciples:

**Pray that you may not enter into temptation.**

... but then Levi tells us that Jesus began to be grieved and distressed. Now we must understand a few things about this. First of all, Jesus was not afraid; He wasn't a coward. And I don't think Jesus was even fearful of what those evil men were going to do to Him when they took Him, and here's why. **John 13:3** says:

**Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,**

So, unlike us, Jesus was Omniscient, and here the Apostle John tells us that Jesus knew three very important things:

1. He knew that the Father had given all things into His Hands.
2. He knew that He had come from God.
3. He knew that He was going back to God.

One of the main reasons we fear, is because we don't know the future. So we fear the unknown. But, because He was God, there were no unknowns with Jesus. Jesus already knew what it was like to be in Heaven with God, and He knew that as soon as He died He would go back into Heaven with God. We don't know that. We trust that, and we believe that, and we have faith that the eternal reward that God has promised us is true, because we have come to understand that God cannot lie, and what God says is true. But that isn't knowledge, that is faith. Jesus didn't have faith about His Father or Eternity, Jesus had first-hand knowledge. And so Jesus had no fear of the future because He *controls* the future.

So Jesus understood perfectly that wicked men were going to arrest Him and take Him and brutally torture Him and then kill Him. And, in His fleshly Body, Jesus felt every blow that the Roman soldiers gave Him. He bled, His skin broke apart, He bruised, and it hurt Him real bad. But He didn't fear it. Jesus understood that He had to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy when the golden tongue Prophet said:

### **Isaiah 53:3-5**

**3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

**4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.**

And so Jesus knew that every blow that He received was to satisfy the Damnation that every elected sinner deserved. As these demonically motivated men beat the only sinless Man Who ever lived,

our souls were being set free. As they whipped the Prince of Life, the Fury of the Wrath of God against our greed, and covetousness, and lust, and lying, and murder, and theft, and idolatry, and the dishonoring of our parents, and breaking the Sabbath, and our willful rebellion against God, was being absorbed by Jesus in our place.

And so, because Jesus loved His Father, He was willing to go through this. So the pain and the anguish that He was about to go through was *not* what made Jesus go into the grief and distress, it wasn't even the horrific Death that He knew was coming. No, what caused Jesus to grieve and be distressed was knowing that in order to pay for the Salvation of every single sinner who has been chosen by God from before the foundation of the world to experience the beauty of Holiness and to see God in His Glory, God would have to impute every evil thought, every putrid deed, every wicked imagination, and every vile action that has ever been carried out by any of God's elect on Jesus, and Jesus would have to legally become pure sin. And for a perfectly sinless Being to become nothing but pure sin for the sake of unworthy sinners was the source of His grief and distress, because Jesus knew that as soon as God placed on Him the sins of us all, God could no longer be near to Jesus and would have to withdraw Himself. And that had never happened before.

You see, since before God made the world, Jesus and the Father have been in constant and continuous and perfect relationship. The love between the three Persons of the Trinity is hard to even grasp. They have perfect Unity and perfect Fellowship and perfect Love because They have perfect Knowledge of one another. And now Jesus is going to be made sin for us, and so that perfect Unity will be interrupted for the first time in all Creation. And that is bothering Jesus more than anything else.

Now keep in mind that as Jesus was made sin for us, that sinfulness is an *alien* sinfulness, it is an *external* sinfulness, a *forensic* sinfulness. In other words, Jesus was and is and always will be perfectly sinless on a *personal* level. He became sin for us on a *legal* or *forensic* level. So, as Jesus was on the Cross, dying for us, He remained perfectly sinless, Personally, while being sinful only through imputation.

And this is exactly the opposite as it is with us. We are, in reality, wicked sinners who are made righteous, only through imputation. At

the very moment of Justification, God takes the perfect and spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ, that He earned by living a perfectly sinless life, and God imputes or credits that Righteousness to us through the agency of faith alone. And it is that imputed Righteousness that allows us to enter into Heaven. So, at that moment, we hold a "dual status" before God:

We are personally still sinful and unworthy of anything that God does for us.

