

## WHAT JESUS SAID AT THE LAST SUPPER AND GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

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I am grateful to speak at the Power lectures once again and to have the opportunity to write a chapter for the lectureship book. Attending this lectureship is one of the highlights of the year. The elders are to be commended for having revived this lectureship some ten years ago and for the good that it and the Power periodical has done. B.J. Clarke is an outstanding gospel preacher whom I count as a dear friend. I am grateful that he publishes my articles from time to time. And I am thankful that he will soon join with me and others as instructors in the Online Academy of Biblical Studies (cf. [www.oabs.org](http://www.oabs.org)).

I cannot hope to cover this assignment as thoroughly as I desire given my time and space limitations. Several years ago while preaching for the good church in Greenfield, TN, I preached a series of fourteen sermons entitled “In The Upper Room.” It was an expository series based on John chapters 13 through 17. Chapters thirteen and fourteen took place while our Lord and His apostles sat at a table. At the end of chapter fourteen, they arose from the table, and Jesus gave a discourse which covers chapters 15 and 16. There is the prayer of our Lord in chapter seventeen. Then there is the departure for the Garden of Gethsemane.

What I endeavor to do in this study is to take you to the Upper Room and to the Garden of Gethsemane. We need to experience with the mind’s eye, the sights and sounds of what occurred therein. Words are the vehicles on which thoughts ride. We can use the words of our Lord to allow us to see His thoughts. What was on our Lord’s mind that dreadful night? What frustrations did He

experience? What were His concerns? What were His sorrows?

One does not read any chapter of the Bible in which Jesus is found without seeing and sensing His deep concern. Seeing His concerns helps us to better understand the Son of God and to more clearly see our responsibilities as His followers. No where is this more apparent than in those chapters immediately preceding our Lord's sacrificial death on the cross. Such a study instills a greater appreciation and a deeper love for our blessed Savior.

### **WHAT WE SEE AT THE LAST SUPPER**

#### **(1) WE SEE HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE QUARRELING AMONG HIS DISCIPLES.**

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth (Luke 22:24-27).

The accounts of the Passover supper are recorded in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and John 13. We read of the preparation for the Passover in Luke 22:7-14 and the opening of the Passover by Jesus in Luke 22:15-18. From looking at the other accounts, it appears that Luke's account is not necessarily in chronological order. In his account, the Lord's supper is mentioned immediately following the Passover meal. Also, he appears to introduce incidentally the account of a quarrel among the disciples that night over who would be the greatest among them. In Luke 22:24, the word "also" bears out the idea that he is now telling something else that happened without arranging it in order of time.<sup>1</sup>

Understanding how the disciples on the very eve of the death of our Lord could have possibly engaged in such a quarrel is hard. However, they were all feeling the intense pressure, emotional stress, and impending danger that would make them anxious and create the atmosphere for such a quarrel.

Jesus sought to humble the entire group by rendering them a humble service. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded" (John 13:4-5). Traveling the dusty Palestinian roads wearing sandals caused the feet to be dirty. When one entered someone's home, it was usually the duty of a servant to wash their master's and visitor's feet (Cf. 1 Sam. 25:40-41; Luke. 7:36-46). When it became obvious that none of his disciples would perform this humble task of washing their feet, the only begotten Son of God took the towel, girded himself, and performed the task Himself! If they followed the usual procedure, Jesus poured water over the feet into a basin, the feet not being put in the water. The stream of falling water washed the feet. Then the Savior dried them with a towel about his waist. Here is the Son of God, Deity, on His knees, serving sinful man. It was a well-deserved rebuke to this group of proud men. Can you imagine their shame and astonishment?

Finally the Lord reached Peter. "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13:6-9). Jesus had hoped that they would later accept and understand His purpose and come to recognize that their pride and selfish ambition had to give

way to humility and service to others. While Peter protested initially, he surrendered in total submission to the will of Christ. If washing were the condition of acceptance, then Jesus could wash all of him.

Luke reveals that Jesus stopped their quarreling by reminding His disciples that He was in the midst of them as a servant and that they should imitate him. The road to greatness begins in service. If these disciples pridefully refused to serve their brethren, how could they possibly achieve greatness in the kingdom in the service of the Lord and of others? Are we imitating the ambitious prideful quarreling characteristic of the disciples on that fearful night? Or, are we imitating the wonderful example of humble service displayed so movingly by our Lord?

