

WILLING

MARK 14:32-42

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. What is something that you KNOW is God's will, but is hard for you to do? (Tithe; witness; forgive someone; teach a class; sing in the choir; help someone who is struggling financially; etc.)

In today's study we see that even Jesus struggled with God's will, but a crucial time of prayer helped Him do it.

2. What comes to mind when you hear the word Gethsemane? (Prayer; agony; Jesus; pleading; surrender; betrayal; etc.)

Gethsemane was a garden of olive trees on the slope of the Mount of Olives. The word means "olive press" where olives were pressed and crushed to get the valuable olive oil widely used in religious ceremonies, to cook with, and for medicinal purposes.

Perhaps this is the place Jesus prayed so intently and was being pressed physically and spiritually concerning His impending crucifixion and death.

Earlier in Mark 14 the plot to kill Jesus was discussed. He was anointed at Simon the leper's home; preparation for the Passover meal was made; Judas left the Passover meal to betray Jesus; the First Lord's Supper was observed; and Peter's denial was predicted.

DISTRESSED! Read Mark 14:32-34

This was a crucial time. Jesus was on His way to the cross, but the battle wasn't won yet. "He took His disciples with Him, not to share His agony, but to witness it."—Oswald Chambers.

1. Where do you go when you need to connect with God?
2. What makes that place so special? (Generally, it is special because we have met with God there before and felt His presence in that place.)
3. How do the terms used by Mark help us understand the humanity of Jesus? (Jesus experienced real human emotion, including anguish and distress. We have a Savior who can empathize with us.)

The Perfect Son of God, who had always enjoyed perfect fellowship with the Father, and whom John 17 says shared glory with Him before the world was; who perfectly resisted every temptation; who had never even harbored an evil thought; totally pure—was about to have all the guilt of all the filthy sins of the whole world poured out on HIM, and the wrath of God would be poured out on Him for those sins. That spiritual battle is what caused Him to be "deeply grieved to the point of death." It is rightly said, Jesus did not die of a Roman crucifixion; He died of a broken heart. He was grieved to the point of death. **1 Peter 2:24**— "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross."

As the cup of His death drew closer, Jesus' agony increased. His suffering wasn't just emotional, it was also spiritual.

SURRENDERED! Read Mark 14:35-36

1. What is significant about how Jesus addressed the Father? (Abba is not a term people would use to address God the Father, it would be disrespectful, but the term is a very intimate title for a son to call his father, like Daddy.)
2. What did the "cup" represent? (It was a combination of the physical pain of crucifixion, but it also included the weight of sin and the separation from the Father.)

"He who knew no sin became sin for us!"—2 Cor. 5:21. The very wrath of God was poured out on our sinless Savior!

3. How does our love for the Father help us surrender to Him in times of difficulty? (We are assured, as His children, that He desires the best for us, even when we can't see it.)
4. How can we as believers encourage one another to stay faithful to God's plan? (By being obedient ourselves, praying for each other, encouraging each other verbally.)
5. If all things are possible for God, why didn't He just say, "That's okay You don't have to die for their sins everyone is forgiven?" (He would be denying His very nature as a Holy God.)
6. What was Jesus' ultimate confession? (That the Father's will be done!)
7. What are you willing to do in order to follow God's will?

"Alexander Whyte was a preacher who lived in England in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He had been interceding for a friend who was ill "nigh unto death." He said that God seemed to say to him, "If you are sincere in your prayers, will YOU agree to transfer to your friend half of your remaining years?" Whyte said "I sprang to my feet in a torrent of sweat...it was a kind of Gethsemane to me. But, like Gethsemane, I got strength to say, let it be as Thou hast said. Thy will be done."—Warren Wiersbe.

Gethsemane is not a place of petition; it is one of surrender!

WEAK! Read Mark 14:37-39

1. How many have ever fallen asleep during your prayer/Bible reading time? WHO HASN'T? Try prayer walking.
2. When has someone you were really depending on let you down?
3. How did that make you feel?
4. How would you paraphrase Jesus' dialogue with Peter?
5. Can someone share a time when you had good intentions but failed to produce meaningful action? Notice Jesus called Peter Simon. Some scholars think Jesus did that because he had boasted about His loyalty to Jesus earlier in the evening. It could be because in a sense he had reverted to the person he had been before he began following Jesus.
6. How does the contrast between Jesus and His disciples emphasize our human weakness? (We yield so easily to our humanity unless we rely constantly on the power of the Holy Spirit. In our own power we are nothing.)
7. How can prayer protect a believer from the dangers of temptation? (It draws power from the Holy Spirit and fills our minds with Godly things.)

Again, the Lord encouraged His disciples to stay awake and pray. No matter how willing a person may be, the flesh is still weak. But He gave them another chance.

BETRAYED! Read Mark 14:40-42

1. What did Peter, James and John have to say for themselves? (They had nothing to say, they were caught. I've been there.)
2. How would you contrast the difference between Jesus' perspective and the disciples' perspective? (Jesus knew exactly what was about to happen and the disciples were clueless.)
3. When have you faced a "moment of truth?" (None of our decisions carry the weight Jesus carried but we go through the same process of seeking the Father's will.)

The next nine hours were horrific for Jesus! Remember Jesus had been awake since the previous morning, so He was physically exhausted already.

4. How does a commitment to the Father's will impact all other decisions? (The choice has already been made.)

The real battle for Jesus had already been won in the Garden!

CHALLENGE!

1. What are the weakest areas of your flesh?

2. What can you learn from the disciples in this passage? (The flesh is weak.)
3. What can you learn from Jesus? (It is a real struggle sometimes to yield to God's will!)

Gethsemane is a place where we struggle with ourselves, our selfishness, our wants, our hopes, our dreams, and disappointments. It is where we lose ourselves to find the new person God is making, not just new resolve, but a new life, a new identity in Christ. Oswald Chambers stated, "Our Lord is trying to introduce us to identification with Himself through a particular 'Gethsemane' experience of our own." And remember, every Gethsemane leads to a resurrection but not before it first leads to a cross. —Crosby Robert. 2014. *The One Jesus Loves: Grace Is Unconditionally Given, Intimacy Must Be Relentlessly Pursued*. Nashville; Thomas Nelson