

The Memoirs of Peter/Book of Mark
Gethsemane! (Part 1)
Mark 14:32-42
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Tonight, in our study of the Gospel of Mark we come to Gethsemane. I have to tell you that as we open our Scripture and turn to this passage, I feel like we stand on the holy ground. I don't think any of us can ever truly fathom what went on there that night, but it's our responsibility, our duty, to try to understand as best we can. So, I invite you to read along with me. Mark 14, and we'll begin reading in verse 32:

They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will." And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again, He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. And He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

It's remarkable to me when I read that account that it was just about a half an hour before that Jesus prayed that majestic prayer in John 17 that we call the High Priestly Prayer. There's such a stark contrast between that prayer and the one that we have just read together. The first is marked by a sort of calm, loving communion with His Father. This one is marked by heart-wrenching anguish. The first prayer, John 17, is intercessory. It's for the Apostles and for those who would believe through their words. This prayer is intensely personal. It is for Himself. This week and, Lord willing, next Sunday night, we're going to work our way through this

passage. But we're going to do so a bit differently than we normally do, because you will see, as we study it together, that there are really, two distinct but related themes that are woven together throughout this account. One of those themes, and the most important one, has to do with Jesus and with His suffering for us. There were things that happened that night at Gethsemane that cannot and will not happen to any of us.

But the second theme that weaves its way through this passage has much to do with us. It has to do with the disciples and with their response to temptation in the severe trial in which they are finding themselves. And therefore, by application, it has to do with us as well. These two themes ebb and flow and overlap throughout this passage. On the one hand, we see Christ, and we see Him in His glory and in His suffering. We see Him in the beauty of His love for us. On the other hand, we see Christ counseling His disciples about how to handle the extreme temptation in which they find themselves, those two themes woven together.

What we're going to do tonight and, Lord willing, next Sunday night, is we're going to pull those two themes apart, and we're going to look at each of them separately. Tonight we're going to look at the primary theme: Jesus as Savior. We're going to see Him as He embraces the cross for His own and in obedience to His Father. And next week, Lord willing, we're going to look at this secondary theme, and that is Jesus as pattern, as He teaches us how to respond to temptation in the midst of life's most devastating trials.

So tonight, let's look at our Lord. Let's look at His suffering that has already begun in a garden called Gethsemane. It begins then—as we examine it together, I want to look at this theme as it works its way through this entire passage: Jesus as Savior. He willingly embraces the cross for His own (that's for us) and in obedience to His Father.

Let me say at the outset that I am convinced, as I trust you are, of the impeccability of Christ; that is, that as God it was impossible for Him to sin. But at the same time, what we must remember is that Jesus was absolutely as a human being able to be tempted, able to be tempted, temptable, but not able to sin. We saw that temptability at the beginning of His ministry back in chapter 1 during the 40 days of temptation, and at the end of those 40 days of the temptation and Jesus' complete victory over Satan.

Listen to what Luke says. This is a fascinating statement, because when we think of the temptation of Christ we primarily think of what? Those 40 days. It's as if God said, "Satan, OK, you can have at My Son for 40 days; but if He passes that test, then you're done with it." That

isn't the story at all. Listen to what Luke says in Luke 4:13, "When the devil had finished every temptation [for those forty days], he left Him until an opportune time."

You understand that Satan wasn't done tempting Jesus during those 40 days? Jesus faced a relentless onslaught of temptations throughout His life. But without question, the greatest temptation Jesus ever faced came on Thursday night of the Passion Week in a garden called Gethsemane.

Let's begin by looking at the unlikely setting of Jesus' struggle. Verse 32, "They came to a place named Gethsemane." John gives us a little more information about this in his Gospel. John 18:1-2, says,

When Jesus had spoken these words, [after the High Priestly Prayer] He went forth with His disciples [from the upper room] over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

Now just to remind you—we looked at this last time—but Jesus would have had His upper room discourse, the Last Supper, in the west upper side of the city, in the wealthy portion of the city where homes with upper large meeting rooms would have been built, almost certainly in this region. He would have then, with His disciples, left this region, come across the city, perhaps gone through the temple itself, out the eastern gate, and over to the Mount of Olives. That would have been the basic route that they would have followed that evening.