## (2) WE SEE HIS CONCERN ABOUT THE BETRAYER

The Lord took his place at the table and the feast resumed. Jesus assured his disciples of great blessing if they obeyed his teachings. However, Jesus knew that one of them would not. "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (John 13:18-20).

The Scripture Jesus quoted is Psalm 41:9. When David wrote this Psalm by inspiration, he was probably thinking of Ahithophel, who turned traitor against David and joined Absalom's rebellion. He would later commit suicide. Jesus makes this passage a prophecy of what Judas would also do. Judas was not a victim of this prophecy. This was prophesied and predicted but that did

not destroy his free moral agency, his freedom to choose. God does not make anyone sin (Jas. 1:13-15). God gives everyone the right to choose to obey his will or to sin and refuse to obey. "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11). Judas betrayed Jesus because he allowed the Devil to influence him to sin (John 13:2). When the Devil came, Judas did not resist him (Jas. 4:7). Instead he gave him place (Eph. 4:27). God is omniscient. He knows everything perfectly. He could see down the line the choice that Judas would freely choose to make. Just because God knew something would happen did not make it happen, any more than seeing an accident about to happen makes one cause it.<sup>2</sup>

The awareness that one of his own apostles would betray Him, greatly troubled the Savior. Revealing this to His apostles troubled them as well. "And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" (Matt. 26:22). Peter gestured to John to ask Jesus was. "Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon" (John 13:26). The sop was a piece of unleavened bread. In the festivities of the Passover, it was customary for the head of the house to dip the bread in a sauce of bitter herbs and pass it to each person at the table (Exod. 12:8). Jesus dipped the bread and handed it to Judas. "Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said" (Matt. 26:25). His exposure as the traitor only seemed to harden Judas even more and submit himself more fully to the influence of the Devil.

Jesus told him to do quickly what he had totally committed himself to do so. Judas immediately went out to do the Devil's work. He would miss the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus' final discourses, and His prayer in John chapter seventeen. He chose to leave the light of the world and to go out into the night (John 13:30).

In Judas, we see the progression of sin. Despite all that the Lord had said about money and covetousness (Luke 12:15; Matt. 6:24), Judas continue to be a thief, to steal from the treasury. His covetousness grew until he sold out His Lord for thirty pieces of silver (1 Tim. 6:9-10). He fell by transgression and went to his own place (Acts 1:25).<sup>3</sup>

Are we traveling the road of Judas? Is our sin growing progressively worse? When a child of God partakes in the works of the flesh, and fails to produce the fruit of the Spirit, when he habitually forsaking the assembling of the saints for worldly pursuits and recreational activities, when he refuses to study the Bible and treats prayer as a spare tire to be relied on in emergencies, he is on the road to selling out Jesus for a lot less than thirty pieces of silver? How does this make Jesus feel? Does it not grieve Him just it grieved the Lord to see Judas go out into the night? Should we not share our Lord's concern for those of his disciples who have been hardened by sin?

### (3) WE SEE HIS CONCERN THAT WE WOULD REMEMBER HIS SACRIFICE

The apostle John does not record the giving of the Lord's Supper. It is recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and by Paul in First Corinthians. I believe it occurred after John 13:35 and before John 13:36. The Lord's Supper was instituted as "they were eating the Passover meal" (Matt. 26:26) or more specifically "after supper" (Luke 22:20).<sup>4</sup> The Passover was a memorial feast which God had instituted in the Old Testament to commemorate the deliverance of the firstborn of Israel through the blood of the lamb. The blood was spread upon the side-posts and lintel of their doors so that the angel of death would pass over their houses (Exod. 12:13). It is interesting that the Passover meal was instituted *before* the event it commemorated and not **after**. Likewise, for us to remember His sacrifice for us, Jesus instituted a feast similar but simpler than the Passover *before* His crucifixion

which was to be observed *after* His death. Jesus was finished with the old Jewish Passover because it was "fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16), and because He was to become "our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7). The Passover pointed forward in time to the Christ of Calvary. The Lord's Supper would point backward in time to the Christ of Calvary.

