

The Agony of the Cup

Mark 14:32-43

July 27, 2014

Introduction

As we progress closer to the cross through our reading of the Gospel of Mark, let us go back to what Isaiah said about Jesus.

Isaiah 53:3b *a Man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*

Jesus experiences the fullness of sorrow that we can never experience. We can only feel our own pain and can only absorb so much pain and suffering from the outside. Our Lord experiences fully the pain in people's lives and fully the pain and sorrow inside their hearts. He understands fully the grief and sorrow in this fallen world. However, what we will study today is the grief upon grief—the most He has ever encountered. So intense is Jesus' prayer (the writer of **Hebrews** says in **5:7** that He cries loudly and is in tears) that He almost dies. The good Doctor Luke says that He is sweating blood and the angel has to come down and minister to Him.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke describe the pain and agony of His prayers. What we see here is beyond our human understanding. What was this struggle about? What are the agonies facing our Lord Jesus Christ?

Mark 14:32-42

32 *They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."*

- They went to a place called Gethsemane
 - Gethsemane—means olive press
 - On slope of Mt of Olives—large olive grove
 - Large garden—someone owned it (one of the many unknown people in Bible)
 - This was Jesus' usual place of retreat or meeting

Luke 21:37 *Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening He went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives,*

Luke 22:39 *Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and His disciples followed Him.*

John 18:1-2 *When He had finished praying, Jesus left with His disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and He and His disciples went into it. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed Him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with His disciples.*

- Sit here while I pray
 - Jesus leaves 8 disciples behind

33a *He took Peter, James and John along with Him, 34b* *He said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."*

- He took Peter, James, and John along with Him
 - 3 leaders of the Apostles
 - Jesus is teaching them a lesson about temptation and prayer

- This is the time when they are most vulnerable

Luke 22:53b *this is your hour—when darkness reigns.*

- They were to set up and pray—to keep watch

Luke 22:40 *On reaching the place, He said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."*

- Exact words from Lord's prayer
- Lead us not into temptation
- Prayer is the means to fight temptation
- Prayer is asking, pleading to God to help us in our moments of weakness
- They were to keep vigilant watch

Mark 13:36-37 *If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'*

- They should not be looking to their own confidence but guard against it

Application: If our Lord Jesus Christ needed time apart to pray to the Father in the time of temptation, how much more do we need to so ourselves?

33b *and He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34a "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,"*

- Deeply distressed and troubled
 - Distressed = combination of words: alarmed and deep sorrow
 - Troubled = combination of words: overwhelmed
 - What caused our Lord who knows everything to be alarmed and overwhelmed?

Note: Jesus was **NOT** alarmed or overwhelmed with the thought of physical suffering or death.

- The knowledge of the experience He is about to go through
- It is an experience that He has never had
- He is about to embrace His Father's will and be the sacrifice
- He is to be the sin bearer
- He has never known sin
- He has never known God's wrath
- The perfection of Jesus Christ
 - Jesus is holy—perfectly obedient to His Father's will
 - Jesus as God—He could never be tempted and He is never able to sin
 - Jesus as man—was tempted at all points as we are tempted
 - He had none of the human sinfulness; nothing in His nature was drawn to sin
- Infinitely intense struggle of Jesus in the Garden
 - The last temptation of Christ
 - Satan's full-blown attack against Jesus
 - He is trying to dissuade Jesus from dying on the cross
 - Satan does not want Jesus to die
 - He tempted Peter to convince Jesus not to die
 - He is tempting Jesus here so that He would not approach the cross

- It was a struggle because of His holiness
- He had (has) infinite hatred of sin
- How can He possibly be the sin bearer and receive the wrath of God?
- This was the temptation that Jesus was facing
- Intense physical struggle
 - So intense was His struggle with the spiritual reality that it affected His physical being

Luke 22:43-44 *An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him. 44 And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*

35 *Going a little farther, He fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from Him. 36 "Abba, Father," He said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will."*

- Left disciples at some distance
 - Luke—stone's throw away
- Jesus' prayer
 - Abba Father
 - Term of endearment: infinite love
 - Everything is possible for You
 - God could do anything
 - Except one thing: He could not allow Jesus not to die
 - God told people that salvation comes through blood sacrifice
 - Take this cup from Me
 - Cup = divine wrath

Jeremiah 25:15-16 *This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from My hand this cup filled with the wine of My wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. 16 When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them."*

- Jesus is asking His Father if there is another way to salvation
- He sees the fullest measure of God's wrath before Him
- Not a weakness
- This is the response of a holy person against the thought of bearing sin, guilt, and judgment
- Jesus had a perfect hatred of sin
- Not My will but Yours!
 - I only do what My Father does
 - Been this way since He was born (12 year old boy in the Temple)
 - He trusts His Father completely

37 *Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," He said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."*

- In His prayer, He thinks of His disciples
- Found them sleeping
 - Why?

Luke 22:45 *When He rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, He found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.*

- They were exceedingly sad
- Sleep is remedy
- Simon
 - He learned his lesson well

1 Peter 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

- Spiritual intentions are never enough
 - Flesh will win out every time if left to own devices
 - We have to depend on divine power

39 *Once more He went away and prayed the same thing. 40* *When He came back, He again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to Him. 41a* *Returning the third time, He said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting?"*

- Jesus continues His prayer—three times with God
- Same prayer, same answer
- Goes back to disciples who are sleeping
 - They have no excuse to offer for why they are sleeping

41b *Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42* *Rise! Let us go! Here comes My betrayer!"*

- Our Lord is victorious
 - How?

Hebrews 5:7 *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission.*

- It seems on the surface that His prayer was unanswered
- God did answer Jesus' prayer
- Jesus completely resolved to do His Father's will
- God strengthens His Son completely to go through His will
- He now has the cup in His hand
- Let us go
 - Directly to the betrayer and the enemies
 - His enemies have for a long time tried to capture Him
 - Our Lord is willingly sacrificing Himself to be slain by sinners
 - Confront them directly and give Himself over to them
 - It is time
 - All of the forces of earth are against Christ
 - The cross is a few hours away
 - Satan could not tempt Jesus out of the cross
 - God is moving toward the cross