

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Luke 22:35–46

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## Introduction

- Imagine losing eyesight - for a preacher - could I even do my work? Read, study, type - preparation. **William Walford** - 1800s - lost eyesight. Had Scripture read to him and memorized - preach from memory, etc. Renewed dependency on God's strength to accomplish the mission God had placed before him. "Sweet Hour of Prayer" - ***"In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief, and oft escaped the tempter's snare, by the return, sweet hour of prayer."***
- Seasons of distress and grief for all of us. Many of the greatest lessons that God teaches us we learn in the school of suffering. However, in the school of suffering we tend to be pretty bad students.
- Be honest - most of us struggle to pray well. We struggle to pray well when life is going well, and we really struggle to pray well in seasons of distress and grief.
- If anyone knew how to pray it was Jesus. Jesus rose early in the morning to pray. Jesus taught us to pray ([Luke 11:2-4](#)). Now, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus shows us how to pray.
- Jesus' prayer in the garden of Gethsemane is the most significant prayer to ever be uttered. Jesus prays the most agonizing prayer in human history while He faced the most distressing moments of His life.
- This prayer has much to teach us about Jesus, but this prayer also has much to teach us about how we can come before God in our own

seasons of distress and grief. Three lessons from the Garden of Gethsemane that will help you pray well when life is hard.

## You need to run to God when life is agonizing.

- Jesus carried the weight of the world on Himself on the Thursday night before His death.
- Lord's Supper - In some ways a disappointment. Jesus forever changed the meaning of Passover, and the meal ends in a fight among the disciples over who was the greatest.
- Jesus told Peter that Peter would deny Jesus 3 times. Jesus told the disciples that their lives would be in danger because they chose to follow Him. Back in [Luke 10](#) - Jesus sent the disciples out and told them not to take anything. Largely, because their message would be received and people would welcome them into their homes. Now, "Get your stuff together. Be prepared. You're not going to be received. Take a sword." Jesus would be counted among the lawless, and those associated with Jesus would suffer because of Jesus.
- Jesus speaking metaphorically when He tells them to take a sword. Urging them to be prepared. But they don't get it. "We have two swords right here!" vs. 38 - paraphrase - "I've had enough of this."
- Jesus leaves the Upper Room in Jerusalem and makes His way to Garden of Gethsemane on Mt. of Olives - a place he often went (vs. 39).
- **Kidron Valley** - walked on way to Gethsemane - drains from altar carried the blood of 250,000 sacrificial lambs sacrificed for sins of people ran through the valley - and graves on every side - everywhere Jesus looked - surrounded by death knowing that His death imminent - His blood would flow for the sins of people.

- Gethsemane - “Oil Press” - **Jesus feeling pressed** - pressed with burden for disciples, pressed with weight of sin He would carry, pressed with grief over what was to come.
- Simple words to disciples - “Pray that you may not fall into temptation.” What temptation? Temptation to NOT stand with Jesus when standing with Jesus became hard.
- Then... Jesus goes to pray. Luke’s account abbreviated - [Mark 14:34](#): “I am deeply grieved to the point of death...” In garden, we see a different side of Jesus. We’ve not seen Jesus this distressed and this agonized before. Such agony that his sweat like great drops of blood (vs. 44).
- Jesus’ agony does not change His commitment to His heavenly Father. In His agony, He doesn’t run from His heavenly Father, He runs to His heavenly Father - in Mark and Matthew - seems like He prayed for hours.
- I am so thankful that in His agony, Jesus ran to His Father and not away from His Father.
- When life is agonizing, run to God.
- **When you run from God, you get yourself into a bigger mess.** It’s easy to run from God when life is hard. “God has forgotten me. He doesn’t really love me. He’s not fair, etc.” When you run from God, you open yourself up to the enemy’s influence. You make poor choices. You run from His church. You don’t listen to the voice of wisdom. How many of us have made really sinful choices in difficult seasons of life because your judgment was clouded?
- **When you run to God, you will be met by God.** Notice the wrestling. Running to God does mean you get an immediate answer. Sometimes you’re met with silence. Seems like Jesus was met with silence. Sometimes silence because God has already spoken, and you need to obey what He has already said. Sometimes silence a test to see if you

depend on Him. Will you keep persisting in prayer even when God is silent?