Here's a photograph that shows you that same basic impression but from the southwest not just from the south. And you can see there in the distance the Kidron Valley on the other side of the Temple Mount and then Gethsemane at the base of the Mount of Olives. Again, we looked at this last time, but for those of you who weren't here, this is a photograph of the area that we believe was the area of the Garden of Gethsemane. The Church of All Nations has been built there. It's at least in this general area.

Here is the Garden. There are some, I believe eight, old olive trees that are hundreds of years old. Most believe they probably were not there at the time of Christ because of the Roman destruction of the of the city prior to that, but it's possible. And here's another picture as well of those olive trees. If this is not the spot, then it was undoubtedly nearby, because it had to be

across the brook Kidron and at the base of the Mount of Olives.

It's likely that this garden belonged to one of Jesus' followers. Luke tells us that it was on the Mount of Olives, at the base of the Mount of Olives. And John implies that it was, as I said, at the base there just across the Kidron Valley. Apparently, this garden was surrounded by a stone wall or some sort of structure, because John tells us that they entered it, which implies some sort of structure, some sort of wall.

Mark tells us that the garden was called Gethsemane. The word "Gethsemane" is actually a Hebrew word that means "olive press." Of course, that implies that there were both olive trees and that there was a press there for removing the oil from the olives. Apparently, whenever Jesus and His disciples were in Jerusalem this garden had become a favorite spot of theirs, because Luke 22:39 says, "He came out and proceeded [from the upper room] as was His custom to the Mount of Olives." John writes, as we read a moment ago, "Jesus had often met there with His disciples."

So, once they arrived in this familiar place, notice what happens. Verse 32, "And He said to His disciples, 'Sit here until I have prayed.'" Now remember, at this point Jesus was with only eleven of the disciples. Judas had left them during the last supper; he is now in the process of going to arrange the Roman guard to come back and arrest Jesus. So, Jesus here tells eight of the disciples to sit down near the entrance of the garden and wait for Him until He's finished praying. I'm sure this had happened many times before. We've seen already in Mark's Gospel back in 1:35, and 6:46, other examples of Jesus praying.

We know from the other Gospels He had a regular pattern and habit of prayer: early in the morning, at times in the evening, sometimes all night on occasion. It was through His example that the Apostles eventually learned, as is recorded in Acts 6:3, that they should devote themselves to prayer. And so, He leaves the eight near the entrance of the garden.

And notice verse 33 says, "He took with Him Peter and James and John." This was that inner circle that Jesus often pulled aside for special privilege and for special opportunity. We've seen that several times already in Mark's Gospel. So, Jesus took along Peter and James and John, and the four of them walked farther into the garden together leaving the other eight disciples behind, back around the entrance to the garden. That's the setting.

Let's look, secondly, at the shocking description of Jesus' struggle. There is so much mystery in

this account. It's hard for us to imagine, isn't it? I mean you've walked with me through the Gospel of Mark. It's hard to imagine the majestic, glorious One that we've watched work miracle after miracle; that we have seen confront His enemies with absolutely, unwavering courage; that we have heard speak so pointedly about His approaching death and suffering—it's hard for us to imagine *that* Jesus like this.

As the four of them walked deeper into the garden, suddenly a remarkable change comes over our Lord. Verse 33, "He took with Him Peter and James and John, and [as they are going into the garden, from the time they left the eight until He arrives at the place where He wants to pray] [He] ... began to be very distressed and troubled." Those are shocking words to be said of our Lord. The Greek word translated "very distressed" means "to be alarmed," "to be shocked," "to be distressed." One commentator defines this word as "terrified surprise." And it says He was "troubled." The idea is He felt, He had a feeling of extreme anxiety.

