

A Place Called Gethsemane

Mark Beard 2018

Text: Matthew 26:36-46 (NIV)

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹ "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Introduction

"Gethsemane was located just outside Jerusalem, across from a little brook named Kidron. At this particular time of the year the brook Kidron was a very full stream. There was a channel that was used to flow all of the excess and all of the things that had been offered at the temple down to the brook Kidron. So, all of the blood of the sacrificial animals was poured into that channel and it came down into the brook Kidron. This night, when Jesus and His disciples cross over that stream was blood-red. Do you think the Lord Jesus, as He looked at that blood-red stream, realized that in just a few hours His blood would be pouring from His body as He gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Whatever that may be, the Lord Jesus crosses over that stream and comes into a garden which is known as Gethsemane. Gethsemane means oil press. It must have been a place with a wall, with olive trees and in the center an olive press. It was here that the olives would be crushed so the oil might be given.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Son of God, the Savior of the world would soon be crushed like an olive in a press. The oil of salvation would begin to flow. There is probably no more sacred scene than is this place of Gethsemane. We get the first glimpse here of just how much Jesus suffered in order to be our Savior. We are, this morning, indeed on holy ground. It is midnight and on olive's brow, the star is dim that lately shone. 'Tis midnight in the garden now, the suffering Savior prays alone. There are many lessons which we can learn from this garden of Gethsemane experience. We learn the essence of prayer and what it means when you really pray. We learn

what the summit of all prayer is in this garden of Gethsemane. We learn lessons here on suffering.” --Jerry Vines

We learn many lessons in observing the contrasts between Jesus and the disciples which are crucial to understanding what it means to deny ourselves and follow Jesus Christ.

I. Gethsemane Was A Place for Jesus To Gain Strength for What Was Ahead.

A. Jesus’ desire to stand the ultimate test drove him to prayer.

B. The disciples desire to meet the needs of the flesh led them to sleep.

II. Gethsemane Was a Place for Jesus To Reaffirm His Commitment to The Father’s Will.

A. Doing the will of the Father drove Jesus to complete self-denial.

B. The disciple’s lack of focus on God’s will led the to seek their own desires.

Conclusion

Dennis Corrigan wrote, “Gethsemane teaches us that the kingdom of God is entered only through the denial of one's own will and the affirmation of the will of God. Therefore, the cross must stand central to an understanding of the kingdom. Since the essence of the kingdom is our obedience to the absolute will of God, we understand it only as we bring our own will to the foot of the cross. No self-will can live unchallenged in God's kingdom.” *Dennis Corrigan in Bridge Builder (Nov./Dec. 1988). Christianity Today, Vol. 33, no. 4.*