

Review

Jesus and His disciples have had the "Last Supper," and Judas has left the group. The disciples think that he has gone to do some work for Jesus (John 13:29), but Jesus knew that Judas has left to betray Him (John 13:27).

Jesus and the remaining eleven disciples sang a hymn, crossed over the Kidron Valley (John 18:1) and came to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30). This had become their regular routine when visiting Jerusalem (Luke 21:37-39).

26:31-32 I Will Strike The Shepherd

The hour was at hand. Jesus knew He was being betrayed by Judas, and would be arrested in just a short while. He told the disciples that on this very night, they would all fall away. He quoted Zechariah 13:7 to them:

Zech. 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate," Declares the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones."

The Shepherd was going to be stricken, and the sheep were going to be scattered.

But at the same time, He offers them some reassurance: He is going to be raised. And when He is, He will meet them in Galilee.

26:33-35 I Will Not Deny You

Simon Peter was an impulsive guy. He had a tendency to jump into conversations without hesitation. But you have to admire his heart as he asserts that he would never fall away from following Jesus. He claims that even if the other eleven guys bailed out, he never would.

But the Scripture says,

1Cor. 10:12 ...let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

This very night, he will deny three times that he even knows Jesus. All the disciples ended up making the same claims (Matt. 26:35).

This tells me that we are all in danger of making claims that we can't live up to. Especially when we begin pridefully comparing ourselves to others, saying things like, "Even if it's a problem for EVERYBODY ELSE, it won't be for ME!" Never forget that...

Prov. 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

It is exactly those areas in which we are proud that we should be afraid might result in our downfall. What Peter thought was his strongest area will turn out to be his weakest. His overconfidence will lead to his being underequipped. We must insure that we don't make the same mistake in our walk with Christ.

26:36-44 The Disciples' Instructions

Before we look at what Jesus was going through, let's focus on the disciples for a moment. Jesus gave them three simple instructions: Sit (v.36), watch (v.38), and pray (v.41).

- He asked them to sit while he prayed, but instead they slept.
- He asked them to watch with Him, but they had fallen asleep again.
- He asked them to pray, but they fell asleep a third time.

Saints, this is disturbing. Not because this is abnormal behavior, but because it is so normal. We are just like these guys. The Lord has asked us to do the same things: "Sit with me, watch for me, and pray to me."

- But how often do we fail to sit with Him because of the kids' soccer game, or the TV show's season finale?

- How often do we forget to keep watch for His return, growing sleepy in our forgetfulness?

- How often do we fail to pray because of slumber?

We can't change what the disciples did that night. But as His disciples this morning, we can commit to not repeating their failures.

Gethsemane

The Greek word "**Gheth-say-man-AY**" means, "the place of the olive

press." This was the site of Jesus' distress before being arrested. And I believe there is some spiritual significance in the place's name.

You see, in the Scriptures, olives and olive trees represent witness or testimony. In Genesis after the flood, Noah sent out a dove.

Gen. 8:11 The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth.

The olive branch was a testimony - it gave witness to the fact that the floodwaters had receded. Again, in Revelation 11, God's two witnesses (Rev. 11:3) are called "the two olive trees" (Rev. 11:4).

Gethsemane is "the place of the olive press." That is a place where olives are crushed to bring forth olive oil, which was used to light the lamp in the tabernacle, which burned continually (Exo. 27:20).

The garden of Gethsemane was the location of the crushing of the faithful and true Witness (Rev. 3:14), Jesus Christ. And because He was crushed, His light burns continually - for all time. That's why the Scriptures say,

Is. 53:10 ...the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering...

Let This Cup Pass From Me

Being presented as a guilt offering for the sins of the whole world was no easy task. It was overwhelming on every level - physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Physically, Jesus was under such stress at this moment, that...

Luke 22:44 ...His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

Emotionally, He was in agony (Luke 22:44), being grieved and distressed (Matt. 26:37). He was clearly troubled (Mark 14:33). He told the disciples,

Matt. 26:38 ..."My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death..."

Spiritually, He prayed to the Father, asking three times for the cup of the wine of the wrath of God (Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10) to pass from Him.

But each time, He submitted Himself to the will of the Father, praying,

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

In spite of the indescribably torturous and painful ordeal He was about to undergo, He still said, "If this is the only way for people to be saved, I will do this."

Not one of us could have done this. Even if I thought that I was physically, emotionally, and spiritually that strong, the fact that the disciples fell asleep when I was so obviously distressed and asked for their help would have made me wash my hands of them and say, "You guys are on your own!" But Jesus loves us too much to forsake us for our failures.

26:45-46 The One Who Betrays Me is At Hand

Jesus returned to where the disciples were sleeping and awakened them. The hour had come, and all of their lives were about to change forever...