

“Gethsemane”
Mark 14:32-42
(Preached at Trinity, April 5, 2015)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Tonight we come to the passage that describes the agony of our Lord as He prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. After the Last Supper they returned to the Mount of Olives.
Mark 14:26 NAU - "After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."
 2. After speaking to His disciples about the great temptation that is about to befall them Jesus departed to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. This garden was located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives and was probably privately owned. He took with Him the three disciples closest to Him—His inner circle, the same three that witnessed the Transfiguration – Peter, James, and John. They were also the three He took with Him when healed Jairus' daughter. It was also Peter, James, and John who were prominent in the discussion of the destruction of Jerusalem.
Mark 13:3-4 NAU - "As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately,
⁴ "Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"
 - a. The Bible doesn't tell us why Jesus had an inner circle. But it is true that these three men stood out in prominence and faithfulness. Peter demonstrated his willingness to step forward and lead. James was bold with his brother John. He was the first apostle to be martyred. And John had great love for Christ and knew of Christ's love for him. At least four times he is referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved.
 - b. Beyond this the answer has not been revealed but we need to understand that God doesn't have to fit into the mold many try to force upon Him today. Many feel that in order for God to be just He must treat all men absolutely equal. They have this egalitarian idea of fairness.
 - God doesn't have to treat all man equally in order to treat all men justly. God has chosen His elect unto salvation. That is mercy. He has chosen to leave the remaining to perish in their sin. That is justice.
 - Jesus chose particular men to serve as His Apostles and He chose three from among them to serve in His inner circle.
- Matthew Henry: "As there are distinguishing favours which are given to disciples and not to the world, so there are to some disciples and not to others. All the saints are a people *near to Christ*, but some lie in his bosom."

- c. It is not uncommon for pastors to have an “inner circle.” This is not a matter of personality or favoritism. Rather it is most often due to their faithfulness and great energy and labor that benefits the church. A pastor spends much time with the weak and unfaithful, but when he needs counsel or someone he can trust to complete an important task he turns to those who have proven faithful.
3. As we come to this passage we are nearing the time of the crucifixion. Jesus knew that His hour had come. It was never in doubt. It had been purposed before the world began.
1. Clear from the Book of Acts
Acts 2:23 NAU - "this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death."
 2. Jesus was fully aware of His purpose
John 12:27 NAU - "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour."
Mark 9:31 NAU - "For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."
4. I want to direct you to several observations from this passage. God has been pleased to record for us the most intense prayer ever recorded.
- I. First, observe the agony of our Lord
- A. We must never forget the humanity of Christ.
1. Jesus was a human being in every way. He was also God. But we must not see a blending of our Lord's two natures as if He were super human. Jesus was fully man.
 2. Agony is a word to describe the greatest of human suffering – it might be physical pain or perhaps emotional pain such as the death of a loved one.
 3. Jesus was in genuine agony at the prospect of what was about to occur.
Mark 14:33-34 NAU - "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."
Luke 22:44 NAU - "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground."
 4. No one wants to die
 - a. We all hope to die a painless death after a long life—perhaps to die quietly in our sleep.
 - b. Jesus was only 33 years old
 - c. Jesus was about to suffer an indescribable death
 5. There would have been great agony over the physical torments which were about to occur. We cannot dismiss this.
 - a. On one hand He was filled with joy at the prospect of doing the will of the Father.
Hebrews 12:2 NAU - "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Mark 14:35-36 NAU - "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."

- b. Yet, He agonized over what was about to occur
The physical torments were to be great – and unjust
He knew that in just a few hours He would be scourged, beaten, spit upon, nailed to the cross
- 6. The physical torments could not compare with what would have been the agony of a mighty inner torment
There would have surely been great Satanic attack
John 14:30 NAU - " will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;"
 - a. The outcome was already assured
John 12:31-32 NAU - "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."
 - b. Satan was about to receive a mortal wound
Genesis 3:15 NAU - "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
- 7. Most agonizing, however, He was about to become sin and was about to endure God's infinite judgment upon sin. He was about to drink the full cup of God's wrath.
 - a. The whole cause of the cross is sin – sin hated and despised
Jesus was about to become sin
 - b. He was about to be totally alienated from the Father
- B. The thing we should notice is that in the midst of His agony He went to the Father
 - 1. Our problem is that in times of trial we are often prayer less
James 4:2 NAU - "You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask."
 - 2. We don't pray because we don't truly believe God
Jesus went before God praying as the eternal Son before His Father – there was an intimacy – "Abba Father" – a term of close relationship. It is the term that all of God's children speak in confidence.
Galatians 4:6 NAU - "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

II. The Loneliness of our Lord

- A. He sought the prayers of His brethren
Verses 37-38, 40-41

- 1. This, too, should be our example
Acts 12:5 NAU - " So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God."

2. We should seek each other's prayers
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:25 NAU** - "Brethren, pray for us."
 - 2 Thessalonians 3:1 NAU** - "Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as *it did* also with you;"
 - Hebrews 13:18 NAU** - "Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things."
 - Colossians 4:2-4 NAU** - "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; ³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak."
- B. In our Lord's hour of need, however, He was all alone
 1. His closest disciples had fallen asleep in His greatest hour of need
He came to them as if to find comfort from them yet they slept
 2. The best of men are frail and weak, yet God does not forsake us

III. The Obedient Trust of our Lord

Mark 14:36 NAU - "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."

- A. The very life of Jesus was centered upon honoring the Father
 - Philippians 2:8 NAU** - "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
 1. It was His sustenance
John 4:34 NAU - "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."
 2. He viewed His entire life as a pursuit of serving the Father – it was His work.
John 17:4 NAU - "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do."
- B. His trust was in the Father
 1. This is what He was trying to teach the disciples
Mark 14:38 NAU - "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
 2. We are in constant danger – we must continually seek God's strength
That He might protect us
That He might keep us awake, always watching
1 Thessalonians 5:6 NAU - "so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober."
 3. While they should have been praying they slept. Now it was too late.
The hour of temptation had come.
 4. Our flesh is weak – we must have His strength

IV. The Courage of our Lord

Mark 14:41-42 NAU - "It is enough; the hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"

A. After praying three times He was strengthened to face the crucifixion
Luke 22:41-43 NAU - "And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray, ⁴² saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." ⁴³ Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him."

1. He knew Judas and the soldiers were already on their way
2. The temptation would have been to flee, yet He knew His duty
 He said, "Get up, let us be going" not "Get up, let us flee"

B. We must never forget the demands of discipleship
Matthew 8:19-22 NAU - "Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." ²⁰ Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." ²¹ Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." ²² But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and allow the dead to bury their own dead."

Mark 8:34-35 NAU - "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. ³⁵ "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."

1. Christianity demands courage, steadfastness
1 Corinthians 15:58 NAU - "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord."
2. Doing our Lord's work demands putting aside our personal comforts
 - a. Going door-to-door, passing out tracts, speaking to strangers is difficult
 - b. Living a holy life in an unholy world is difficult – true Christianity is becoming more and more hated

Conclusion:

1. May God grant us to recognize the great danger of the hour.
2. Pray lest you enter into temptation and fall into sin. Pray and He will give you strength.