The Passover meal which they had just observed consisted of a male lamb, one year old and without blemish, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and the fruit of the grapevine. Jesus took the two simple elements of this supper, the unleavened bread, or bread without yeast and the fruit of the vine and gave them special significance, the bread to represent His body and the fruit of the vine to represent His blood.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom (Matt. 26:26-29).

In Luke 22:19 and in Paul's account in First Corinthians 11, we are informed that each time after He took the bread and after He took the cup, He said, "This do in remembrance of me." The Lord's Supper was to be a time of remembrance. The design of the Lord's Supper is to keep alive the precious memory of Christ and what He has done for us. And so the table upon which the Supper is often spread before us, has written across the front, "this do in remembrance of me."

Human beings are prone to forget. Myriads of tombstones and multitudes of buildings and statues attest to the fact that people want to be remembered after death. High atop Mount Corcovado overlooking Rio De Janeiro stands a huge statue of Jesus Christ. The stone monument has stood for more than sixty years, but now it is beginning to crumble. According to *Veja*, a Sao Paulo news

magazine, "The greatest risk is that a piece of the statue may fall on some tourists. Two million people a year visit Christ the Redeemer."<sup>5</sup> It is not possible to honor Jesus adequately as we would a famous patriot by building a statue of Him. The memorial He has chosen is not of stone but of a supper. The Lord's Supper is a period of several minutes each Lord's Day in which we as Christians look back to the life of our Lord and contemplate His love and sacrifice for us.

Jesus blessed the bread. This means He gave thanks to God for the bread. Matthew and Mark have "blessed" in regard to the bread, and "gave thanks" for the cup. Luke has "gave thanks" for both.<sup>6</sup> Since Christ, our great example, offered prayer in instituting the supper, we too in like manner, offer prayers of thanksgiving. Our prayers should be addressed to God the Father, in praising Him and thanking him for His son Jesus Christ who died on the cross for us.

The early Christians understood that the Lord's Supper was an item of regular worship, and it was observed upon the first day of every week in their regular meetings. Remember the church at Corinth was commanded to lay by in store upon the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1,20). Paul also says it was their practice to "come together in one place to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:33,34). Therefore, the early Christians assembled upon the first day of every week for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper as well as to worship God through His other divinely appointed avenues of worship. How tragic it is that many religious groups come together on Sundays, sing, pray, give, and listen to a sermon. They then go home without doing the thing the disciples in the New Testament came together to do! How do you think Jesus feels about that?

Sacred history bears out the fact that the early Christians ate the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Pliny, and others tell us that they so ate the supper during the second century. It is a wise and safe course to do it as the early Christians did, not annually, quarterly,

monthly, or on weekdays but on each Lord's Day.

Sometimes our denominational friends will argue that partaking of the Supper every Sunday makes it mundane and causes it to lose its meaningfulness. This is not so. On November 11, 1921, they buried the unknown soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, across the Potomac from the nation's capital. Ten years later the tomb was completed. The inscription on the marble sarcophagus announces, "Here rests in honored glory an American soldier known but to God." Part of that honored glory are the ceremonies of the honor guard from Fort Myer, Virginia. A sentry is always on duty at the tomb. During each hour the guard walks his post exactly forty-two times. They precisely time every move. During the day they change the sentry each hour in a polished military ceremony before hundreds of tourists. At night they make the change every two hours. For decades the honor guards have marched, but has anyone suggested that the continuity has robbed the ceremony of its meaning? Why then should one charge that the weekly observance of the Lord's death makes that time of communion mundane? Taking the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day does not require it becoming an unfeeling routine any more than praying everyday makes prayer an unfeeling routine. It is not the indispensable frequency, but individual flippancy which often destroys the meaning of sacred things. Paul warns against that very thing in First Corinthians 11:29. It must be done thoughtfully and reverently. Each week, let the living Christ be remembered in honored glory just as He wished us to do.<sup>7</sup>

#### (4) WE SEE HIS CONCERN ABOUT PETER

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall

not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me (Luke 22:31-34).

