



The Agony in The Garden

Matthew 26: 36-46

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took

with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Luke 22: 40-46

When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength.

In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

Mark 14: 32-42

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." He came and found them sleeping; Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Meditation

From the supper room in Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples went out into the night to the quiet grove of olive trees called Gethsemane on the western slope of Mount Olivet. Taking Peter, James and John, witnesses of his transfiguration in glory, he withdrew deeper into the garden. They would witness now his fear and hear his anxious prayer.

Going on alone, a stone's throw away, Jesus fell upon the ground and began to pray a doleful prayer: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me. Yet not my will but yours be done." (*Mk 14:36*) So troubled and distressed had he become by what he saw before him - a brutal death- that "his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground". (*Luke 22:43*) Returning three times to seek his disciples' support, he found them asleep.

In that dark night, when evil had its way, Jesus found support in only One. "Abba, Father." A child's cry came from his heart. Cold fear, betrayal, the desertion of friends, the false judgements of others, the whips, the nails, the hard wood could not stop it. His childlike trust in God would not be broken, even through the hours of pain and tears.

When words no longer could be said, nor thoughts no longer formed, that confident prayer uttered in the garden would remain in Jesus' heart. "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you."

His prayer did not go unanswered. Luke's account of the agony of Jesus says: "An angel came from heaven to strengthen him."

- ✠ What does a disciple learn from all of this?
- ✠ That he will watch with us in the dark gardens of our life?
- ✠ That he will teach us this same childlike prayer?
- ✠ That he will send an angel too to strengthen us?

Prayer

Lord, have mercy.

Jesus, Eternal Son of God

Jesus, born into the human family

Jesus, rejected by the world you came to save

Jesus, bargained for and sold for money

Jesus, foreseeing your torments and sweating blood,

Jesus, betrayed by a false friend,

Jesus, deserted by those you loved,

Jesus, slapped in the face and spit upon in a court of justice,

Jesus, accused by liars,

Jesus, disowned by Peter,

Jesus, insulted by Herod,

Jesus, condemned to death by Pilate

Jesus, beaten with whips,

Jesus, crowned with thorns,

Jesus, rejected for the murderer, Barabbas,

Jesus, burdened with a cross,

Jesus, stripped of your clothing,

Jesus, nailed to a cross,

Jesus, taunted in your pain,

Jesus, abandoned,

Jesus, shedding the last drop of your blood,

Jesus, dying for us,

Jesus, laid in a tomb,

Jesus, rising in glory,

Jesus, ascending into heaven,

Jesus, sending down the Holy Spirit,

Jesus, our ransom,

Jesus, our brother,

Jesus, our God,

have mercy on us.