

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: Christ the King

Outline:

- Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)
- Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King's baptism.
- Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)
- Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)
- Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)
- Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.
- Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.
- Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.
- Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.
- Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.
- Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.
- Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.**
- Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

Matthew has presented many credentials showing that Jesus is indeed the Christ – the prophesied Messiah as seen in the OT Scriptures. Israel, led by her religious leaders, rejected the truth claims of Christ which led to the high drama confrontations of the Passion Week which climaxed in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on what we know as “Good Friday”.

The whole background of what we are studying needs to be understood through the lens of Matthew 1:21 and 20:28.

Slide # 2

Matthew 1:21 (NKJV)

21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for **He will save His people from their sins.**

Matthew 20:28 (NKJV)

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and **to give His life a ransom for many.**

In our study we are on the night before the crucifixion. Jesus has just instituted “***The Lord’s Supper***” and foretold of ***Peter’s imminent denial*** which Peter vehemently denied would happen.

And that brings us to the Garden of Gethsemane where we find one of the most moving scenes in the entire ministry of Jesus.

No one can approach this account of the Garden of Gethsemane without realizing that he is walking on holy ground.

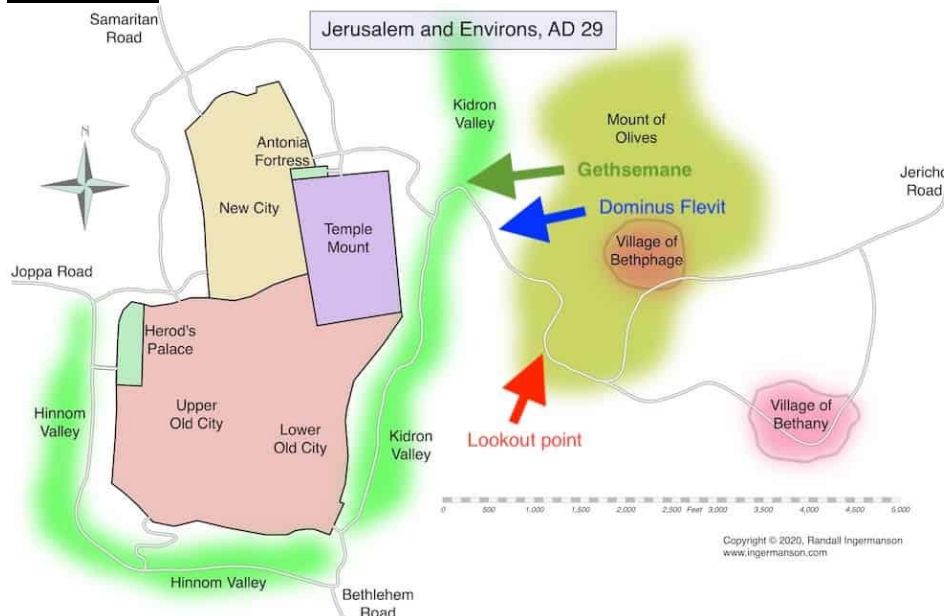
– **William MacDonald**

Matthew 26:36–46 (NKJV)

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.”

Gethsemane was on the slopes of the Mount of Olives separated from Jerusalem by the Kidron valley. In Luke 22:39-46 it is called “the Mount of Olives” and John 18:1 calls it “a garden”.

Slide # 3



Luke 22:39-40 indicates that it was Christ's custom to come here which would account for Judas knowing exactly where to find Him (Jn. 18:2).

The word "Gethsemane" literally means "oil press". This area was covered with Olive trees. The fruit from the trees was put in "oil presses" to extract oil from it. Appropriately this was the place of "the crush" and it was here that Jesus felt the press of His soul in an unparalleled way. This was the place of the press.

It was here that the shadow of the cross hung over Jesus in a horrific fashion. It was here that Jesus experienced "the dark night of the soul". And it was here that we are taught how to cope with "the dark night of the soul" as seen in the importance of PRAYER. How did Jesus prepare His soul for the greatest trauma and drama of all time? He prepared Himself in PRAYER. There is a great lesson here!

As they came to the entrance of the garden Jesus instructed most His disciples to sit there while He went on a little distance from them to pray.