If Peter, James, and John didn't notice this change that came over our Lord, He tells them about it. He doesn't hide it. Verse 34: "He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death.'" Literally, the Greek text says it this way, "overwhelmed with sorrow is My soul to the point of death." Overwhelmed with sorrow -is My soul to the point of death.

Obviously, the emphasis in what Jesus was saying is on that sense of being overwhelmed by sadness. And it was so intense, and this is where I think we can't fully appreciate what our Lord was enduring. It was so intense (this overwhelming sense of trouble and sorrow and shock and alarm) that it pushed Him to very limits of His human physical endurance. It was a sorrow so great that He said to His disciples, "It's about to crush the life out of Me."

Verse 34, He says to them, "Remain here and keep watch." [Matthew adds] "Watch with Me." [Jesus longed on the one hand for solitude to pray, but on the other hand He longed for the comfort and companionship of His friends. Verse 35,] "And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by."

Here Mark gives us a commentary of what was happening. Luke tells us that Jesus went on beyond the three disciples He'd taken with them—with Him about "a stone's throw." So, He's within earshot. He's within visual distance, probably. And then it says He "fell to the ground." Or as Luke puts it, "He knelt down and began to pray."

It was uncommon for people in the first century to kneel or to prostrate themselves. Most Jewish men would have prayed standing, and here is our Lord kneeling. But He doesn't stay in the kneeling position for very long. Matthew tells us that He soon "fell on His face." He prostrated Himself in the dust of that garden before His Father. And undoubtedly, as He had done many times before in this garden, Jesus began to pray.

But this was no ordinary night, and this was no ordinary prayer. Look at verse 36. "And He was saying, 'Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.'" It's interesting, because it appears that Mark as well as the other Gospel writers understood that Gethsemane was an absolutely critical moment in the life and ministry of Jesus. It is when He demonstrated most fully His full submission to the Father when He is confronted with what it will cost.

Now before we look at what He prayed in verse 36, I want you to see how He prayed. Turn with me to Luke's account, Luke 22. Luke 22:44. Here's how He prayed, "And being in agony He was praying very fervently...."

It's interesting, Hebrews 5 says that "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears." That happened throughout His life, apparently, according to the writer of Hebrews. But undoubtedly it happened here. Jesus is offering His prayers loudly with crying and tears.

J. Oswald Sanders writes, "As the powers of darkness closed in on Him and the imminence of the cross pressed upon Him, He found Himself in a conflict the like of which He had never before experienced."

Look at verse 44 again. Luke goes on to say, in this agony as He poured out His heart with loud crying and tears praying very fervently, "His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground." It's hard to know for sure what the Gospel writers intend for us, what Luke intends for us to understand here, because he uses the word "like." It may mean that Jesus' bloody sweat is simply a powerful word picture of His suffering, that it was actually just sweat, but he intends us to understand the intensity of it. But I think it's more likely intended to be taken absolutely literally.

There are historical accounts both in the past and even in recent history of people actually sweating blood. It is a dangerous condition known as "hematidrosis." Either through extreme

mental anguish or physical strain the capillaries near the skin dilate and burst, literally mixing blood and sweat together. Regardless, whatever Luke intends for us to understand, he intends for us to understand this, the incredible intensity of both Jesus' emotional and physical trauma at this moment.

In fact, it was so intense, look at verse 43: "Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him." That's shocking, really, because only twice in Jesus' life did an angel help Him that's recorded in Scripture. The first time was after the temptation in the wilderness: forty days without food, tempted by Satan at the beginning of His ministry. The other time is here in the temptation in the garden. I love the fact that the Father sent an angel. It shows that in the darkest times of His life, the Father's love for Him had not waned. In spite of what Jesus was about to endure, the Father's love had not changed, and it would not change.

Now, you've seen how Jesus prayed, let's go back to Mark and look at what He prayed. What was Jesus praying about? Verse 36: "He was saying, 'Abba! Father!'" Let's stop there for a moment, because that's a fascinating expression. "Abba" is an Aramaic word, an everyday Jewish term in the first century that was usually used within the intimacy of a family. It includes the ideas of intimacy and love as well as respect. You've probably heard some people say this is like the English word "daddy." It's really not. It's a word that has more respect to it than that. Probably the closest English equivalent is a word like "papa." "Abba! Father!" It's interesting. He uses an Aramaic word "abba" and a Greek word "pater" for father. Together, "Abba! Father!" that only occurs three times in the New Testament, here, in Romans 8, and in Galatians 4.