Peter thought his courage was strong enough to meet any tests that might lie ahead, no matter how difficult. He thought he was ready for any crisis that might come whether prison or death. Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself (John 2:25). He also knew that Peter would face a formidable foe in the Devil. Satan wanted to test Peter, shake his faith, sift him like wheat. Sifting is not a single shake. It is a constant shaking. Satan is relentless in his pursuits.

Jesus foreknew that Peter would need to repent. He knew that Peter would deny him. He knew that Peter would need to be converted, that he would need to turn again. Jesus also knew that Peter needed somebody to pray for him. He knew that Peter's faith was the only thing that could help Peter overcome the Devil in the end (1 John 5:4; 1 Pet. 5:8-9).<sup>8</sup> If Peter allowed his faith to fail completely, He would be overcome. So Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail. Why pray for this if it were an impossibility? Friends, it is possible for our faith to fail. Consequently, we should pray for others as they face dangers and temptations at home, at school, at college, at work, at places of business, in the military, in our social lives, yea, everywhere. Oh, how we need the prayers of others that our faith will not fail when it is tested!

Roman Catholic theologians attempt to argue for the primacy of Peter from this passage. But our Lord's prayer for Peter was not to indicate Peter's *primacy*. Instead, it acknowledged his *weakness* and intimated Peter's denial later that night.

When Peter later succumbed to temptation and betrayed his Lord, one thing which surely moved him to repentance was the fact that Jesus was praying for Him. He knew that the Lord still loved him enough to pray for Him in spite of his faults, in spite of his lack of loyalty. He knew that

the Lord expected him to be faithful in the end and to strengthen others who would be weak as Peter once was. Despite Catholic theology, strengthening the church would not be Peter's exclusive role (cf. 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:12). The same Greek word (*sterizo*) occurs relative to Paul's projected work in Rome, *the very city over which Peter is alleged to have held papal control!* Like Jonathan who went to David and "strengthened his hand in God" (1 Sam. 23:16), we need to strengthen our brethren. We should support the weak (1 Thess. 5:14), pray for the wayward, and let them know it. Let them know that we are concerned about them even as Jesus expressed His concern about Peter.

#### (5) WE SEE HIS CONCERN FOR THE TROUBLED HEARTS OF THE DISCIPLES

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.  
In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

In these gloomy hours preceding Calvary, is it not remarkable that His thoughts were most often focused upon the welfare of others rather than Himself? Jesus commanded them to stop being troubled in their hearts. Surely, they were troubled by the uncertainties which faced them, by the betrayal of Judas foretold, and by the denial of Peter predicted. But they were especially troubled by the fact that Jesus had said in John 13:33 that He was going to leave them. Comprehending their mental distress within the upper room is impossible for us.

How would they be comforted? First, they were to derive their comfort through their faith in the Father and the Son. They could know that there was a peace promised them unlike any the world has to offer (John 14:27). They could know that there was a place provided for them, a

mansion in the Father's house. The house of God is God's entire habitation, the whole domain of God. The many mansions there are descriptive of the grandeur of the places where Christians will abide for eternity. The word *mansion* is inclusive of everything that the human mind can conceive in a place to live. God will supply every need (Rev. 7:17).

Jesus assured them by telling them that there was a place prepared for them. He has gone to prepare it. Obviously, this place He is preparing is not a renovated earth (cf. Matt. 24:35; 2 Pet. 3:7). The place He is preparing is in Heaven to which He ascended and from which He will return to take us there. At Christ's second coming, the hades realm will be opened, and the graves will be opened, and the sea will give up her dead. We shall be resurrected with a new incorruptible body. At the judgment, the saved will be granted their eternal home in that place Jesus has prepared.

Christians are constantly faced with troubles of death, temptation, fear, doubt, and discouragement. How are we to deal with such crises in our life? Let us take the Lord's advice. We should develop an unwavering and sustaining Biblical faith (John 14:1). We should have hope of life after death in a mansion above (John 14:2). And we should look forward to His second coming when He comes to take the saved home (John 14:3). How wonderful it is that the Lord sought to give us this remedy for troubled hearts when His own heart must have been deeply troubled.

