

Mark 14:32-72

Gethsemane was a garden on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. **What was Jesus' main purpose in going there (v. 32)?** To turn himself in. Our Lord knew that his time had now come when he must be delivered into the hands of his enemies. He wasn't hiding or evading the authorities. He was in control of all events leading up to and including his death. This secluded spot, known also to Judas, was one of their favorite meeting places (John 18:2).¹

Why was Jesus "overwhelmed with sorrow" (v. 34)? It wasn't so much the physical aspect of His upcoming crucifixion. Rather, Jesus knew He was going to bear God's wrath for the sins of the world. He was anticipating His upcoming separation from His Father. When the Father looked upon his beloved son, hanging on the Cross, all He could see was sin – the sin of the world. Jesus became an *enemy* of God at that moment. And the Father turned His back on His Son which was the ultimate act of rejection. The father/son relationship that had existed for all eternity was shattered temporarily during the three hours of darkness when He hung on the Cross. Jesus' death was much more than a case of another martyr dying for another cause.

What is the cup symbolic of (v. 36)? In the Old Testament, the cup was a powerful picture of the wrath and judgment of God. In bearing God's judgment, the sinless Jesus endured the agony of being "made sin."²

In this moment of distress, how did Jesus address His Father (v. 36)? As "Abba," a child's familiar name for "daddy." **What does that say about their relationship?** He felt so close to the Father that He used the familiar name – in spite of what was about to happen. The Jews did not address God as "Abba" because they considered such intimacy disrespectful. Jesus used the word because He, as the Son of God, was on intimate terms with the Father.³ There was an emotional, intimate relationship.

What was Jesus asking the Father (v. 36)? "Are you sure about this? If there is any other possible way to atone for the sins of humanity other than the agony which awaits Me at the cross – please let it be." The silent heavens indicated that there was no other way. The Holy Son of God must bleed and die that sinners might be redeemed from sin⁴ (Hebrews 9:22).

What is the key statement in His prayer (v. 36)? "*Yet not what I will, but what You will.*" A statement demonstrating trust and a spirit of submission to the Father's will. His prayer is a remarkable revelation of the humanity of Jesus. We see emotions ranging from sorrow to agony. The Christian life, as Jesus modeled it, is all about surrender, the surrender of our will to His.

Jesus returned, found them sleeping, and then addressed all three disciples. **What did He command them to do (v. 37)?** Watch and pray. Be alert. **Why?** So they don't fall into temptation. He repeated this scenario with the disciples two more times. If a man cannot pray for one hour, it is unlikely that he will be able to resist temptation in the moment of extreme pressure. No matter how enthusiastic his spirit may be, he must deal with the frailty of his flesh.⁵ **What are some practical examples of how we might "watch and pray?"**

What kind of temptation lay ahead that He would be referring to? To deny Christ. To flee and desert Jesus. Temptation is a primary tool of Satan. They are going to be going into battle against the master tempter. They need to get ready; to prepare. The battle is often *won* or *lost* before the crisis comes. The groundwork needs to be laid before getting to battle stage.

How did the disciples respond to Jesus' confrontation (v. 40)? The disciples "*did not know what to say to Him*" probably because they felt ashamed. They had boasted great spiritual strength, but now they were demonstrating great spiritual weakness.

Mark recorded that Jesus made three separate trips into the depths of the garden to pray, repeating the same words each time (vv. 39-42). **What is the message for us?** Persistence and repetitive prayer are good. Jesus' perseverance in prayer demonstrated the extent of His dependence on the Father.⁶

Why was such a large group of men, soldiers, and guards sent to arrest Jesus (v. 43)? Jesus had previously escaped through the crowds (Luke 4:30, John 8:49, 10:39). They wanted to make sure it didn't happen again.

Why was it necessary for Judas to kiss Jesus (v. 45)? Apparently, Jesus was very average in appearance, with no distinguishing features: *"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire him"* ([Isaiah 53:2](#)). It was necessary that Judas specifically identify Him for the sake of those arresting Jesus, and he chose to identify Jesus by greeting Him with a kiss. Otherwise the Roman soldiers and temple guards would not have known who Jesus was.

How did Peter respond to Jesus' arrest (v. 47)? When the armed henchmen of the betrayer stepped forward and arrested the Lord, Peter quickly drew his sword and sliced off the ear of the servant of the high priest ([John 18:10](#)). It was a natural reaction, not a spiritual one. Peter was using carnal weapons to fight a spiritual battle. The Lord rebuked Peter and miraculously restored the servant's ear ([Luke 22:51](#); [John 18:11](#)).⁷

When Jesus' response made it clear that He would not resist His arrest, what did the disciples do (v. 50)? Their loyalty and confidence in Him as the Messiah collapsed. Everyone deserted Him and fled (14:27). No one remained with Jesus to share His suffering—not even Peter (v. 29).⁸

Why did the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Supreme Court) have such a hard time convicting Jesus (vv. 53-65)? In their eagerness to do away with the Lord Jesus, the religious authorities couldn't get their acts (lies) together. They were building a false case but couldn't fit the pieces of the false puzzle together. The false witnesses kept disagreeing with one another. It was harder to agree on a consistent lie than to tell the simple truth.

Jesus *could* have mounted a magnificent defense. **Why did He keep silent (also before Pilate) and not defend himself (v. 61)?** His silence had been prophesied: [Isaiah 53:7](#) *"He was oppressed and afflicted yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."*

How did Jesus respond to the High Priest's question (v. 62)? Previously, Jesus had not revealed His messiahship because publicly claiming to be the Messiah would have precipitated a premature crisis (1:44; 8:30; 9:9). Now He openly admitted His messiahship because the time for crisis had arrived.⁹ Jesus knew that this confession would seal His conviction.

In a real sense, it wasn't Jesus who was on trial at all. It was really the religious leaders who were on trial – before God. They seemed to win, but they really lost. In much the same way, we all are on trial before God and will be held accountable for what we believe about Jesus Christ.

How did the Sanhedrin react to Jesus comments (v. 63)? They reacted with a self-righteous, melodramatic horror and subsequent abuse and brutality (some began to spit on Him and to beat Him). The Sanhedrin then sentenced Jesus to death. The high priest tore his clothes which was an expression of indignation and outrage. It had become the high priest's traditional response to blasphemy ([Acts 14:14](#)).

The events of vv. 66-72 happened below in the courtyard of the high priest while the hearing just described continued on the floor above. **What does Peter's presence say about him?** It was a testimony to His love and devotion for Jesus. Only one other disciple was there.

Have you ever been in Peter's shoes and made promises to Jesus that you have not kept? When that is the case, there is an appropriate time to weep bitterly -- but then a time to come back to Jesus, who will always receive you back. As the end of this story unfolds, it will provide assurance that if anyone did fail Jesus under the duress of persecution or temptation, there was always a way open for repentance, forgiveness and restoration.

¹ Grassmick, J. D. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (p. 179). Wheaton: Victor Books

² *Ibid.*, 180.

³ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Mark, 2020 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 289

⁴ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1359). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Mark, 2020 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 292

⁷ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1359). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ Grassmick, J. D. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (p. 181). Wheaton: Victor Books

⁹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Mark, 2020 Edition, (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 299