

## Gethsemane

Mark 14:32-42.

Sunday morning, February 8, 2009.

### I. The Lord's agony of spirit.

- A. Coming to the garden of Gethsemane, "Oil press," the Lord left eight of His disciples near the entrance, while he took James and Peter and John further along with Him. They had been the ones who had been with Him on the mount of transfiguration while Moses and Elijah had spoken with the Lord about His upcoming sufferings. Here they are made to witness his anguish of soul.
- B. In the presence of the three disciples "He began to be troubled and deeply distressed," or "began to be filled with horror and anguish."  
He expressed this distress to His disciples saying: "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death;" or it might be rendered "I am overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."
- C. Then He left the three behind and went "a stone's throw further into the garden by Himself, "and fell to the ground, and prayed..." Literally this reads "He was throwing Himself to the ground, and was praying..."

### II. Understanding the Lord's agony of spirit.

- A. There is much mystery in this passage.  
Witnessing His agony of spirit we, like Moses, stand on holy ground.  
Here is a kind of suffering taking place that we, as believers, shall never know.
- B. But how shall we understand this suffering?
  1. Why is the almighty Son of God, who did so many powerful works, and had faced so many impossible situations, so heavy and disquieted here?
  2. Why is the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into this world to lay down His life for His sheep, seemingly so afraid at death's approaching hour?
  3. Many people in history have faced death with seemingly far greater courage than did the Lord here. What do we make of that?
- C. No doubt the agony we witness here had a lot more to it than the physical sufferings that awaited Him.
  1. Here we witness the burden of sin and guilt being laid on the sinless Lamb of God. We can not possible know what that must have been like, but we see Christ's human nature, even as supported by His divine nature, staggering under the load.
  2. He who knew no sin, was being made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21.
  3. He who is the eternally blessed Son of God was being made the Accursed One and hung on a cross, a tree, as such. Galatians 3:13.
  4. He would face it all alone.  
He would walk the valley of death (not the shadow of death, but death itself);  
He would do so bearing the burden of our sin and guilt as the Accursed One.  
He would do it all alone; forsaken of His disciples and even of His Father.  
He would do it with the powers of outer darkness descending upon Him.  
Here we see Him descending into hell as the Nicean Creed puts it.

Is this not the greatest of all possible calamities that could befall a man?  
Is it any wonder that the sinless Son of God staggers at the prospect?

### III. How the Lord's suffering differs from ours.

Many people have suffered greatly in the body. Thousands have been crucified in history; some took as long as three days to die. Hundreds have been crucified in the Sudan over the past decade alone.

Many have been scourged; the Apostle Paul alone was scourged, not once, but five times. Many have endured great cruelties, and often over many days; how is that different from the sufferings of the Lord Jesus?

A. In psalm 23 we read of the sufferings of the godly as a passing through the valley of the shadow of death, and as a being in the presence of once enemies.

B. The believer passes only through the shadow of death; not death itself.

C. The believer does not go alone; the Lord goes with Him.

D. The believer needs to fear no evil because of the Lord's overruling presence.

E. The believer has a table of the Lord's grace and promises prepared for him in

the

presence of his enemies.

F. The believer has his head anointed by the Lord with the oil of the Holy Spirit, even in the presence of his enemies.

G. The believer's cup is full, and runs over with the grace and goodness of the Lord, even in, and often especially in the presence of his enemies.

H. The Lord's goodness and mercy follow (literally pursue like a sheepdog) him, and they drive him into the Lord's house to dwell there forevermore.

I. Our suffering sanctifies us; it consumes only our dross; it drives us into the arms of a loving heavenly Father. His sufferings destroyed Him; cursed Him, and separated and isolated Him from His Father and His earthly companions.

### IV. How did the Lord face these sufferings?

A. Prayerfully.

Here especially did He offer up "prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was He heard because of His godly fear." Hebrews 5:7

An angel was sent who strengthened Him in answer to His cries.

B. With a total surrender of His will.

"...Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

C. With sleeping companions who had been so well intentioned, but whose flesh proved to be weak. He does not rebuke them, and is not bitter toward them.

He simply says: "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come..." What was enough? His watching and praying, for He was strengthened, and their sleeping and resting, for they were about to flee.

D. Later, when the disciples were charged with the great commission, they no doubt thought back of their great weakness, and had doubts about the future. How would the Kingdom fare in their hands? Here the Lord gives them His promise:

"You shall receive power... Acts 1:8. That power made all the difference!