

THE GRIEF IN GETHSEMANE

Mark 14:27-52

There's a lot of ominous looking storms this time of year. Last weekend, my family encountered 2 of them, back-to-back. One was on Friday night at the *Sandhills Drive Inn*, when just as the movie was beginning, it started down pouring and the brilliant lightning started blinding us. The following night on our way home from Alliance, we encountered another storm on top of the table. It was one of those that you think twice about driving into – where you see where the veil of rain begins and as soon as you hit it you step hard on the brakes and the wipers go on full blast. Both of these storms had just spectacular, crackling thunder and blinding lightning.

Those dark, ominous storms reminded me of our text today with Jesus' arrest in the garden of Gethsemane because of the way Scripture describes it. Judas, influenced by Satan himself, has just left the last Passover supper to betray Jesus. John 13 says, "*he went out. And it was **night**.*" It was probably around midnight when they finished the Passover meal and like my mom used to say, "*Nothing good happens after midnight.*" But "*the night*" to John is a theme, drawing from His opening prologue about Jesus being a Light in the darkness. He's amplifying the spiritual darkness that looms over this entire setting. Jesus told His captors in Luke 22:53 how even though He could have at His disposal 12 legions of angels, yet "*this is your moment, the time when the power of **darkness** reigns.*" John 18:18 says it was a **cold** night, like the chill before a storm, a storm that Jesus is going to walk right into after He finished praying.

I want to ask us this morning as we begin, "*What storm are you facing today? What Gethsemane are you in?*" You might not be in one, and that's great. We rejoice with you. But some are going through a Gethsemane and everyone will someday. As one poet wrote, "*A garden all must sometimes see, Gethsemane, Gethsemane, Somewhere his own Gethsemane.... The garden lies; strive as you may, You cannot miss it on your way. All paths that have been, or shall be pass somewhere through Gethsemane.*" We all have our own Gethsemane's. Today, as always, the focus is on Jesus but we're also going to **learn a lot from Him how to respond to Gethsemane's.**

Like last week, we'll make our way through the text, stopping along the way to discuss it. We don't want to over-dissect all of this, but keep moving in this active gospel about an active Savior.

Verses 26-27

"After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, because it is written, 'I will strike down the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.'"

Alright, so we're leaving the upper room in Jerusalem and heading out east to the Mount of Olives, to a garden called Gethsemane. Meanwhile, Judas has gone to the authorities to betray Jesus who are looking for a moment to catch Jesus in a discreet place, apart from the crowds which may start a riot (14:2). What Judas doesn't know is that they've already left, so they probably stopped by

the upper room first, but Judas still has an idea of where Jesus would be because as Luke and John state, this was His habit while in Jerusalem. He often went here with His disciples (John 18:2).

To get there, it's interesting to think that as John also says, they crossed over the Kidron valley (John 18:1). During this time of year, there would have been a stream flowing and into this stream drained all of the blood of the lambs that had been slain in the temple for Passover. It was living, bloody water. Those lambs really foreshadowed His fulfillment as the ultimate Passover Lamb who will be slain soon and Jesus wants to prepares the disciples for that by removing the surprise.

I. JESUS PREPARES THE DISCIPLES BY PREDICTION (VV. 26-31)

He quotes Zechariah 13:7 about how when He, as the Shepherd, is struck, they are going to scatter. They shouldn't be surprised because it is God who will strike Him. *"I will strike down the Shepherd,"* it says. Isaiah 53 calls Him *"a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.... The Lord was pleased to crush Him."* It's all painful but note what is about to take place is not a twist of fate or unfortunate circumstances, but a sovereign hour appointed to Him by the Father. It is a heavenly, purposeful grief and purposeful crushing.

1st Guidance through Gethsemane **God is in control of the Gethsemane's.**

The **cup of His suffering and hour of His trial is in God's hands**, which is revealed in His prayer asking God to remove it from Him. His fate didn't rest in the hands of sinners or Satan, but God's purposeful hands. We've got to realize God has sovereign purposes behind our Gethsemane's.