But *legally or forensically*- we are sinless because the spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ has been imputed to us

And the Latin phrase that signifies this mystery is:

Simil Justus et Peccator

... we are simultaneously Just or Righteous because of the imputation of Christ's Righteousness, and at the same time, we are still personally sinful. Jesus was personally sinless, but was Sinful only because of the imputation of our sins upon Himself. And it was this and the fact that this imputed sinfulness would force God to withdraw Himself as to why Jesus was in grief and distress.

Now, in Matthew's Gospel, it also gives us further insight into something that Jesus told these three men:

**Matthew 26:38b**

**... My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."**

Now this is the first time that Jesus had ever asked anyone to pray for Him. And evidently He didn't ask the other 8 men to pray for Him, just these three.

Now I have taught you before that all the Apostles were not created equal. They were all saved and they all did great things for Jesus and the Church. But some of them did more. And God used some more than others. We have already seen how that Jesus Himself called Peter the "protos", which meant that Peter was at the head of the Apostles, he was the first. So Peter was the "first among equals". Now

believing that doesn't make you Catholic, it makes you Biblical, because that is what the Bible says.

So according to **Luke 6**, there were three groups of four men each. And the first group was comprised of two sets of natural brothers, Peter and Andrew, and James and John, who were also called "the sons of Zebedee".

And so these four men made up the first group of Apostles. And yet, back in **Luke 9**, when Jesus was going to be transfigured, He only brought three of the four men of this first group. For some reason, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother was left out. Now we can speculate as to *why* Jesus did this, but the Scriptures don't tell us, and I am very reluctant to teach something that the Bible doesn't say.

And now, here again, as Jesus is being grieved and distressed over becoming sin for us and of God withdrawing His Presence from Jesus, once again, Jesus confides with these three men, Peter, James, and John, and leaves Andrew out.

So here is how it went down. All eleven of the remaining Apostles went with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane. All eleven saw that Jesus was grieving and in distress. And at the edge of the garden, Jesus says to all of them:

**Pray that you may not enter into temptation.**

... so all of them were told to pray. But, not just *any* prayer. Jesus told all of them to pray that they would not enter into temptation. Now why did Jesus say that? Notice that He didn't tell them to pray that they wouldn't sin, but so that they wouldn't enter into temptation.

So Jesus went to the Garden to pray. But now He commands His closet followers to pray that they would not enter into temptation. Not sin, but temptation. So Jesus was not asking them to pray about not committing adultery or of not coveting or of breaking the Sabbath or of idolatry. No, He was telling them to pray about not being overwhelmed by the temptation that was just about to happen.

But then, as Jesus says this, He leaves eight of the eleven at the edge of the Garden. And only Peter, James, and John go into the Garden with Jesus. And at some distance into the Garden, Jesus stops and He tells these three men:

## **Matthew 26:38b**

**... My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."**

So, this is an even *deeper* level of grief that He had at the edge of the Garden. So from this we know that this grief was progressive, it was getting worse and worse, it was getting heavier and heavier, it was becoming so all-consuming that, if it were possible, it could kill Him. Jesus was getting ready to be the Sacrifice for the sins of every single elected sinner throughout all time. Everything He had said and done up to this moment was now coming to a crescendo. The pressure and the tension must have been incredible.

Now to **"keep watch"** meant to pray and not sleep, or to pray without stopping, or to pray without any interruptions. You see they divided the night into watches back then, and to "keep watch" meant to pray fervently through your entire time. Now look at the last two words again:

**... with Me...**

Jesus is asking these men to "keep watch" with Him, or, in other words, to faithfully pray with Him or for Him. Now there is no record that He asked the others to pray for Him. Jesus told the eight to pray about not entering into temptation. But here, for the very first time, the Incarnate God is asking these three frail and sinful men, who evidently were His closet men, to pray with Him through this unbelievably difficult time, and to not fail to pray for Him. Now look again at **Luke 22:41:**

**And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,**

Dr. Luke tells us that Jesus went about a stone's throw away from these three men, and Jesus knelt down and He began to pray. Now a stone's throw is the distance that a normal person can throw an average rock, which is about 50-60 feet.

