**Not What I Will, but What You Will**

March 22, 2020

Mark 14:27-52

Key Verse 14:36 “‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’”

Have you experience great anguish and sorrow to the point of death, especially over something you know you had to do, but you did not want to do because it was difficult and uncomfortable? Today’s passage is the famous account of Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane as he wrestles with the reality of the coming cross next day. He knew that he had to take the cross, but he felt into great sorrow as Satan tempted him. This is the second greatest agony that our Lord would experience, the first being on the cross itself. The New Testament never says that Jesus laughed. It never says he was happy. But it does say that he was sad, and it does say that he cried. He experienced sorrow upon sorrow. He had been constantly exposed to the sorrows of life. Jesus felt our pain. He understood the grief and the sorrow that goes along with a fallen world: sin, disease, unbelief, rebellion, rejection, disobedience, suffering, and certainly death. But as much sorrow as he had – sorrow upon sorrow - there was no sorrow, and there was no grief ever in his life like the experience recorded in this passage. This has been called his last temptation. Let’s learn how Jesus won the victory through prayer.

**First,** Jesus predicts Peter’s denial (27-31). On the way to the Mount of Olives, Jesus told them that they would all fall away. Look at verse 27. “You will all fall away...for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’” This is the prophecy in Zechariah 13:7. Here, “shepherd” refers to Jesus, and “sheep,” to the disciples. Jesus knew that his disciples’ faith was not strong enough to withstand the approaching trials and Jesus’ suffering and death. In desperation, they would all scatter and run away to look for a hiding place. Jesus told them this so that after their failure, they might remember what he said and stand firm in the time of despair and sense of failure. How did Jesus help them? Jesus gave them the promise of God about his resurrection. Look at verse 28. “But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” In short, Jesus said, “See you there!” This promise does not seem to be much of help to the disciples, who would soon be in great troubles. However, this promise declares that even though evil men put Jesus to death, he will rise again on the third day. After that, Jesus would give eternal salvation, and a living hope in the kingdom of God to those who believe. This sure promise enabled them to stand firm through this shocking event. Later the women remembered this word and believed in Jesus’ resurrection.

How did they respond to Jesus’ words? Peter got so upset when he heard that he would fall away from his master. He could not believe that he would fall away from Jesus like a coward. He could not believe that he would be a failure in his loyalty to his master. So he declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” In verse 30 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth...today--yes, tonight--before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him three times that night. What a surprising prediction! The disciples’ hearts must have sunk at his words. They must have doubted their ears. In verse 31, Peter got offended and said, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” His heart was right, but what he said was based on his feelings, not on faith. Peter did not know that human feeling is changeable. He did not know that no one can overcome the devil’s temptation by his own effort. Peter was too immature to accept Jesus’ prediction, “...you will fall away.” Peter was so spiritually blind that he could not accept the glorious promise of Jesus’ resurrection and of meeting him again face to face in Galilee. Peter was too emotional to accept this glorious promise.

**Second**, Jesus decided to accept God’s will at Gethsemane (32-42). Look at verse 32. Jesus went with his disciples to Gethsemane to pray as the final preparation for his rejection, suffering and crucifixion. He said to them, “Sit here while I pray” (32b). “He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said to them. ‘Stay here and keep watch.’” Sorrow is mental suffering and spiritual agony. What was causing this extreme sorrow? Was it the betrayal of Judas? Was it the desertion of the 11 disciples? Was it the crucifixion? It was something more than those things. It was the anticipation of experiencing the Father’s wrath for our sin and embracing the role of becoming a sacrifice for sin. To become the sin offering. He is facing something completely alien to himself. He has never known sin. He has never known the wrath of God. He has never known alienation from God.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was lonely. In time of trouble we want someone with us. We do not necessarily want him to do anything. We do not necessarily want to talk to him and or have him talk to us. We only want him there. Jesus was like that. Jesus had to do battle with Satan in prayer. It was not an easy battle. “Gethsemane” means “oil press,” where olives were pressed until oil was extracted. Likewise, Jesus was pressed until his sweat became like drops of blood. He needed his disciples’ prayer support. That was the reason Jesus took Peter, James and John and said, “Stay and keep watch.” But he didn’t stop there. Look at verse 35. “Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.” At that time Jesus could not move because of sorrow. But when he could not move one step more, he went a little farther to come to God. In times of sorrow we human beings indulge in human thinking at random; we don’t move. Instead we sleep, or sit to watch Youtube mindlessly. But when his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, Jesus went to God. By going a little farther he overcame his human limitations and approached God in prayer. Thus he showed us a good example of how we must go to God when we are distressed by mental pain and agony of soul. In this he shows us a good example of how to overcome human limitation.

Look at verse 36. “‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’” This is Jesus’ actual prayer. Jesus said, “Abba! Father!” Abba meaning Papa, Daddy. No Jew would ever even call God Father, let alone call him Abba. But our Lord calls on the affectionate, intimate, personal name of God as if pleading for that intimate love to rescue him. “Everything is possible for you,” he says. Theoretically that is true. That is an absolute fact; all things are possible for God. There is nothing that God doesn’t have the power to do. He can do whatever he wants in the whole universe. However, it is not true actually. God couldn’t allow Jesus to miss the cross. When he says, “Everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me,” that presents a problem. If he doesn’t go to the cross, then we have some big problems. Satan wins; heaven is empty; hell is full; the Bible isn’t true; the promises of God are lies; there is no salvation. Now, theoretically, God can do anything he wants. But God has already put himself on record that salvation will come through blood sacrifice. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. God can’t go back on his word. God never breaks his promise.