Paul apparently picked up on this expression of our Lord. Because you see, in addition to Hebrew, our Lord probably also spoke both Aramaic, the language of Palestine in the first century, and Greek, which was the trade language of the first century world. And so, it seems to me, likely, that in this moment of extreme emotion both terms for God poured out of His soul. And Paul later adopted it as well and tells us to cry out "Abba! Father!" Papa, Father.

He says, "All things are possible for you." Jesus was fully confident in God's omnipotent sovereignty. He said, "Father you are in control, and You are capable of doing whatever is in Your will to do." That's a great place to start in prayer, isn't it? "I know You're all-powerful, and I know You're in charge, and I know You can do whatever it is You want to do."

And in response to that, verse 36, He goes on to say, "Remove this cup from Me." Remove this

cup from Me. Again, you have to put it at the context of all that we've seen already about the intensity of the anguish and trouble that our Lord was going through, the loud crying and tears, and the pouring out of His sweat mixed with His own blood under the stress of that moment. And in that moment, here is the heart of Jesus' prayer, "Remove this cup from Me." Now notice, it's described in two different ways. In verse 35 by Mark and ultimately by Peter, it's described as "the hour." But by Jesus, when we get the actual words of His prayer, we're told that He said the "cup." "Remove this cup from Me."

Now those two terms, the "hour" and the "cup," are essentially synonymous, but there is a nuance of difference between them. And I think it's important for you to understand this. By the "hour," we're talking about a predetermined moment, season, or time, a sovereignly determined time in which a specific event will occur. John loves this expression, and he uses it in John 2 to refer to the hour to perform a certain sign, the hour in which Jesus will perform a certain sign: in John 5, the hour to awaken those who are spiritually dead; in John 5, a future hour in which He will raise all the physically dead; and in John 13:1 the hour for Jesus to depart from this world. It's that last hour that Jesus is referring to.

And it's this one, John 12:23, the hour to be glorified in His death and resurrection. That's the hour about which Jesus is praying, the hour to be glorified in His death and resurrection.

Now that's the "hour," but what about the "cup?" What is that referring to? The "cup" is specifically referring to what will happen during that sovereignly appointed hour. So, the hour refers to the appointed time, The cup refers to what's going to happen during that time. Obviously, the issue isn't the container. The cup, of course, stands for the contents of the cup. It describes specific events that Jesus will face during that hour, that appointed time.

So, what exactly was the content of this cup that Jesus had to drink during His death and about which He's now asking the Father to remove? Throughout church history scholars and theologians have debated this issue and have essentially offered—there are variations on these—but essentially they've offered four answers to that question. What exactly is the cup?

Some would say it's the desertion of Jesus by His friends and His disciples. Others would say no, that's too trivial, lots of people have endured that. It was the physical pain and suffering that He was anticipating, the death by scourging and crucifixion, and it's-the relentless waves of pain that came with such a death.

But think about that for a moment. Many followers of Jesus Christ have faced torture with joy, and certainly without the anguish we see in the heart of Christ in the garden. Others would say, well, it's physical death. Again, when you think about that, there have been countless Christian martyrs who have gone to their death without this kind of spiritual struggle. Some would see all of those combined. I think all of those fall far short of the real answer. Jesus has been anticipating these and telling His disciples about these for months.

So, what exactly was the cup? What's going on in the garden? I think the best explanation of the cup comes from how the expression is used in the Old Testament. And it is most often used of the wrath of God. That's the cup. The concept of the cup points back to the Old Testament. There Scripture points to the contents of the cup being the wrath of God poured out.