#### (7) WE SEE HIS CONCERN FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY

In John chapter 17 we have the real Lord's prayer. It is the longest of our Lord's prayers recorded and is quite possibly the greatest prayer ever recorded in Scripture and ever prayed on the earth. Jesus was concerned about others and did not want to end the warm and close association He had enjoyed that evening with His disciples without a prayer to the Father.

Jesus first prayed for Himself, then for His disciples that the Father would keep and sanctify

them. Finally, He closed his prayer by praying that all of us to come might be unified in Him and one day share His glory. What an encouragement this prayer should have been for them.

In this prayer, our Lord declared four wonderful privileges that we have as His children. First, we share His life (John 17:1-5). Second, we know His name (John 17:6-12). Third, we have His Word (John 17:13-19). Fourth, we share His glory (John 17:20-26).<sup>9</sup> It is in this last portion of our Lord's prayer that He focuses especially on us, on those believers yet future. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:20). Our Lord looked across the years and breathed a prayer for all those who would believe and obey the gospel. It ought to thrill our hearts to know that our Lord prayed for you and me when death for Him was but a few short hours away! Can we not see His concern for the church which He was about to purchase with His own precious blood?

Jesus prayed that we might share His glory in this life (John 17:21). Christ was glorified in this life as the Son of God. He has bestowed that same glory to us that we might be united as the sons of God in one family. The unity for which Jesus prayed is attained when we become one in Christ at baptism (Gal. 3:27). Then to maintain that unity with God and one another, we must continue to walk in the light (1 John 1:7). In the midst of denominationalism which is foreign to this prayer of Jesus, we must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace within the church (Eph. 4:2).

We must also remember that we share His glory in this life, so that we might behold Christ's glory in the next (John 17:24-26). Jesus was praying in verse twenty-four not only that we might be with Him in glory, but that we might see the restoration of His glory which was His before He came into the world (John 17:5). The ultimate glory awaiting the children of God has yet to be fully

revealed (1 John 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:10). But it is certain that Jesus wants us to appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4). We can see His concern as we see the thoughts of His heart poured out in prayer to His Heavenly Father just hours before He died for us: the glory of God, the sanctity of God's people, the unity of the church, and the mission of preaching the gospel to a lost world. When we see what occurred in the Upper Room, it makes us more aware than ever of the selfless mind of Christ. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:4,5).

### **WHAT WE SEE IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

As we journey now with our Lord and His eleven disciples from Jerusalem, we travel across the Kidron River and up the slope of Mount Olivet to the place called Gethsemane. The name Gethsemane means a place of oil-presses. This is the place where Jesus would prepare for the ordeal of the cross. This would also be the place of his betrayal. What do we see there?

#### **(1) YOU WILL SEE HIS FRIENDS SLEEPING.**

Eight disciples are left at the gate while three others are selected to go farther into the garden in the shadows of its ancient olive trees. Those three were Peter, James, and John (Matt. 26:37). We call them the inner three. They were His closest disciples and the three most capable of sympathizing and comforting Him. In verse thirty-eight, He told them to watch with Him. Jesus moved away about a stone's cast (Luke 22:41) where He fell on His face and poured out His breaking heart to the Father. "And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into

temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:40-41). The Lord was disappointed to find them asleep instead of watching and waiting, and He rebuked them. Jesus went back and prayed again. When he returned, Matthew 26:43 says, "And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy." This sounds strange to us. We think that surely they could have watched for one hour. However, we need to look at what Luke says about it. Luke 22:45 says, "And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them **sleeping for sorrow.**" So we learn that there were some extenuating circumstances. It was not due to indifference but was caused by their own sorrow at the words Jesus had spoken unto them. They were willing in spirit, but they were weak according to the flesh. They were physically and emotionally spent. Nevertheless, those circumstances were not sufficient to excuse them from being more actively involved. Had they fully comprehended how much the Lord needed their sympathy and comfort as He came repeatedly seeking it, they probably would have kept awake. "And he said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Luke 22:46).

Jesus returned to pray for a third time. Upon returning from His final prayer, He apparently found the three apostles asleep the third time. "Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me" (Matt. 26:45-46).

