

OVERVIEW SERIES:

Matthew 26:39-44

Jesus And His Prayer

These verses show us the intense supplication of Jesus to His heavenly Father. They also show us the indifference, the self-centeredness, and the inability of the disciples to watch and pray. Jesus fully understood the power of the enemy. The disciples, however, did not fully comprehend the present danger.

Jesus knew what would soon come, and His clear knowledge of this coming event caused Him to fall “on his face” to the ground. He prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

By using the phrase “if it be possible,” Jesus did not wonder if escaping the cross was within the realm of possibility. Jesus knew that He could have walked away from death at any time He chose. He explained this to the unbelieving Pharisees. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:17-18). God the Father sent His Son to the cross, but He did not force Him to go. And in this phrase Jesus is asking if there could be another way to deliver men from sin. The agony of becoming sin was becoming almost unbearable for the sinless Son of God; but yet He said to the Father, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

One writer observed that “This conflict between what “I will” and what “Thou wilt” reveals the reality of the amazing fact that Jesus was truly tempted. Though sinless and unable to sin, He clearly could be brought into the real conflict of temptation.”

When Jesus returned to the three disciples, He “findeth them asleep.” That discovery, though not unexpected, must have added greater grief and distress. The disciples were sleeping at the moment of the greatest spiritual conflict ever known to man. Never has there ever been a greater spiritual conflict in all of history as the conflict that took place that night.

Some commentators believe that the disciples were asleep because of their indifference. Most likely they were asleep because of all that was happening, not indifference. Sleep is often a means of escape, and the disciples may have slept more out of confusion and depression than apathy.

Three times Jesus went to His Father in prayer, and all three times He prayed the same thing. His sorrow was heavy. His grief was heavy. His loneliness was great. This had to be done, and only Jesus could accomplish the Father's will. Jesus, and Him alone, had to pay the price for man's sins. There was no other way. Sin had to be paid for, and the price was death – the death of the spotless, sinless, Son of God. O what He suffered for you and I.

By: Jerry W. Arnold

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