Let me show you several references. Turn back with me to Psalm 75. And again, these are not direct prophecies about Jesus drinking the cup, but they show you the Old Testament context of this expression. Psalm 75:8, As God abases the proud, exalts the righteous, as He brings judgment, Notice verse 7 of Psalm 75,

“... God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another. For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.”

It's a powerful word picture. The idea here is that the wicked are going to be made to drink from a cup that God holds as Judge. And that cup has in it, in its contents—it is His wrath against sin. And the Psalm pictures the wicked drinking this cup down to the dregs, enduring all of the wrath of God against sin.

Look with me at Isaiah. Isaiah the prophet comes to this theme as well in Isaiah 51 as he speaks of the children of Israel and their sin and how God's dealt with it and will deal with it. He says in Isaiah 51:17, “Rouse yourself! Rouse yourself! Arise, O Jerusalem, You who have drunk from the Lord's hand the cup of His anger. The chalice of reeling you have drained to the dregs.”

Look down in verse 22. Verse 21, let' start there, “Therefore, please here this, you afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine: Thus says your Lord, the LORD, even your God who contends for His people, ‘Behold, I have taken out of your hand” [Here God's removing His wrath.I've] “taken out of your hand the cup of reeling, The chalice of My anger;” [and] You will never drink it again.” [And] “I will put

it into the hand of your tormentors.” [You see this picture?]

Look over in Jeremiah’s prophecy, Jeremiah 25. Again, prophesying against the children of Israel, “Moreover I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.” And He goes on to describe all that He’s going to do then to Babylon. Babylon will be judged beginning in verse 12. But go down to verse 15.

For thus the LORD, the God of Israel, says to me, “Take this cup of the wine of wrath from My hand and cause all the nations to whom I send you to drink it. They will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.” [And] “Then I took the cup from the LORD’s hand and” [I] “made all the nations to whom the Lord sent me [to] drink it.” [So, you get the picture. This is the image in the Old Testament of the cup.]

Now with that in mind, go back to Mark 14. Jesus was praying that if it were possible, if it were possible for the work of redemption to be accomplished without the full brunt of the wrath of God and without the terrible alienation and separation from God, then remove the cup. Remove the cup.

So, what was creating such spiritual and physical trauma in our Lord? It was not desertion by His friends. It’s wasn’t the anticipation of physical pain or even death. Instead, it was something that you and I can’t begin to really comprehend. The perfect, holy, spotless One, who had never before known sin, was about to have all the sins of every person who would ever trust in Him credited to His account. Second Corinthians 5:21 “He” [that is God] “made Him” [that is Christ] “who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.”

That doesn’t mean that Jesus became a sinner on the cross. It means that He bore the guilt and the shame of sin. We understand that, don’t we? We understand what it’s like to bear the guilt and the shame of our own sin, and we know how oppressive and devastating that guilt and shame can be in our own hearts. But folks, we cannot begin to image what it would be like for the Holy One, who had never known the guilt and shame of sin, to suddenly bear the guilt and shame of every wretched sinner who would ever follow Him. Think about it. Not just the guilt and shame of one person’s sin, but the guilt and shame of every person who would ever trust in Him, all at one moment, like an inverted pyramid resting on His shoulders.

But it wasn't merely the weight of sin and shame that troubled our Lord, it was much more. It was the wrath of God against those sins. We understand, the Bible is very clear. Your sins and mine deserve God's eternal wrath and punishment. There's no question about that, but we cannot contemplate what it would be like to endure the wrath of God for our own sins. In fact, I don't know if you've ever even contemplated this, but imagine for a moment that you had not experienced the grace of God and that you will one day leave this life and awaken in the torments of eternal hell with the reality that there is no hope forever, that you will bear the weight and the guilt and the punishment, the wrath of God against your sins forever. We can't begin to contemplate what that would really be like, and if our minds start going there, it's terribly frightening.

But what must it've been like for Jesus during those hours on the cross to have endured the wrath of God, not merely for one person's sin but for millions, perhaps billions, who would come to trust in Him? We cannot imagine what it would be like for the eternal Son of God, who had from eternity past enjoyed nothing but unbroken communion with His Father, to suddenly be cut off; to experience utter alienation and separation; to have the Father turn His back on His Son and to treat Him as if He were, in fact, a sinner; for Him to cry out "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me."