## You need to learn how to trust and obey.

- **Why the agony? The cup of God's wrath.** [Is. 51:17](#), [22](#). Every sin was going to be placed on Jesus - [2 Cor. 5:21](#) - The Son of God would stand before His holy Father - the judge of the universe - **guilty of every sin ever committed.** You can understand the agony - Compare Jesus' death to the death of Martyrs of the faith. They died confidently because of what Jesus faced for them. Jesus died in agony because He took sin upon Himself.
- Humanity of Jesus on full display. Jesus doesn't want to die this agonizing death. Jesus knew that His death would end in victory - a glorious resurrection - but agony over what He would face.
- Mark and Matthew - Three times He checks on the disciples to find them sleeping and then returns to a posture of prayer. Jesus doesn't fall asleep. He prays.
- Jesus agonizing, and Jesus wrestling with the will of the Father, but in His wrestling, Jesus simply says, "Not my will but your will be done." Aren't you glad that Jesus said those words?
- In the agonizing and wrestling, Jesus trusts and obeys the will of His Father. Why? His Father knows best - The Father's eternal plan of redemption is good.
- Have you ever wrestled with God's will?
- You need to wrestle with God in prayer because:
- **Prayer conforms you.** We don't pray to change the will of God. Prayer doesn't always change my circumstances. Sometimes God DOES answer my prayers and changes my circumstances (according to His will). Most of the time, my circumstances don't change. God knows what

He wants to accomplish in my life. I pray so that God might conform me to His will. My biggest problem... “God, I want to follow you, but I don’t want to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank). We all have areas in our life where we’re resisting God’s will. However, as I pray, God softens my heart and conforms me to His will.

- **Prayer is your way of acknowledging that God knows what’s best for you.** Good news: God is not going to mess up your life. You can trust Him ([Romans 8:31-39](#)). You can obey Him. You can say, “Not my will, but your will be done.”
  - What keeps you from trusting God? Pride? Skepticism? Unrepentant heart?
  - What more does God have to do to prove to you that you can trust Him?

## You need to know where real strength comes from.

- God’s plan doesn’t change in the garden - but something does happen as Jesus agonizes before the Father. Jesus is strengthened.
- An angel ministers to Jesus - only Gospel writer to mention an angel. BUT... God is not absent. He is with His Son, ministering to His Son. Jesus is strengthened.
- Notice the contrast - Jesus is praying in Gethsemane - He’s wrestling with the will of His Father, and He leaves the Garden strengthened. He is more resolute than ever in His mission. He will willingly be arrested. He will stand before the chief priests, Pontius Pilate, and King Herod Agrippa with boldness. He will not back down. He will go to the cross and accomplish God’s purpose.
- BUT... the disciples do not leave the Garden strengthened. They were prayerless in the garden. They are in grief too - Maybe because they

didn't understand what was happening. Maybe they were wrestling with the fact that they had made fools of themselves fighting over who was the greatest.

- Regardless, they were prayerless. They don't leave the garden strengthened. They leave as cowards. Jesus was arrested, and they flee. They don't stand with Jesus. This One that they had given three years of their lives to, they cannot stand with when His life is on the line for them.
- Real strength and empowerment when we are in the presence of God.
- **A prayerless life leads to a cowardly life.** If you're not in the presence of God you're not going to stand when life gets tough. You're not going to walk in bold faith. Instead, you're going to give in to temptation. You're going to let the enemy have his way.
- **A prayerful life leads to a confident life.** Confident in God's will. Willing to walk in bold faith. Willing to obey because you've been with God. You know His will as you've wrestled with Him in prayer.
- As a follower of Jesus, you know you need to grow in your ability to pray effectively. What do you do?
- **Just start praying.** It really is a disciplined habit. Often, heart follows habit. The more you make prayer a priority, the more you want to pray because you will begin to see God at work in you. What if over the next week you prayed before you looked at your phone?
- **Pray as a response to God's Word.** God has already spoken to us. Prayer is a response to what He has said. This is why you need to pray with an open Bible. This morning, this passage should lead you to pray. You could spend the next week going through this passage and letting this passage guide the way you pray. E.g., "God, not my will, but your will be done." Where are you putting your will above God's will? Ask for help. Pray that for your spouse, your children, etc. OR, a prayer of

thanksgiving. “Jesus, thank you that you were willing to say, “Your will be done.”

- **Pray with God’s people.** We need to pray more together. Praying at Wando Woods on Sunday night encourages me to pray more faithfully as I hear the people of God cry out to God. We’re starting quarterly prayer gatherings at Northwood because we want to make sure we are led by the Spirit. Read books about prayer (Tim Keller’s prayer book). Learn from others who pray passionately.
- **Pray because you understand God’s love for you.** Gospel: the first Adam rebelled in the Garden of Eden and brought sin and death into the world. The last Adam ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)) submitted in the Garden of Gethsemane and brought life and salvation for all who will believe. God loves you. He desires a relationship with you. Why wouldn’t you want to spend time with the God who saved you through His Son?
- Today, if unbeliever, repent and turn to the One who died and rose again for you. Believer, ask God to help you to grow in your desire to pray.