

DO I HAVE THE STRENGTH?

Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's redemptive plan.



TRANSFORMATION
for Adult LifeGroups

MATTHEW 26:36-46

FEBRUARY 28, 2018/MARCH 4, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: MATTHEW 26: 36-46 (NIV), Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." 43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. 45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

FIRST THOUGHTS

- Who in here has run the Gate River Run or known someone who did? How much training was involved? How did you feel physically and mentally on the day of the race?
- When in your life have you felt the strongest—either physically or mentally? Explain.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Matthew placed the account of Jesus at Gethsemane in the setting of the Passover festival in Jerusalem. Devout Jewish people from everywhere crowded into the city for the festival, which created a mixture of tension and jubilation. Jesus had made His triumphal entry into the city on Sunday. On the following Thursday, Jesus' disciples began to get everything ready so they could celebrate Passover together (26:17).

By the time the sun set on Thursday, Jesus and His disciples were sharing the Passover meal in a room provided by an unidentified person who was apparently loyal to Jesus. During the meal, Jesus initiated the Lord's Supper. Later that night, He led His disciples to the Mount of Olives (26:18-30). As He made His way to Gethsemane, He stopped to pray. His time in prayer strengthened His resolve to go to the cross and sacrifice His life so we could be saved. Before the sun rose the next morning, His adversaries arrested Him, and He began His journey to Calvary.

Matthew recorded the details of Jesus' praying at Gethsemane. So did Mark and Luke in their accounts of Jesus (Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46). The writer of Hebrews likely had Gethsemane in mind when he asserted that Jesus prayed in advance of His suffering (Heb. 5:7-8). These writers understood that Jesus' praying at Gethsemane paved the way for the most pivotal episode in God's plan of salvation.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

COMMITTED TO THE TASK

> Read Matthew 26:36-39

- In what ways did Jesus show His humanity and divinity in these verses? What emotions did He express?

The word Gethsemane actually means "oil-press" and it was associated with the orchard of olive trees where Jesus and His disciples often came for retreat and respite. Olive oil is produced by growing olive trees, harvesting the olives, crushing them with an oil press, and collecting the golden juice. Jesus' life is mirroring this cycle in the very place he came for relaxation. In Luke 22:44 the pressing intensity was described as: "Being in anguish, He prayed more fervently, and His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground."

- What was Jesus' attitude as He faced impending death?
- When have you wrestled with God over a situation or hardship? Why is praying that the Father's will be done such a hard prayer?
- Would anyone share a brief testimony of a time when you were pleading with God for something but then His answer turned out to be completely different yet better?

ASLEEP ON THE JOB

> Read Matthew 26:40-43

- How did Jesus' disciples let Him down? How do we let Jesus down?
- What can we learn from Jesus' prayer here to apply in our own prayer life?
- How can we support each other during hard times? How have friends tangibly shown support to you?

REALIZING THE MOMENT

> Read Matthew 26:44-46

- How might we be guilty of sleeping when we should be alert and praying?
- What steps can we take to recognize God's work in our world?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

The dictionary defines submission as "the action or fact of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person." In reflecting on Jesus' example of submitting to His Father's plan, ask yourself – Who am I submitting to? What is my attitude as I submit? What is my response when I am called to action?

Personal Challenge: Willingly accept God's direction in your life; stay alert and depend on the Father to help you remain faithful to your assigned task; and be thankful that Jesus fulfilled his earthly purpose of laying down His life as a sacrifice.

UPCOMING LESSONS

- Read Matthew 26:63-75
- Have you ever felt abandoned by your friends or that they were acting disloyal to you? What was that like?
- As you go about your week, notice how people show loyalty to someone or something.

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

4th - Numbers 34-36; Mark 11 | **5th** - Deuteronomy 1-2; Mark 12 | **6th** - Deuteronomy 3-4; Psalm 36; Mark 13 | **7th** - Deuteronomy 5-6; Psalm 43; Mark 14 | **8th** - Deuteronomy 7-9; Mark 15 | **9th** - Deuteronomy 10-12; Mark 16 | **10th** - Deuteronomy 13-15; Galatians 1