Now normally this would not be valuable because everything that can be done 50 feet away can be done close by. But evidently, the trees

in this Garden were closely packed together, and so going even fifty feet away provided some seclusion.

Now this is one of the rare moments in the entire Bible where Jesus actually knelt down to pray. We usually think about somebody praying when they are on their knees and have their eyes closed. The reality is that this posture is rare and reserved for intense times like this. The majority of instances of prayer in the Bible were done while standing up with eyes open, many times with hands raised up. The raising of hands was done primarily in the Bible as one would pray, not when singing or worshipping.

Now posture, and eyes closed or open, and hands raised or down is mostly irrelevant. The issue is prayer and what you are praying about, not what your posture is. However, there are times when it seems appropriate to kneel down as a sign of humility with eyes closed as a sign of reverence. I love to kneel down. In fact, when I was first saved, I had injured both knees in football, and kneeling was almost impossible. I begged God to heal my knees and allow me the privilege of bowing my knees before Him, and God answered that prayer and I spend more time on my knees in prayer than off of them. I also believe very strongly that there are "seasons" of prayer when God begins to burden your heart to spend long, protracted times in prayer, usually accompanied with fasting, where most of that time is spent prostrate on the floor or ground with your face in the dust. I value those times with God. I have also spent all night in prayer just slowly walking and pacing back and forth. But, however you are led to pray, the issue is prayer and *not* necessarily what position you get in. But here, this phrase would be better understood as Jesus *collapsing* to the ground, *falling* on his knees due to the intense anguish He is under.

So eight of the eleven were left at the edge of the Garden and told to pray that they would not enter into temptation. Then three of the eleven were taken some ways into the Garden and given additional and more intimate information, and then told to keep watch and pray with Jesus. And then Jesus Himself goes about another stone's throw deeper into the Garden and He falls to the ground on His Knees and prays.

Now once again Levi's account is helpful because in **Matthew 26:39** the Apostle says:

**And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."**

Levi tells us that the grief and distress was so overwhelming on Jesus at this point that He went about 50-60 feet further into the Garden away from these three men, and He literally fell on His Knees with His Face to the ground and prayed. Now this is the prayer of agony. This is intense, spiritual warfare against everything satan has thrown at Him. But look at *how* Jesus is praying:

**My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.**

Again, there is no reason to assume that Jesus was afraid, or that He was reluctant to be beaten, or having second thoughts about dying. None of this was what was bothering Him. In order to fulfill His Father's Will, all of the sins of all of God's elect had to be placed on Him, and at that moment, God the Father and God the Son would be separated for the first time. And that was almost more than Jesus could bear. God is so Holy and Sin is so repugnant that God cannot even be near it. And throughout all eternity God the Father had enjoyed perfect unity and harmony and fellowship and love with God the Son, and now that was going to end.

But, not merely a separation. Our sins on Jesus was going to cause the full Fury of God's Wrath to be poured out on Him as He hung on that Cross. And all of our sins would be forever damned because Jesus paid for them, and that allows God to show those who trust in Jesus only Mercy.

Jesus is begging God for another way. Jesus is absolutely committed to carrying out God's Will. But, because of the horror that awaits Him in God being separate from Him, Jesus is seeking another way to fulfill God's Plan. And so in this overwhelming grief and distress, Jesus cries out:

**My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;**



Is there another way I can obey You, and yet not have to become sin and have You leave Me? May I find another way to honor your Will, and yet not lose the contact with You that I have enjoyed since before the world was? Is there another way?

