

SUFFERING AND STRENGTH IN THE GARDEN

Mark 14:32-42

INTRODUCTION

The **Act of Uniformity** was an Act of the Parliament of England in 1662, which prescribed the form of public prayers, administration of sacraments, and other rites of the Established Church of England, following all the rites and ceremonies and doctrines prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Over 2,000 pastors refused to take the oath and were expelled from the Church of England in what became known as the Great Ejection of 1662. This created the concept of non-conformity, with a substantial section of English society excluded from public affairs for a century and a half.

One “Non-conformist,” **John Flavel**, would preach in the forest at midnight to spread the Gospel. Flavel made this powerful statement:

“The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying.”

The Bible teaches this by precept, by doctrine, and by example.

Jesus in Gethsemane is the most powerful example – the most notable example of suffering, of worship, of strength, of comfort, of purpose and of goodness in God’s perfect plan.

READ Mark 14:32-42

The overwhelming agony that Jesus experiences is far beyond human comprehension. As the perfect God-Man, He perfectly understands.

Like no other passage before, this really grabs me in the sense of we can’t begin to grasp what He suffers. We can’t begin to understand the agony Jesus suffers - to bear the weight of all of us from Adam and Eve forward is incomprehensible.

Proposition: There are four ministries of Jesus Christ in today’s passage:

1. Sympathy
2. Suffering
3. Supplication
4. Strength

So That: We would be in Awe, Amazement, and Praise at The High Price paid by Jesus.

- God’s Astonishing Love for Sinners
- God’s Intense Hatred of Sin

I. Sympathy Mark 14:32-33a

Point – He wants the comfort of the presence of his apostles.

- He wants → sympathetic companionship
- In His humanity, He wants the prayers and companionship of, in particular, His inner circle
 - Peter, James and John in the Garden of Gethsemane

Proof – Mark 14:32 – “And they came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here until I have prayed.” ^{33b} And He took with Him Peter and James and John,”

“Gethsemane” – Greek form of Hebrew word meaning "oil-press"

- beyond the brook Kidron at the foot of the mount of Olives
- where oil was made from olives of Mt. Olives
- **quiet** and **secluded** - shade of its trees give shelter from the heat and privacy
- a favorite place for Jesus to retreat with His disciples (**John 18:2**)

The Garden of Gethsemane is the place of most intense spiritual **Suffering** of Jesus Christ. It is also the place of the most intense spiritual **Strength** of Jesus Christ.

He leaves the 8: Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot

“Peter and James and John” - these 3 men were His inner circle

- they had been with him when he healed Jairus’ daughter – **Mark 5:37**
- They saw the future glory on the Mount of Transfiguration – **Mark 9:2**
- Now, they see the deepest agony of His soul

14:34b – “remain here and keep watch”

2 Commands: – Solitude and Sympathy.


Solitude

“remain here” – aorist imperative

- He knows He must drink this cup alone
- He understands His own words - **Isaiah 63:3** – “I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no man with Me.”

Sympathy

“keep watch” – present imperative – standing duty

– : - 'to stay awake, to be watchful.'

Consider this illustration:

I don't know if you have watched over someone you care about or if someone has done so for you, but it is an important action. Perhaps you have taken care of someone who is ill, perhaps as a parent taking care of your children or as a spouse taking care of your spouse.

Jesus wants their support. In His humanity, He wants their prayers and support. In this way, God wants believers to be there for each other.

II. Suffering

Mark 14:33b-34

Point – unparalleled agony of Christ - the overwhelming agony far beyond human comprehension

Proof – 14:33b-34 – “And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled.” ³⁴ And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch.””

There are two strong terms describing the strongest possible anguish

1. “**very distressed**” – to be thrown into terror – terror-struck
 - Jesus is thrown into a pit of horror to the point of death
2. “**troubled**” –from τ and θ extreme displacement, not at home, *to be troubled, distressed*

In case we don’t get the point ...

“**deeply grieved**” – surrounded with grief – engulfed with sorrow “**to the point of death**”

There have been hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of men and women who have faced horrible death by torture. Jesus’ agony is not primarily because of fear of physical pain...

→ it is the ultimate horror of separation from the Father! → **spiritual agony**

- He sees the tsunami of His Father’s wrath coming
- He is swept to the very limits of His endurance

Jesus is able to perceive the horror of sin in a way we cannot.

In the following excerpt from “*Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God*”, Jonathan Edwards is talking about the wrath of God over every sinner. Some of the words he uses to describe God’s wrath is a little of what Jesus is experiencing in the Garden of Gethsemane.

There are **black clouds of God's wrath** now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like **great waters** that are dammed for the present ... If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power.

The **bow of God's wrath** is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Jesus in Gethsemane has a near view of this burning furnace of wrath, into which he is to be cast; he is brought to the mouth of the furnace. He looks into it, sees its raging flames. He knows where He is going and what he is about to suffer. This is what fills His soul with darkness and agony.

III. Supplication Mark 14:35-36

Point – Prayer is vitally important to Jesus

- Run to prayer. Walk with God. Pray your desires. Trust God.

→ **Supplication** (Prayer) in the midst of suffering

Proof – Mark 14:35-36 – “**And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground, and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by.** ³⁶ **And He was saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."**”

In the midst of His suffering, prayers flow out. The second member of the Trinity, in His humanity, prays in the perfect way to help us understand His suffering.

“fell to the ground”

- Jesus normally prayed standing with His arms spread
- this is a gesture of extreme urgency – shows the intensity of His agony
- in the parallel account of **Matthew 26:39** – Jesus fell “on His face”

After having just observed the Passover, He prays in His humanity, for the wrath of God to pass over

“Abba! Father!”