J. Oswald Sanders writes, "There will always be mystery in the agony of Gethsemane, because the mystery of the hypostatic union, that union of His two natures, is involved. There is no parallel between His sufferings and those of the martyrs, who were often exultant as they approached the hour of martyrdom, There was no vicarious element in their sufferings. They suffered and died after He had removed the guilt and exhausted the penalty of their sins. For them there was no hiding of the Father's face. That night in the garden as Jesus began to see the reality of what lay before Him, He prayed, 'Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me.' But He ends His prayer in verse 36 with these words, "Yet not what I will, but what You will."

As horrible as the prospect of personally experiencing God's wrath against every sin of every sinner who would ever believe and the separation from God that that sin deserved and inherited, Jesus was still willing. So, don't misunderstand Jesus' struggle. Never once did He contemplate refusing to go to the cross and refusing to suffer God's wrath if that were God's will. His prayer was "if possible." "If it's in keeping with Your will, Father, and if My prayer is not according to Your will, then whatever the cost, Your will be done."

Now that brings us to a third part of this drama, and that is Jesus' profound concern for His disciples. We're going to look at verses 37-41 in more detail next week, but I just want you to see this one theme in them. Three times during that somewhere between an hour and two hours of time, our Lord interrupted His soul-wrenching prayers to return to the three disciples who made up the inner circle.

The first time comes in verse 37. He came and found them sleeping, so He tells them to "keep watching" [verse 38] "and praying." Verse 39, "Again" [for the second time] "He went away and prayed, saying the same words. And" ... "He came" [again] "and found them sleeping." Verse 41, "... He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting?"

Have you ever wondered why Jesus came back these three times to His disciples? Did He go there to sort of seek them out for Himself? Was it because He needed them? No. He came back those three times during His greatest moment of anguish out of concern for them. He comes back and tells them how to guard their own hearts. We'll look at that next week. I am shocked and amazed at that.

Let's just be honest with ourselves. When we find ourselves in our greatest trauma and turmoil, the last thing in the world we're thinking about is others. And yet here's our Lord relentlessly concerned for His own. He came back those three times for them. One writer says, "The remarkable element in the scene is that in the midst of an unparalleled agony, Jesus twice more came to look after His three vulnerable disciples and to warn them of their danger of failure in the struggle which was about to overwhelm them." I love that. If Jesus, in the midst of His darkest moment, was concerned for His own, don't you ever think for a moment He isn't concerned for you.

The passage finishes with Jesus' renewed resolve to drink the cup. Notice what He says in the middle of verse 41, "It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners." The struggle in Gethsemane—by the time He gets to the ending of the third prayer, the struggle is over. There is now nothing in Jesus' heart except perfect peace and trust. Through his communion with the Father and through the angelic messenger, Jesus has been strengthened and comforted in the Father's love. And now He's ready.

Now, He says "It is enough." It's very hard for us to know what Jesus meant for sure. There have been various options suggested. Some say it means enough sleep: it's time for you to wake

up, it's time for us to go. Some have said it's enough time, "the hour has come." Others would say it's enough prayer: the issue about which I have prayed is now settled, and we need to move on. Jesus now knows that the hour that He prayed would pass is not going to pass. "The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Verse 42, "[So] get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!" You know what is really shocking (when you think about it from a human stand point about that verse) is Jesus says, let's "get up, [let's] be going"—but, but, going where? If you and I knew that the one who was going to betray us and 600 Roman soldiers were coming, we would want to go the opposite direction. Jesus isn't running away; He's not leaving the city; instead, He goes to meet the one who betrays Him. Remarkable, remarkable scene.