Verse 28

But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

He's basically saying, *"It's written you all are going to flake out on Me but don't be surprised and don't think that's the end. When I have been raised, I'm going on ahead of you and will restore you."* He's promising to get them back on track and on mission after everything goes down, but it's like the thought of the His approaching death is so dark to them that they just can't see the light of triumph that is going to follow.¹ All they see is death. When they fall asleep, they fall asleep partly due to sorrow, Luke says. They're not listening to the resurrection part.

Sometimes we get that way in "Gethsemane's". We just see the difficulties, the undesirable circumstances, the pain, the grief, and we don't consider God's precious promises to us in Christ about how it's all going to end and we don't see how God is using all of it to develop us and work things for our good. We get too focused on the here and now and forget how the story can end.

2nd Guidance through Gethsemane **Remember how the story ends.**

Jesus' story doesn't end with a cross. Neither does ours. Our story ends with resurrection and restoration and gathering to Him. The ultimate hope of the gospel is a New Heaven and New Earth enjoying eternal bliss forever in the presence of our Savior. That's an overwhelming NT emphasis – keep your focus eternal. Hebrews says Jesus, *“who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross.”* He kept His focus on the glory and joy to follow. God has called me to be His child and whatever I'm going through, it's not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us, the trophies of His grace.

Verses 29-31

But Peter said to Him, “Even though all may fall away, yet I will not.” And Jesus said to Him, “Truly I say to you, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.” But Peter kept saying insistently, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And they all were saying the same thing also.”

A first step to failure is self-confidence and Peter just took it. The others nodded their heads in agreement, so they took it as well. Proverbs says pride comes before the fall. Be careful if you think you stand, lest you fall (1 Cor. 10:12). What's interesting is that Luke 22:31 reveals how Satan goes after Peter much like Job, to sift him as wheat. Peter is going to learn through this to rely on the means of grace if he is going to be a Church leader – that means his pride will need crushed. Note the next verse:

Verse 32

“They came to a place called Gethsemane.”

This is an **olive garden** – but no, not the restaurant. The name is made up of 2 Hebrew words meaning **“olive press”** which tells us there was probably an olive press on the property where a stone would crush the olives and the oil from them would run out and be collected. Now get this: the oil was actually more valuable than the edible olive itself. **Their greatest value comes from the oil being extracted through the crushing process.** It's the same with Jesus. **He was crushed for our iniquities (Is. 53).** But I also find it intriguing that oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. After He was crushed, He sent the Holy Spirit. The “oil” doesn't come without the crushing of the olive.

As with olives, so with Jesus, so with us. It's been said that **God can hardly use a man (like Peter) until He crushes Him in his own Gethsemane.** It's in the crushing that He grows us spiritually, that He makes us useful in ministry, that we learn trust and obedience (Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-11 & Hebrews 5:7-10 later). Hebrews 5:7-10 says Jesus learned obedience through His Gethsemane moment. Nothing in His human flesh wanted to drink that cup, but in a steel-willed act of obedience to the Father's will, He did it anyway. Peter is going to have his will and his pride crushed as well as he learns to be humbly Christ-dependent instead of self-confident.



3rd Guidance through Gethsemane

Gethsemane's removes self-sufficiency and replaces it with Christ-dependency.

You can tell **Peter has been crushed in a good way** by how he writes his epistles of 1 Peter and 2 Peter. He comes out the olive press with an encouraging pastoral heart, as Jesus predicted. In Luke 22:32, Jesus said after you're sifted, "*when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.*" He does exactly that in 1 Peter 5:8, "*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who called you into His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*" He's tending Jesus' sheep now (Jn. 21:15-18) reminding them to stay focused on Christ and how the story ends. It doesn't end with suffering, but with glory.