- “Abba” only appears in Scripture with “Father”
- This only occurs three times - see also Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6 – “spirit of adoption as sons”!

“remove” – aorist imperative – urgent plea

“cup” – the cup of divine wrath → Suffering

The 3rd Cup of Passover was the **Cup of Blessing**

... also called the **Cup of Redemption**

- The reason why we hear it most often preached as a cup of blessing rather than the cup of redemption is because in redemption, there is a price to be paid. For Jesus, this is His own blood.

Psa 75:8 – “For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain *and* drink down its dregs.”

Rev 14:10 – “he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.”

Jesus drinks the Cup of:

Sorrow

Fierce Anger

Alienation from God

God’s Wrath

So we may drink the Cup of:

Joy

Pleasure

Adoption by God

God’s Mercy

Before we drink the cup of joy and blessing with Him in the Kingdom → He must drink the cup of the fierce wrath of God!

In the parallel account in **Luke 22:43-44**, an angel appeared to strengthen Him

“Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.”

The drops of blood refer to a condition known as *hematidrosis* which describes effusion of blood in perspiration. This occurs when the subcutaneous capillaries dilate and burst, mingling blood with sweat. This is caused by extreme anguish or physical strain.

It is quite possible that Jesus was praying out loud

Hebrews 5:7 “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death.”

“yet not what I will, but what You will.””

- The heart of His prayer
- He submits His will to the will of God

John 5:30 – “I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

John 6:38 – “I have come down from heaven ... to do ... the will of Him who sent Me.”

Consider this illustration:

Turn to: **Daniel 3:17-18**. Note what the three godly men say to king Nebuchadnezzar, right before their time in the fire.

- In verse 17, they tell him that their God is able to save them from it
- In verse 18, even if He does not deliver us here, out of the fire, He will ultimately deliver us out of the king’s hand

This is the heart of Biblical prayer. Pray your desires (**Psalm 37:4**) under the umbrella of the Sovereignty of God.

Charles Spurgeon – “Be perfectly content to leave the result of your prayer in his hands, who knows when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold.”

Another Illustration:

Dr. Craig Saterlee, a seminary professor in Chicago, had been legally blind since birth. He was introduced one time as “a believer in the power of prayer”. He graciously explained, “I don’t believe in the power of prayer. I believe in the power and presence of God, so I pray.”

- Prayer is the flowing out of our knowledge of the confidence we have in the finished work of Jesus Christ
- We believe that He cares for us when we are delighting ourselves in His statutes and laws

Prayer is not a means of bending God’s will to our will but of submitting our will to His.

- It’s OK to pray for a change in Circumstance following the example of Jesus in Gethsemane.
- But let’s make sure and pray at least as much for a change in Character

Don’t pray as much for lighter burdens. Pray more for stronger backs.

Beware the mindset of “Unanswered Prayer” → it will cause cavities in your soul

Application: → Prayer Generated by the Word of God
→ Prayer Consummated in the Glory of God

IV. Suffering – Part 2

Mark 14: 37-41a

Point: Friends will fail us. Family will fail us. Brothers and sisters in Christ will fail us. God will NEVER fail us. Enemies will assail us but God will NEVER fail us. We may feel deserted. Aloneness becomes loneliness. One man said, “Joy is a partnership. Grief weeps alone.” We see the beginning of the scatter of the sheep in the text from last week.

The theme of Christ being abandoned dominates verses 27-72.

Mark 14:37 – “**And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?"**”

This is the first use of “**Simon**” since **Mark 3:16** “**Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter)**”

Up to 3:16, Mark called him Simon, after 3:16, Mark had always used Peter... until now

- “Peter” : stone, rock – firmness and strength of soul
- “Simon”: you are not living up to your name.

Peter just said “I am ready to die with you!” (verse 29)

- Now you can’t even stay awake one hour?!?!?
- This only adds to Jesus’ anguish

Mark 14:38 – “**“Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**”

Point – “**watching**” and “**praying**” are weapons against temptation

- Temptation comes through a door that has deliberately been left open.
- Opportunity has to knock, but sometimes temptation just has to stand outside and whistle...

Application:

Prayer will keep you far from sin
... just like sin will keep you far from prayer

Mark 14:39 – “**And again He went away and prayed, saying the same words.**”

Matt 26:42 – “**My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done.**”

Mark 14:40 –

“And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.”

- They have no excuse.
- They give no excuse.

Even impulsive, word-multiplying Peter is at a loss for words.

Mark 14:41 – “**And He came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?"**”

- Three times Peter falls asleep
- Three times Peter will deny knowing Christ
- Three times Jesus will ask Peter, “Do you love Me?”

His inner circle has failed Him. The betrayal is great. However, His Father NEVER fails Him!

→ If we have any disappointment vertically, it is because of our own sin.

Consider this hymn:

Hallelujah! What a Friend!

Jesus! What a Friend for sinners!
Jesus! Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,
He, my Savior makes me whole.

Hallelujah! what a Savior!
Hallelujah! what a friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,
He is with me to the end;
Hallelujah, what a friend! Hallelujah!

IV. Strength

Mark 14: 41b-42

Point – He does not flee from agony. He faces agony head on!

Proof – **Mark 14:41b-42** – “**It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.** ⁴²“**Arise, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!**””

As they approach, Jesus can see the Roman soldiers from Fort Antonia and the chief priests and elders. Most clearly of all, He can see Judas, who leads the group. He does not wait for His enemies to come to Him, He goes out to meet them.

“**the hour**” – divinely appointed time for His sacrifice

- This is His “Cup” and He is here to drink it.
- This is His “Hour” and He is there to meet it.

CONCLUSION

God gives Him something better than the passed cup. God gives victory over death.

“For the joy set before Him [He] endured the cross, despising the shame” Hebrews 12:2