The request, nonetheless, is clear. We know what is on Jesus’ heart, “Take this cup from me.” Cup is a symbol from the Old Testament of divine wrath. A cup of wrath. You see that in Psalm 75, Isaiah 51, Jeremiah 25. “Let this cup of wrath pass from me. Remove it.” Jesus has to drink the wrath of his Father. That is something he had never experienced. He knew it was coming. But Satan is tempting him again not to take the cup. Satan has been tempting Jesus not to go to the cross since day one. This temptation is far greater than the previous encounters with Satan. The first one is the temptation in the desert after fasting 40 days. Satan came at him and said, “You are hungry; you have power to make the stone into bread. Why are you suffering needlessly? Bow to me, and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world.” Satan was trying to make him avoid the cross. “You don’t need to be rejected. You don’t need to die. You can have the kingdoms now.” That was the first temptation. The second time was after Jesus predicted his suffering and death to his disciples. Then Peter rebuked Jesus, saying, “No, you can’t. No, Lord. That can’t happen.” Then Jesus rebuked Peter, “Get behind me, Satan.” Satan’s effort to keep him from the cross came through the mouth of Peter. Satan didn’t want Jesus crucified. Satan is not behind the crucifixion of Jesus. That is the last thing Satan wants. He wants to keep Jesus from the cross.

Here, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Satan shows up again. Satan tries to keep Jesus from the cross. The experience in the garden, Satan’s aim is, will drive Jesus to say to the Father, “No, I can’t do it.” If Satan succeeds in that, then hell is the only place people will ever live forever. Heaven will be empty; God’s word will be untrue, the promise of salvation a lie. This is the great battle. No wonder the struggle was so severe that Jesus said, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.” But then comes his triumphant resolution, “Yet not what I will, but what you will.” Not what I will, but what you will. In the end, that is what he always said. He said over and over, “I only do what the Father tells me, shows me, desires of me, and what I see the Father do. I follow only his direction.” Let’s just call it triumphant submission. He yields to the will of the Father in each of those three cycles of prayer. But he finally comes out triumphant. The last temptation is over. He is resolved triumphantly to do what his Father has asked him to do; he is going to the cross. In the movie, “the Passion of the Christ,” Jesus crushed the snake under his feet. He won the victory over the devil.

After prayer, he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. From among them, he awakened Simon and said, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?” He went on to say in verse 38, “The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.” In other words, they were willing to take part in his prayer labor, but they couldn’t. Why? It was because they didn’t pray. The harder these physical men tried to open their eyes, the heavier their eyes became. Their eyes did not obey them. While Jesus was struggling in prayer before the cup of suffering and death, they were struggling with their sleepiness. There are many people who struggle with their sleepiness or sleeplessness and die in regret. When he came to them a second time, they were sleeping. But this time, Jesus did not wake them up. Perhaps he covered them with a blanket so that they could sleep better. When he returned a third time, he saw that they were oversleeping. So he said, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough!” On the other hand, Jesus himself was fully prepared to meet any kind of trial--even crucifixion. The time of suffering came upon him, but he was ready to confront it. Jesus’ heart was not shaken by the thought of drinking the wrath of God. Rather, Jesus was full of spirit and said, “The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

**Third,** Jesus was arrested (43-52). Look at verse 43. To our surprise, the traitor was Judas, one of the Twelve. It is unbelievable that one of the Twelve had stood on the side of the enemies. Judas, the betrayer, coming up to Jesus and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. It was a signal to the Sanhedrin police. When he followed Jesus without any commitment, Judas became a betrayer and a man of tragedy. He saw Jesus’ death as a failure, and he did not want to be on losing side. He was too smart, and he wanted to get out at least with some money. It is tragic that Judas saw and heard the same promise from Jesus like the other disciples, but he never listened to Jesus. It is because he had no commitment to God. He followed Jesus to satisfy his own ambition. Look at verse 47. “Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.” John 18:10 tells us that this was Peter. It sounds like Peter. In this terrifying atmosphere, Peter was the one who drew his sword to hack a man. It was an expression of his loyalty to Jesus. We see Peter’s readiness to do something for Jesus. But his impulsive action was not at all help to Jesus. Look at verses 51,52. “A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.” It was Mark, the author of this gospel. He was the ancestor of streaking. He was a city boy and a mommy boy, filled with fear. But later, he was changed and became a gospel writer.

In this passage we learn how to fight spiritually in prayer. Jesus was betrayed by his own disciple Judas. The other disciples all deserted him. There was nothing but heart-break behind and torture and crucifixion ahead, yet he won the victory over Satan’s temptation. What made it possible for him to be so victorious? It was prayer--a spiritual battle. When he prayed, God helped him to overcome the power of death. May God help us through prayer to make a decision of faith to obey the will of God.

Big Idea: Make a decision to obey God’s will through prayer