**NOT MY WILL, BUT YOURS BE DONE**

 March 20, 2016

Luke 22:39-62 / Key Verse: 22:42

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Today we are going to study Jesus’ prayer at the garden of Gethsemane. Through Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer, we can learn what prayer is and why we should pray. May God bless each of us to learn about Jesus’ exemplary prayer so that we too may grow as men and women of prayer! I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Last week, we learn that Jesus ended the Passover in the time of Old Testament and opened the First Communion in his own sacrifice. In the Communion, as the bread we eat is one and we all drink from one cup, so we are all one in Christ no matter how different we are in human point of view. This is really beautiful picture and illustration of union; oneness and unity in Christ and with Christ and between each others in Christ. Jesus also gave us a great hope that someday all the believers from every tribe and language and nations will get together and have final Communion in heaven as the final fulfillment of union with Christ and between each others in Christ.

With this great hope, now Jesus knew what was waiting for him. Jesus knew now the time came that he had to prepare himself to become the Passover Lamb; suffer and die on the cross for our sins. How did Jesus prepare himself?

Let’s look at verses 39-42. “Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, ‘Pray that you will not fall into temptation.’ He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed. ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’”

As we know, Jesus always prayed. In the gospel books, we see that Jesus prayed early in the morning, sometimes all night, and in solitary place. The Mount of Olives (there was the garden of Gethsemane) was one of the places where Jesus used to pray. Now Jesus went there to pray as usual. Here we learn that each Christian needs to have prayer habit like Jesus and his or her own a garden of Gethsemane; the quiet place for prayer. (Dr. Henry encouraged us many times to have daily bread and prayer as the first thing you need to do after getting up from the bed as a prayer habit.)

On reaching there to pray, before praying for himself, what did Jesus ask his disciples? Look at verse 40b again, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” Jesus asked them to pray so that they would not fall into temptation. Jesus emphasized this repeatedly in verse 46 again. Look at verse 46. “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” Then, what kind of temptation might the disciples face?

According to previous passage verses 31-32, Satan had asked to test their faith. Here we learn that the core of Satan’s temptation is to test our faith (not to increase our faith but make us lose our faith). In fact, when Jesus was arrested by religious leaders, all the disciples ran away and Peter disowned Jesus three times despite his own strong assertion that he would never disown Jesus even if he had to die with him.

Jesus knew how weak and vulnerable the disciples were; how easy to be tempted to give into fear and lose faith. So Jesus taught them the secret to overcome Satan’s temptation. It was prayer.

As for you, what kind of temptation are you facing? As we had group bible study to prepare this message, I heard that many students are fearful and anxious because of study load, mark, and job search or job interview. Are the ones who already graduated and got a job free from anxiety and fear? No, not at all! They also can be tempted to give into fear and anxiety to save money for the future; like marriage or better or comfortable life in worldly point of view. Remember that temptation will never end as long as we live on earth. Then naturally some questions arise in us. How can we overcome temptation? Is fear and anxiety-free life really possible while we live on earth? Why does God allow temptation to us? According to Jesus, overcoming temptation is possible. And even temptation is allowed to be used for good purpose to us. Prayer is the only way to overcome temptation and overcoming temptation through prayer leads us to grow in godly character; seeking God and depending on him absolutely. When we live depending on our own ability and efforts, we cannot but fall into temptation; we cannot but live as victims of fear and anxiety and despair and frustration.

But today Jesus teaches us to pray not to fall into temptation. In the Bible, there are numerous promises that when we seek God with all our heart and depend on him only, he will help us and provides us with what we need. Prayer is not an option. Prayer is ‘must’ because it is the only way to overcome Satan’s temptation. Temptation doesn’t come always with ugly and evil face but rather, many times in comfortable and beautiful face outwardly. Satan tempts us to give up living by faith and sometimes not to attend SWS making you become afraid of study load and fear of failure. How can we overcome such temptation? We should kneel down and pray to God earnestly. Then God will surely give us enough strength and wisdom to overcome temptations.

After Jesus asked his disciples to pray, Jesus knelt down and prayed. In this way, he showed the example of earnest prayer. What was the content of his prayer? Let’s look at verse 42 again. “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Here, we learn two things. **First, prayer is to bring your trouble or anguish to God**. As we know, Jesus already knew that suffering and death on the cross for the sins of the world was God’s will. But even to Jesus, the suffering and death on the cross was not easy task. Like every human being who doesn’t want to die, Jesus who had full human nature also had the desire not to die. Not to mention physical pain, Jesus also knew how painful it would be to suffer on the cross and be abandoned from the love of the Father even temporarily while he was to be hung on the cross. Jesus had never been separated from the Father God because he was sinless. But now Jesus was facing the total separation from the Father on the cross for the first time in his life. This fact made him cry out with unbearable pain and anguish. So, Jesus earnestly prayed to the Father pouring out his anguish with fervent cries and tears. “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me.” Hebrew 5:7 describes Jesus’ crying prayer, “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions *with fervent cries and tears* to the one who could save *him from death*, …”