You may wonder why these instructions seem contradictory. When Jesus returned the third time to his sleeping friends, the time for comfort was now over. An angel had appeared to strengthen him according to Luke 22:43. The time when they could have given him some moral support was now past. So he says, "Sleep on now, and take your rest." But at that precise moment Jesus could

see the soldiers approaching in the distance and knowing what was about to occur said, “behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me” (Matt. 26:45-46).<sup>10</sup>

“Smitten for offenses, Which were not His own, He, for our transgressions, Had to weep alone; No friend with words to comfort, Nor hand to help was there, When the Meek and Lowly Humbly bowed in prayer.”<sup>11</sup> Can we not see the loneliness of our Lord? Our Lord knew what loneliness was. He was desiring the sympathy of His friends, but they were sleeping. Do you not think that our Lord is often disappointed with us because we fail to do that which He desires from us? Is the life which I am living a disappointment to God? If you would answer yes to that question, then you need to change. Watch and pray for we know not when our Lord shall come (Mark 13:32-37).

## (2) YOU WILL SEE HIS FEELINGS OF SORROW.

Gethsemane means olive press and here the heart of Jesus was pressed beyond measure. "Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me" (Matt. 26:38). Isaiah described the Lord as “the man of sorrows” in Isaiah 53:3. “Night, with ebon pinion, Brooded o’er the vale; All around was silent, Save the night-wind’s wail; When Christ, the Man of Sorrows, In tears and sweat and blood, Prostrate in the garden, Raised His voice to God.”<sup>12</sup>

"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). Luke, the physician, says that the Lord was in an agony. This is a medical term used to describe a severe inner conflict, a mental or emotional battle.<sup>13</sup> The original says, "His sweat became as great drops of blood." In 1874, William Stroud,

a London physician, wrote a book entitled The Physical Cause of the Death of Christ. Therein the doctor argued that bloody sweat is indeed possible under extreme emotional exertion.<sup>14</sup> Then in 1986 an article titled, "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ," appeared in the prestigious, *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Three men wrote it, two of whom are associated with the Mayo Clinic. These suggested that Luke's description of our Lord's sweat in the Garden is consistent with a condition known as hematidrosis, in which there can be hemorrhaging into the sweat ducts during periods of acute emotional distress. Subcutaneous capillaries can burst causing this kind of phenomenon pictured by Luke.<sup>15</sup> Whether this is what occurred or not, this language conveys to us the extreme emotional distress which Jesus suffered in the place called Gethsemane.

The writer of Hebrews spoke of this very occasion when he wrote in Hebrews 5:7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." Why did Christ so pray? He did not want to be separated from His Heavenly Father, and He did not want to endure the ridicule and the death of the cross. He despised the shame of it according to Hebrews 12:2. So He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. Yes, He had feelings too. He could grow tired and hungry just as we do. Because of this, He can be in touch with our feelings today (Heb. 2:17-18). We can see His feelings in this place called Gethsemane and know that He was made like us, that He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb 4:15), and that as a result, He is a merciful and faithful High Priest for us today. Because of His work, we can come boldly before God's throne of grace in prayer and obtain mercy and find the favor of God which can help us in our time of need.

### (3) YOU WILL SEE THE FEAR OF HIS SUPPLICATION.

The Hebrew writer mentions this in Hebrews 5:7 when he says Jesus "was heard in that he feared." This does not mean He was afraid of God. Rather, it refers to the fact that He had respect for what God had said. He would not carelessly handle the word of God. Just a little later that night, Jesus would say, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26:53-54). Jesus would not approach His responsibility to that Word flippantly, and neither should we. When we see Jesus in the place called Gethsemane, we see one involved in a struggle. There was His foreknowledge of what would happen. There was His freedom of will that would cause it to happen. There were His feelings of emotion that overwhelmed Him, but there was His fear, His respect for the Word and will of the Father.

How important it is that we walk in the fear of the Lord each day (Acts 9:31), have the type of respect that we ought to have for the word of God, and seek to do His will at every time and in every place.

#### (4) YOU WILL SEE HIS FAITHFULNESS IN SUBMISSION.

"Abba, Father, Father, If indeed it may, Let this cup of anguish Pass from Me, I pray; Yet, if it must be suffered, By Me, Thine only Son, Abba, Father, Father, Let Thy will be done."<sup>16</sup> "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matt. 26:42). "And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words" (Matt. 26:44).