Footnote: A garden of ancient olive trees remains in this area to this very day which I can personally testify to as having seen. Some of these old trees are thought to be between 1000 and 2000 years old. It is remarkable to stand there and think that this may have been very close to the very area where Jesus had His "Garden of Gethsemane" experience.

Slide # 4



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

Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and John) are often referred to as "The inner circle".

They were with Jesus on special occasions. They were all three at the mount of transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-9; Mk. 9:2-13; Lk. 9:28-36); they were allowed to uniquely see Jesus raise the daughter of Jairus from the dead (Mt. 9:18-25; Mk. 5:35-43; Lk. 8:40-56).

It was these three who were the closest to Jesus and in the “dark night of the soul” experience Jesus wanted them close. We would expect them to be the most understanding and sympathetic during this most difficult time.

But you know what sometimes those closest to you let you down. Sadly, being human means that people cannot always be counted on.

Jesus left the 8 at the entrance but then going on a little further with the inner circle of the 3 Jesus began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

The word “**sorrowful**” (Gk. lypeisthai) depicts the idea of “**deep grief**”, and “**deeply distressed**” (Gk. ademonein) is the idea of **greatly troubled**. It was obvious that Jesus was beginning to experience extreme anguish. And they didn’t have to wonder because Jesus plainly told them...

38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

At some point Luke 22:41 says Jesus went “about a stone’s throw beyond them”. A stone’s throw is generally considered to be about 70 yards.

The phrase, “even to death” emphasizes extreme inner turmoil that is so overpowering that it feels like it is going to kill you. No one ever felt the keen battle with sin on the level that Jesus did. Truly He was “A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3). And because of the ultimate anguish Jesus experienced in spiritual warfare, He can relate to our suffering in the battle.

Slide # 5

Hebrews 4:15–16 (NKJV)

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot **sympathize** with our weaknesses, but was in **all points tempted as we are**, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Jesus can relate to our human struggles. He can relate to human weakness – although He never succumbed to sin. Still, He can relate and sympathize with our struggles.

There is an old Hymn called, “No Not One”. The refrain goes like this:

Jesus knows all about our struggles,
He will guide till the day is done;
There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus,
No, not one! No, not one!

Slide # 6

Hebrews 5:7–8 (NKJV)

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with **vehement cries and tears** to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,
8 though He was a Son, yet **He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**

Jesus learned to submit in the darkest of times – even when humanly speaking He didn’t feel like it. Many commentators think that the phrase “***even to death***” harks back to and reflects the refrain of Psalm 42:5, 6, 11; and Psalm 43:5.

Slide # 7

Psalm 42:5 (NKJV)

5 Why are you **cast down, O my soul**? And why are you **disquieted** within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

Psalm 42:7 (NKJV)

7 Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; **All Your waves and billows have gone over me.**

In this “death-like” experience of the soul Jesus instructed the inner circle to “Stay here and watch with Me.” “Watch” literally means “to stay awake” but is closely connected with the emphasis on PRAYER.

But in particular note the emphasis on “with Me” here in verse 38 and also in verse 40. Jesus desired them to be “with Him” in the horror of this experience.

Sometimes when you are in “the dark night of the soul” there is nothing more important than just having those you love and trust be WITH you in the experience. They don’t even have to say anything, just the reality of WITNESS ministers on a level that defies words. Jesus in effect was just asking that they be ALERT AND WITH HIM IN PRAYER.

I think the very worst of the cross experience was the alienation that Jesus experienced from God the Father. It wasn’t the physical experience (although horrific), rather it was the spiritual experience of being separated from God.

39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

The phrase, “fell on His face” emphasizes the intensity of the moment as it expresses overwhelming distress. We see here the humanness of Jesus.

In His state of humility, Jesus set aside the independent use of His divine attributes and functioned as a completely dependent servant taking His direction and doing only the will of the Father (cf. Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; Phil. 2:8). In this state Jesus in Matthew 24:36 acknowledged His self-confessed ignorance saying that even He as the Son did not know the day nor the hour. On some level we seem to have something similar here.

