

Conversations with Jesus: "Prayer in the Garden" **Matthew 26:36-47**

1. What principles or observations from Pastor Ronald's message did you find to be helpful or insightful?
2. Before His arrest, Jesus went to a place called Gethsemane, which means "an oil press". In a grove of olives trees, oil presses were used to extract oil from the fruit. Jesus leaves His disciples (except for Peter, James, and John) and begins to pray. He was experiencing sorrow and grief unlike anything he had known to this point in His earthly life. He was about to be "pressed" and crushed for our iniquities. And He asked His disciples to stay and keep watch with Him. In this hour of great need, the Lord wanted those with a sympathetic understanding to be near and to pray with Him.

Who are the 2-3 people in your life that you would want by your side and praying with you during a season of hardship and suffering? Why?

3. Jesus then separates Himself from the three and prays to the Father, asking: "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me." The "cup" probably refers to His imminent suffering and death on the Cross for the sins of humanity. He may also have in mind His coming separation from the Father as the wrath of God is poured out upon Him. Jesus, who knew no sin, was about to become sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21).

Ultimately Jesus submitted His will to the will of the Father. How can we yield our will and ambition to God's Will and His plan for our lives?

4. When Jesus returns to the three, He finds them asleep. He awakens them and reprimands just Peter for his inability to stick with Him in prayer for just one hour. Just a short time before, Peter had twice said he would never forsake the Lord (vv. 33 & 35) and yet he couldn't even stay awake to pray with Him. Jesus acknowledges the weakness of the human flesh and encourages them to keep watching and praying. As Jesus prays a 2nd time, He recognizes that the cup could not pass away unless He "drank" of it. He affirms a 2nd time that God's will must be accomplished whatever the cost. He then returns and finds the disciples asleep again but this time He doesn't wake them. A 3rd time Jesus prays the same prayer while the disciples sleep on. How lonely that must have been for Jesus! The disciples were nearby but He was alone in prayer.

How does the nearness of Christ and His Word comfort and encourage you when you feel alone?

5. When Jesus returns to the disciples a third time, He awakens them with the news that His betrayer, Judas, was coming and they must go and meet him. As Jesus is speaking, Judas arrives and is accompanied by a large crowd, including both Roman soldiers and Jews from the temple guard.

As we reflect on this passage, what should we emulate from Christ's example?