When you have trouble, problem, or anguish, where do you go? Do you give up? Do you fight with people emotionally? Do you sleep or spend time in unnecessary internet surfing to escape from the reality? Do you struggle all by yourself to fix only in your own strength? We should remember Jesus who brought his troubled heart and anguish to God the Father in earnest prayer. Like Jesus, we also should pour out our trouble and problem to God in earnest prayer. God will surely answer and give us best way.

To Jesus, how did God answer? Look at verse 43. “An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.” God the Father did not take the cup of cross death from him. Instead, God sent an angel from heaven and strengthened him to obey God’s will. It must have been even harder and more painful decision for God the Father to let his One and Only Son Jesus to suffer and die on the cross and to watch his Son’s painful death on the cross. But this was what God the Father chose and this was the expression of his love for us while we were still sinners. Because of love for you and me; because he could not give up you and me, God decided to give up his own Son on the cross. This was the most painful but best decision for you and me and all people.

**Second, the ultimate purpose of prayer should not be to fulfill our own will but to obey God’s will**. After confirming the Father’s will, Jesus prayer topic moved from saving himself to obeying the Father’s will. “Yet not my will, but yours be done.” To obey the Father’s will, Jesus prayed more earnestly until his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. Here, we learn that the ultimate purpose of our prayer is not just to gain what we want but to obey God’s will. Many people pray for something they want and they stop there. I do not mean that we should not pray for what we want and need. But I mean that just stopping there is problem. Jesus prayed for what he wanted but he did not stop there. He ultimately prayed more earnestly to obey God’s will until his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. Of course we cannot pray always like this as Jesus did but we should learn Jesus’ eagerness to obey God’s will in his prayer.

Look at verse 46, When Jesus came back to the disciples, they were sleeping exhausted from sorrow. They heard Jesus’ asking to pray not to fall into temptation but they could not overcome their sorrow yet because they did not know yet the meaning of Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection.

In verses 47-62, Jesus was betrayed by one of the Twelve disciples; Judas and finally arrested by religious leaders. But when he was fully strengthened through prayer, he was not frightened by anyone. Rather, he took initiative to be arrested because he saw everything from God’s sovereign perspective. On the other hand, the disciples reacted emotionally based on human loyalty and Peter disowned Jesus three times before the rooster crowed exactly as Jesus had said to him. In verse 61-62, Right after he disowned Jesus the third time and the rooster crowed, the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. It was not an angry and condemning face but compassionate face. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him; “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly. Peter did not know his weakness. Peter did not pray. Peter did not know the meaning of Jesus’ suffering and death and resurrection yet. So he could not but fail as a disciple of Jesus. But to Jesus, it was not a failure. Rather, it was really a new start as true Peter. Later, when risen Jesus met Peter and restored love relationship with him, he came to know the meaning of Jesus’ suffering and death and resurrection. Peter deeply realized how weak he was and he became a man of prayer and he could strengthen brothers and sisters who were under the persecution.

Like Peter, when you experience brokenness thinking, “my life is a failure”, please remember that “my failure and brokenness” is not failure in Christ but a new start in Christ.

Let me tell the story of my shepherd. When I was in my mother church in Korea, in a SWS, my shepherd cried out loudly in prayer with much tears after delivering the message. He cried out to God because he thought that he had failed a lot by losing brothers and sisters. Especially when a most sincere brother left, his brokenness became its peak. He cried out to God in much tears because he thought that because of his lack of love, a most sincere brother left from his church community. I had seen his sincere struggle many times but I had never seen such severe brokenness in him. In his broken heart, he earnestly prayed to God for himself that he would grow as a man of love and he also prayed for many SNU students to grow as men and women of love. His sincere brokenness and repentant prayer impacted me. On that day I accepted his prayer deeply and personally in my heart. So, I prayed that I might be one of the students for whom he was praying. This prayer has lasted in my heart even until now and many times whenever I lose love, I am reminded of this prayer. His brokenness was not failure in Christ but led his life to more Christ-centered life.

Today, we learn what prayer is and why we should pray. Prayer is to bring our trouble, problem, and anguish to God and pour out all the burdens of our life to God. Prayer is labor requiring our sweet. Prayer is not only for getting help or solving our problem but also ultimately for being strengthened enough to obey God’s will fully. Prayer is not optional but “must” to overcome temptation and our human and sinful nature.