Jesus knew He was born to go to the cross. He knew what the Scripture said. He Himself repeatedly said this was going to happen. Yet, as the reality of the cross pressed in on Him we see the very human side of Jesus as He says, “***My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me***”.

In the intensity of the moment this is how He humanly felt. It was so overwhelming and daunting that humanly speaking He wondered if there was any other way the salvation of the world could be accomplished.

This proposition put forth by Jesus serves to show that there was no other way. Jesus knew this, but humanly speaking it was so overwhelming that He said, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” This was God’s plan and there was no plan “B”. If salvation was to be accomplished it had to happen by way of the cross!

A KEY in understanding what is happening here is to properly understand what Jesus meant by “this cup”.

Although facing a gruesome death would be daunting for any human being there have been many martyrs who faced death with great steadiness and peace. The death of Christ was no normal physical death! It was totally unique involving so much more than any other death.

The view that says “**the cup**” was that Christ feared premature death at the hand of Satan in the garden loses all credibility because in John 18:11 Jesus plainly says “the cup” came from the Father and not Satan.

Furthermore, Jesus was very clear that no one could take His life from Him, but rather He voluntarily laid it down (Jn. 10:17-18).

God may have given Him an exhaustive view of what was before Him so that His sacrificial death could be fully obedient and fully voluntary. To go blindfolded is to go as a victim, not a gracious, obedient volunteer. In Gethsemane that blindfold came off. It was when Jesus saw the full force of His suffering that He exercised full obedience, offered with full freedom, with full knowledge, with full willingness. ...In His human nature, He recoiled from the prospect and prayed for deliverance from it. But since God the Son came to do the will of God the Father, He obeyed His Father. – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

Slide # 8

Philippians 2:8 (NKJV)

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and **became obedient** to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

The “cup of God” in the Scriptures is used figuratively either of God’s blessing (Ps. 16:5; 23:5) or of His wrath, but mostly of His wrath (cf. Ps. 75:8; also, Ps. 11:6; Isa. 51:17, 19, 22; Jer. 25:15-16, 27-29; 49:12; 51:57; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 23:31-34; Hab. 2:16; Zech. 12:2; Job 21:20; Ps. 60:3; Isa. 63:6; Obad 16). In context here the “cup” would clearly seem to represent the wrath of God experienced by Jesus as the sin of the world was placed on Him. “Cup” and “wrath” consistently go together.

Slide # 9

Revelation 14:10 (NKJV)

10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the **wrath of God**, which is poured out full strength into **the cup of His indignation**. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

Revelation 16:19 (NKJV)

19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her **the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.**

In our natural state we are under the WRATH of God.

Slide # 10**John 3:36 (ESV)**

36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but **the wrath of God remains on him.**

If you are not a believer in Christ the WRATH of God hovers over you and at some point it will fall on you with full force if you don't come to a saving faith in Jesus. But the good news is that Jesus on the cross took our place and bore the punishment that we deserve.

Slide # 11**Romans 5:9 (NKJV)**

9 Much more then, having now been **justified by His blood**, we shall be **saved from wrath through Him.**

There is a 50 dollar word that denotes the removal of God's wrath. Do you know what it is? It is the word "propitiation". It means "to satisfy" and at the cross God's wrath against us was satisfied. God accepted Christ's sacrifice as a worthy payment/satisfaction for sin.

Slide # 12**Romans 3:25–26 (NKJV)**

25 whom God set forth as a **propitiation by His blood, through faith**, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,
26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be **just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

2 Cor. 5:21 says, "[God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us". Gal. 3:13 says Christ became a curse for us. Hab. 1:13 says that God cannot look upon sin.

God is light and in Him is no darkness at all and so He can have no fellowship with sin (1 Jn. 1:5). It making Jesus sin the Father was completely separated from the Son which as I say was the worst part of the experience of the cross.