Now it is very important that we understand the dynamic that is going on here. Why is Jesus seeking another way? What is going on that Jesus is begging God for another way? You see, as sinners, we struggle with temptation because of our sinful and unholy flesh. We are a new creation, *incarcerated* in unredeemed flesh. And so, we are seduced by the remnants of our fallenness. So with us, our temptation has to do with us holding on to sin and not coming to righteousness. So we are tempted to hold on to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. We struggle because the power of evil is so strong in us. We struggle because the power of sin is innate to us, because the power of iniquity is intertwined in our being. We have unholy impulses residing in us. Our battle is to fight against our innate attraction to sin, to fight against our fallenness, and to strive to abandon it, and embrace righteousness and holiness and purity.

That was not Christ's Struggle. Jesus struggled with temptation in exactly the opposite way. He struggled because of His holy flesh. He struggled because He was totally devoted only to that which was pure and righteous and perfect. He struggled because the power of holiness was the only motive He had ever known in His eternal being; the only motive He had for every thought, every word, and for every act was absolute pure Holiness.

We struggle with three things, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. He struggled against three driving dominant, all-consuming, all pervading impulses, holy, holy, holy. So for us, we're struggling to abandon sin and embrace Holiness. But, for Jesus, He was being tempted to abandon Holiness and embrace sin, our sin, on the Cross. So it is just the opposite.

And this is completely incomprehensible to Him. This is repulsive and foreign to Jesus. Because He's not like us. He's not fighting against sinful impulses to be holy. He's fighting against holy impulses to be made sin. So satan is tempting Jesus to cling to His Holiness, just as he did when he tempted Him in the wilderness. Satan is tempting Jesus to cling to the right to be acknowledged as the Messiah, and to rule over all the kingdoms of this world, to remain pure and undefiled. But, to do

that, Jesus must avoid the Cross. He must avoid being made sin for us. He must disobey His Father's Will in order to maintain His perfect Purity. And so, He is seeking another way. Jesus has no intention of disobeying His Father, but He is seeking to try to be fully obedient while not having to be made sin and have God separate from Him.

Jesus was having to fight against His Own holy impulses. We have to fight against our own sinful impulses. We fight to hold on to God. He fights to let go of God. We fight to be joined to God. He fought against being separated from God. In the face of this immense inconceivable conflict that we can't even fathom, Jesus is thinking while fully concentrating on this conflict. He is thinking about His Own beloved Apostles whom He loves unto perfection, according to **John 13:1**, that they are going to struggle that same night with their own temptations, and they're going to have to be ready. And Jesus makes Himself ready through prayer, he comes to the place of full submission to God through prayer, and He knows they need to do the very same.

And the answer was "no". There was no other way for Jesus to do this. All of the sins of all of God's elect was going to have to be placed on Jesus, and for the first time, God the father and God the Son would be separated, and the Righteousness of God would force God to adjudicate all of these sins.

And so Jesus prayed the single most important prayer that can ever be prayed:

**... yet not as I will, but as You will.**

Jesus humbled Himself here more than anyone has ever humbled themselves. And His surrender to God's Will was greater because Jesus had more to lose. In order to obey God, Jesus had to become sin. And yet, right here, Jesus fully submitted Himself to His Father's Plan. And He did it through prayer. Jesus came to the place where He was willing to become pure sin and have God the Father abandon Him while screaming in agony on the Cross so we could be saved, through prayer.

And so, this is the single most important prayer that anyone could ever pray. Total surrender to God's Will. And how do you get to that place? Through agonizing in prayer. Not as I will, but as You (God) will. This kind of prayer shows full reliance on God' Sovereignty, and it shows full trust in that which God has called you to do. And you arrive

at that place through prayer. I hope you can see how vitally important prayer was to Jesus, and how important prayer is to us. But it didn't come easy. And we will see that, Lord willing, next week.

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.