In the first prayer He said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The cup of which

Jesus spake was the cup of suffering which He foreknew would be His to drink upon the cross to execute God's eternal plan for the redemption of humanity. Into that cup were poured loneliness, ingratitude, betrayal, humiliation, suffering, and death. Jesus prayed that the cup might be removed if it be possible. In John 12:27 Jesus had said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." He said this about a week before the ordeal of Gethsemane (John 12:1). Jesus was already under great emotional strain at the time. Already the thought had occurred to Him to pray for deliverance. However, He knew not how that could be reconciled with God's eternal purpose.<sup>17</sup>

In the garden, Jesus expressed His heart's desire to God to remove the cup of suffering. Yet, it was not possible. There was no other way. He then said, "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." There were two wills: His and the Father's. Which would He follow? Oh, how the Devil must have tempted Him on this occasion to turn from the awful task before Him. The conflict was real. Yet He prayed, not my will, but thine be done.

In the second and third prayer, the words are slightly different. Jesus knew what the Father's will was. He had surrendered His will to the Father's will. So in the second prayer He said, "O Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." See His faithfulness? He would be faithful to do God's will. He would submit, perfectly and totally to the will of God. God's intentions were clear. Jesus submitted His will to the will of Father.

Again, the words of Hebrews 5:8-9 have application to this event. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." The Lord learned obedience. This does not imply that He was ever disobedient. Rather, He submitted himself and His will to the will of the

Father. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Christ learned obedience through suffering. Why did Jesus suffer? Jesus suffered to fulfill the message of the prophets (Isa. 53:1-12). He suffered to qualify Himself as a merciful and High Priest (Heb. 2:17,18). He suffered because there was no other way to atone for the sin of lost humanity (1 Pet. 2:21-25). But what would that cost? It would cost Him his very life. He would have to go from Gethsemane to Golgotha, and then to the grave. That was an awful journey, but His faithfulness would require it.

Jesus learned obedience by the things which He suffered. He did not tell us to do something He didn't do himself. If Christ needed to learn obedience, to humbly submit to the Father's will, what about us? Would the "Faith Only" people say Christ was faithful without obedience? How could they?

The garden of Gethsemane was a painful place, but visiting there by faith from time to time can be a most profitable thing for us to do. Studying about it and singing good hymns concerning it should refresh our minds with the mental as well as physical suffering which our Lord endured for us. He obeyed, so that we might obey and be saved. Is the Lord disappointed in your weakness to serve Him as He desires?

"When my love to Christ grows weak, when for deeper faith I seek, then in thought I go to thee, Garden of Gethsemane...Then to life I turn again, Learning all the worth of pain. Learning all the might that lies, in a full self-sacrifice."<sup>18</sup> He gave His life for you. The selfless Savior remains concerned about you. He is as concerned about people now as He was in the upper room. Give your life, your all to Him today.

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3. See Winfred Clark, "His Own Place," **Expositions of 'The Expositor,'** Volume 2, Michael R. McDaniel, Ed. (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 2001), pp. 275-277.
4. See Wayne Jackson, "Did Jesus Eat The Passover Supper?" ([Http://www.christiancourier.com/questions/passoverMealQuestion.htm](http://www.christiancourier.com/questions/passoverMealQuestion.htm)) pp. 1-4.
5. J. David Branon, "Still Here At The End," **Our Daily Bread** (Grand Rapids, MI: RBC Ministries, November 28, year unknown)
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13. Billy Smith, "The Plot To Kill Jesus; The Precious Ointment; The Bargain of Jesus; The Supper; Peter's Denial Foretold; Gethsemane," **A Homiletic Commentary On The Book Of Matthew** (Memphis, TN: Getwell Church of Christ) p. 656.
14. William Shroud, **Treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ and Its Relation to the Principles and Practice of Christianity** (London: Hamilton and Adams, 1871).
15. William D. Edwards, Wesley J. Gabel, and Floyd E. Hosmer, "On The Physical Death of Jesus Christ," **Journal of American Medical Association** (Vol. 255, March 21, 1986).

16. Jameson, Ibid, third verse.

17. Wayne Jackson, “Did Jesus Contradict Himself As He Approached Death?”  
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