Slide # 13

Isaiah 53:10–11 (NKJV)

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

Hence, the most satisfying explanation of the cup refers to the divine wrath which Christ would incur at the cross as He became man's sin-bearer. This experience during which God for a time was separated from His Son, gave rise to the awful cry of Mt 27:46 [*"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*]. If one man's sin can cause him bitter grief when he feels estrangement from God, how incomparable must have been the anguish of Jesus who knew what it meant to assume the guilt of all [mankind]. – **Wycliffe Bible Commentary**

cup. A symbol of deep sorrow and suffering. Here it refers to His Father's face being turned away from Him when He who had no sin was made sin (i.e., a sin offering) for us (see 27:46; 2 Co. 5:21).

– **NIV Study Bible**

Note that in His humanness Jesus said, ***"if it is possible let this cup pass from Me"*** but then instantly in the same breath also said, ***"nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*** That denotes total submission. There was no rebel resistance, only holy obedience.

And we see here tremendous mystery. Jesus as the God-Man still had His own will and yet was totally aligned with the will of God the Father. As God they are ONE and yet they both have their own will. There is DEEP mystery here. In the Tri-une God of the Bible we have three distinct persons and yet they represent the unity of the ONE true GOD. We have a God so profound we can't figure Him out. We just bow before Him!

Jesus asked "if it is possible" and what was the answer?

There was none; the heavens were silent. By this eloquent silence we know that there was no other way for God to justify guilty sinners than for Christ, the sinless Savior, to die as our Substitute.

– **William MacDonald**

40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?”

Jesus was in the most intense troubling time of His life and His disciples were sleeping oblivious to this most momentous hour in history.

Peter, often the self-appointed spokesman for the group had just shortly before this declared that he would never deny Christ, and of course, then the rest of the disciples also chimed in (v. 35). But if you are going to assume that position then prepare to be called out for it in failure.

Jesus very specifically called out Peter, but it is addressed plurally to them all when Jesus said, “**What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?**”

Peter had emphatically declared he could be counted on even to die for the Lord, but here he was failing to prayerfully stay awake for even one hour. In the time of Christ’s greatest need Peter who had affirmed that he was all in could not even stay awake.

We dare not condemn them when we think of our own prayer lives; we sleep better than we pray, and our minds wander when they should be watching. – **William MacDonald**

Again, note the emphasis on “with Me”.

While many truths can be derived from a study of this passage, the overwhelming impression is one of the loneliness of Jesus in His hour of crucifixion. – **John Walvoord**

41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

What a profound verse – it knows us – Jesus knows us! Here Jesus clearly connects watching with prayer. To remain spiritually vigilant is to be prayerful. Here Jesus indicates that prayerful vigilance is the key to spiritual victory and not falling prey to temptation.

The way to be spiritually strong is to handle life with prayer. When facing a major crisis point the way to handle it is with prayer.

When life becomes more intense we should handle it with more intense prayer. This is the great example and model of our Lord. This is how to properly deal with human weakness. We can only compensate for our weakness through PRAYER.

Jesus at this point was addressing only the disciples who were true sincere believers. Judas had defected and was gone away on betrayal so this statement doesn't apply to him. As true disciples, their spirit was indeed willing.

When Peter said, "I will never be made to stumble" his spirit was indeed willing (v. 33). When Peter said, "I will not deny You" his spirit was indeed willing. And when all the other disciples also said the same, they too were indeed willing in their spirit (v. 35). They were all well intentioned. They all had good hearts in that sense.

But good intentions only take you so far and they cannot make up for human weakness. As Jesus said, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." It is because of human weakness that we need the strengthening of prayer. We need to depend upon God. In our humanness, we will surely fall and fail. We need help!

Even Jesus in His humanness needed to pray. Even He needed to look to God for the strength needed to faithfully deal with the great challenge before Him. He handled it with prayer and was faithful. The sleepy disciples were prayerless and therefore failed miserably. Prayer makes all the difference.

Jesus taught us to pray...

Slide # 14

Matthew 6:13 (NKJV)

13 And **do not lead us into temptation**, But **deliver us** from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.

The sense of leading is that of guarding or guiding in such a way that we do not fall into temptation and are thus overcome by it. We are always in danger. We need constant help. We need to constantly be in prayer looking to God to strengthen and keep us.

In terms of the disciples here...