So, what are we to learn from this part of our study, lessons about our Lord as Savior in this passage? First of all, we see His humanity. Perhaps nowhere else in all the Gospels do we see the true humanity of our Lord as we do here in the garden. His agonizing response was not the response of the eternal Son of God, it was the response of the fully human Jesus. He was made like His brethren, Hebrews says, in all things except for sin. He's just like us, fully human. He knows, Hebrews says, and He understands because He experienced it.

Secondly, we see in this passage Jesus' perfect obedience. This was the final test for Jesus. It was His greatest temptation, because no other human being could ever know the temptation of a holy person being tempted to avoid becoming judgment for the sins of the world. Nobody's ever been there. Nobody else has ever dealt with that. In Gethsemane, Jesus endured what has never been and never will be experienced by anyone else. It was a temptation that you and I cannot even begin to imagine. But here's the point to remember, He was obedient. Thousands of years before, in a garden, one man was disobedient and plunged the entire race into sin and death; and now, in a garden, the Obedient One initiates the process which will be ended on the cross. Later that same day, He was obedient unto death.

Here's how Philippians puts it: "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross." He obeyed the Father when not a single one of His disciples did. His was a perfect obedience in every circumstance, even the worst possible circumstance. And what's remarkable about that is 2 Corinthians 5:21, goes on to say that that perfect obedience has been credited to us, God the Father sees us as if we had lived that life of perfect obedience.

But the thing that really jumps off the page in the story (as far as a lesson we learn about our Lord and Savior) is Jesus' voluntary suffering. Here's the heart of what lies behind the struggle in the garden. You ever ask yourself why God allowed this to happen this way? Listen to William Hendriksen, +

Why Gethsemane at all? Why could not God have arranged it in such a way that at the very entrance of the garden, Jesus would immediately have been arrested? Why all the agony, the prayers, the bloody sweat? Could not the answer be as follows? To establish for all time that the obedience which Jesus rendered was not forced upon Him against His will but was voluntary. He was actually laying down His life for the sheep. That wholehearted sacrifice in total obedience to the Father's will was the only kind of death capable of saving the sinner. He had to be willing to voluntarily lay down His life in your place and in my place.

Yes, Jesus struggled in the garden. He struggled with the personal cost of His substitution for sinners, but don't miss the larger point. Having seen, that night, the complete and total horror of what His death for sin and for sinners meant, He understood. He got it. He knew. And yet He volunteered to go on for you and for me.

Turn with me to Hebrews 5. The writer of Hebrews makes much of our Lord's obedience in this way. Hebrews 5:7, let's start there.

In the days of His flesh, [obviously talking about His entire earthly life, but clearly this is true in Gethsemane] He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Now, don't think that Jesus was disobedient earlier in His life. That's not the point. The point is He was always obedient in one sense, He always did the Father's will, He always obeyed God's law. But as He grew—just like any person does as they grow from infancy into childhood and from childhood into adolescence and from adolescence into adulthood, they are faced with new kinds of temptations. And Jesus in every stage of life showed that He had learned full and complete obedience to the Father. He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. "And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."

Through His ordeal in Gethsemane, He manifested in yet another way, in a more extreme temptation than He had ever faced, His obedience to the Father. And it was that perfect obedience through the worst that, according to verse 9, allowed Him to become “to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.”

Listen, the only reason you and I can sit here tonight with a hope of heaven, a hope of forgiveness, a hope of being in God’s presence someday, is because Jesus submitted to the Father at the worst point of temptation in the garden. He volunteered to suffer even knowing fully what it would cost. And He did it for you. And He did it for me. What a Savior! Let’s pray together.

Our Father, we are staggered by what we have read and studied tonight. It’s really beyond our full grasp. But Lord, what we do understand drives us to fall on our face before You in complete and utter gratitude that You would offer Your Son in this way; and gratitude to our Lord that He would suffer in such profound ways for us that He would move forward knowing what the cross meant, knowing what was coming, knowing the cup that He would have to drink and drain to its dregs every last drop of Your wrath against our sins.

Thank You, O God, that He volunteered to submit to that purpose for us. O God, help us to live no longer for ourselves but for Him who loved us and who gave Himself for us.

We pray in Jesus name, Amen.