Their temptation was to succumb to physical sleep and so fail in their responsibility to support Jesus. It may point also to the temptation to deny Jesus when He is lead away to the cross (cf. vv. 31-35).

– *ESV Study Bible*

42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

Again, we see the humanness of Jesus and yet His total submission to the will of the Father. This mission was totally horrible to the point that humanly speaking Jesus did not want to do it, and yet was yielded to the will of the Father.

This serves to show us just how indescribably difficult it was to go to the cross. We can’t even begin to imagine what Jesus went through to secure our salvation.

In the first petition (v. 39) the conditional clause is positive; in verses 42 and 44 it is negative, expressive of Jesus’ growing awareness that the cup will not be taken away until He has emptied it.

– *Evangelical Commentary On The Bible*

43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

Once again Jesus found them sleeping. This time He did not wake them.

Their **sleeping and resting** was in stark contrast to His agonizing (v. 37) and praying to the point of exhaustion and perspiration (Luke 22:43–44). He was lonely, for though the disciples were nearby, they were useless in their intercession.

– *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

We note that it is not recorded that God answered Jesus which in effect affirmed that there was no other option as we have noted. But in this process, in a sense, there was an answer as brought out by Luke.

Slide # 15

Luke 22:43 (NKJV)

43 Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.

This reminds me of when Paul repeatedly asked the Lord to remove his thorn in the flesh and the Lord told him, “My grace is sufficient for you” (2 Cor. 12:9). The Father in this case gave Jesus the strengthening grace that He needed in providing an angel to minister to Him.

God the Father would not remove the cup but He did provide a strengthening angel to sustain Jesus in the strain of it all.

And then after the angel strengthened Jesus Luke goes on to emphasize that the agony of the experience continued beyond what we can comprehend.

Slide # 16

Luke 22:44 (NKJV)

44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

So fervent was this prayer session that Christ’s “sweat became like great drops of blood”. We are not quite sure what this means. It is noted that word “like” indicates similarity. So it could mean that His perspiration was so profuse that it was like blood spilling on the ground and not necessarily blood itself.

But again, it is not totally clear. However, it is clear that the struggle was extremely intense.

44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Praying the same thing is not necessarily vain repetition. In Matthew 6:7 Jesus said, “***when you pray, do not use vain repetitions***”. Vain repetitions is when you just mouth empty words in a ritualistic manner thinking that just being “wordy” counts for something. Jesus said that vain prayers “***think that they will be heard for their many words.***”

So there is such a thing as mindlessly just vainly repeating words, but then there is also the sincere repeating of the same request before God from the heart – because it is the overwhelming issue on your heart. That is where Jesus was coming from.

Once again, we do not see a direct answer from God the Father. Three times Jesus intensely took this to the Father in prayer and three times received “silence” which was rightly understood as “no”. Sometimes the answer to our prayer is NO and sometimes that becomes obvious in that no other door is opened.

Yet, as I already indicated God did answer in the form of providing an angel to strengthen Jesus. And beyond this, the Bible indicates that Jesus prayer for deliverance was heard and was ultimately answered in the resurrection. Sometimes, God does answer prayers, but perhaps in a different way than we had originally desired.

Slide # 17

Hebrews 5:7 (NKJV)

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,

Slide # 18

Psalms 22:20–22 (NKJV)

20 Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog.

21 Save Me from the lion’s mouth And from the horns of the wild oxen!

You have answered Me. [***IN THE RESURRECTION***]

22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

What a great contrast is drawn in this text. Over against the threefold denials of Peter is the threefold petitions of Christ. Peter’s great self-confidence needed no prayer but Christ in His troubled soul was driven to intense prayer – each time yielding to the will of God the Father.

Again, and again we have to come back to God’s will and not ours. Again, and again, we must come back to, “not as I will, but as You will.” This is what Christ modeled for us!

45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

The question, “Are you still sleeping” is probably to be understood in an ironic sense with the idea that their opportunity to be useful in the time of crisis has now passed them by.

There would be no more time to prayerfully pray for the coming challenge. Time was up! “Behold the hour” was “at hand” when the Son of Man was “being betrayed into the hands of sinners.”

There comes a time when the time for preparatory prayer is over. They had missed their opportunity. Consequently, they had been no help to Christ and they were personally totally unprepared for their time of testing which was now lie straight ahead.

Doubtless Jesus could see and hear the party approaching as it crossed the Kidron with torches and climbed up the path to Gethsemane. The sleepers for whom He would die have lost their opportunity to gain strength through prayer. By contrast Jesus has prayed in agony but now rises with poise and advances to meet His betrayer. – **D.A. Carson**

Again, there seems to be a play on the idea of “three” here. Jesus told Peter he would deny Him three times (v. 34). On three occasions Jesus found Peter and the disciples sleeping. Perhaps a connection is being drawn between the three times sleeping and the three denials. In contrast, Christ prayed in earnest three times and emerges ready to go to the cross.

Arousing the sleepers Jesus says...

46 Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

Jesus knew what was happening and knew that there was no way around it. He had to go to the cross in keeping with the will of the Father and now He was prayerfully prepared to do so.

Jesus had prayed and now met His temptation with strength and dignity, and He overcame it. The disciples had slept and now met theirs with weakness and fear, and they fell before it.

– **Thomas Constable**

Jesus did not rise in flight or in retreat, but rather went forward prepared to now face His betrayer and the mob with him. Jesus did not cower or hysterically react, but rather responded with peace and dignity as One strengthened and resolved to do the will of God.

It is impossible for you and me to enter into the full significance of Gethsemane, but I think it was there that He won the victory of Calvary. – **J. Vernon McGee**

If Jesus failed here, He would have failed at the cross. His success here made the victory at the cross possible. The struggle at the cross was first won in *prayer* in Gethsemane. – **David Guzik**

I think they are right! God works through prayer. The greatest victory in the history of the world is seen in the cross, but it was made possible through agonizing prayer in Gethsemane. The victory of the cross was first wrought in prayer in the garden.

What we have here is a grand lesson on the essential and important place of PRAYER in the great struggles of life! This is how we cope! As we go along we see that Peter got this message.

Slide # 19

1 Peter 4:7 (NKJV)

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV)

7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

How do you prepare for a major testing time? How do you prepare for the dark night of the soul? You cannot improve on what Jesus modeled. You want those close to you to be there WITH you and you want them to WATCH in prayer with you!

There is a reason the Bible says, “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17). This is where the battle is won or lost. Prayer is the great work behind all else that is done.

Someone has observed that Jesus performed His mighty miracles without any outward sign of strain, but when it came to prayer we read that He offered up prayers “with loud crying and tears” (Heb. 5:7) and “being in agony, He prayed” (Lk. 22:44).

We all need prayer and we need it constantly because we are constantly dependent upon God. And we need to work at it. How much effort do we really put into prayer?

Someone has said, “***If you want to put a Christian to shame just ask them about their prayer life.***” There are exceptions, but all too often this is the case.

Charles Spurgeon is often called “The Prince of Preachers”. He ministered in the 1800s at a Baptist Church London called THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE. Under his ministry about 15,000 people joined the church. In his day it was the largest independent church in the world.

One day some young college students made their way to London to hear Spurgeon preach. Arriving early they found the place locked up. Suddenly a stranger approached and asked them if they would like to see the heating apparatus of this church. They hadn’t come for that but they agreed to go with him. He led them into the building and down a long flight of stairs and into a hallway. At the end of the hallway was a door that opened into a large room filled with 700 people on their knees praying. The stranger – who just happened to be Spurgeon said “there is the heating apparatus of this church.”

“No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.” – **Leonard Ravenhill**

God help us to be people of prayer!

The Father has never forsaken His own. The Lord promises us, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5; cf. Gen. 28:15; Deut. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5). Yet, the Father forsook His Son so that He might NEVER forsake us. And the Son accepted this cup so that we might be with Him forever!

Man of sorrows, what a name,
For the Son of God who came,
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah, what a Savior! - **Phillip Bliss**

Before we leave the garden, let us pause once more to hear His sobs,
to ponder His sorrow, and to thank Him with all our hearts.

– ***William MacDonald***

Indeed, let us THANK Him with all our hearts!