This is fun just to think about: If Jesus knew Peter would deny Him here, don't you think He knew this when He chose Peter 3 years ago? **Jesus doesn't only see us as we are, but as He intends us to be.** If He intended to reject Peter, he would've left him on his fishing boat 3 years ago. But that's not how God works. I liked what Jesus said to the repentant Mary in *The Chosen* series. She's grieved that she "threw away Christ's redemption" and He says, "*Mary, if redemption was only for a day, it wouldn't be much a redemption, would it?*"

Verses 32-42 take us to Jesus' prayer

"and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed." And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch." 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. 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." And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. And He came to them a third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting?"

II. JESUS PREPARES HIMSELF THROUGH PRAYER (VV. 32-42)

You have to picture it. You've got these ancient, gnarly looking olive trees and narrow paths, maybe dimly lit by the moon. The cold breath of Jesus as He prays out loud. The movie *The Passion of Christ* portrayed this scene well.

He leaves the body of disciples at the entrance but brings the 3 with Him that we could call **the inner circle: Peter, James and John**. Why them? Because for 1) they were the **leaders** within the 12. 2) because James and John had **boasted** to Jesus they could drink the same cup He drinks. They need humbled. Peter as well. And 3) Jesus intentionally shared special moments with them because they would soon be **responsible to teach the other disciples the lessons they learned**.

It's interesting how death was involved in their special moments with Jesus:

Raising of Jairus' daughter = Jesus showed them His victorious power over death.

Mount of Transfiguration talking about His departure = showed them His glory after death.

Garden of Gethsemane's soul-searching = He presents Himself for death.

Each involves death and they need to know Jesus has power over it, it's not an accident that He dies, and there is glory coming after His death.

But I also have to think that Jesus wanted the company of His closest disciples that night.



4th Guidance through Gethsemane

Find a companion to walk through Gethsemane with.

In our Gethsemane's, we need someone to talk stuff through with – to correct foggy, emotionally consumed thinking. Someone who can speak comforting truths of God's Word to our downtrodden hearts. Someone to remind us of who we are in Christ and how good God is. Someone to pray for us. In Gethsemane, **find a companion or be someone's companion** in theirs.

Notice Jesus became **very distressed** and **troubled... deeply grieved**. There is soul-wrenching **agony**, so much that He started sweating drops of blood another gospel reveals – a rare condition called hematohidrosis. *What's causing it?* It's "*the hour*" or "*the cup*". These are basically synonymous terms for what is about to take place.

The hour emphasizes the time that has been appointed for Him since the before the creation of the world. The "hour" He's been waiting for. **The cup** is what that hour contains, which is not just death and suffering, as painful as that will be. The word cup in the OT refers often to **the cup of God's wrath**. His words on the cross, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" reveal what Jesus really fears, doesn't it? The perfectly obedient, sinless Son of God, always in intimate harmony with His Abba Father, is now taking upon Himself the judgment of the world. He who knew no sin will become sin on our behalf and redeem us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. J Oswald Sanders wrote, "*Jesus drank a cup of wrath without mercy that we might drink a cup of mercy without wrath.*"

I think Jesus brought the disciples along so **we can learn a lot from Jesus' prayer**. Luke says He's praying **out loud about a stone's throw away**. Hebrews says with **loud cries**. Praying out loud was common. But look at **the content** of the prayer. It's not a "name it and claim it" prayer: "*All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me, yet not what I will, but what You will.*" So He's not questioning God's ability, but God's will. He **prays in faith by ultimately surrendering His will to the Father's will**.

Now, Jesus didn't have a sin nature, but he was fully God and fully man. As a man, He was tempted to the lure of self-preservation like us. Satan tempted Him in the wilderness to skip the cross. But He's not like the 1st Adam who disobeyed God in the garden for selfish reasons. He, the Last Adam, prevails in the garden against temptation.

Usually when you're in Gethsemane, it's because things aren't going your way according to your will. And the self-pity can overwhelm you. You can lose sight of the clearly revealed will of God and all you have are questions. When you're in Gethsemane, sometimes you just have to say yes to the most basic of commands of God that you can think of, even when your own feelings and others are telling you otherwise – even when it doesn't make sense.

 **5th Guidance through Gethsemane**
Keep saying “yes” to God’s clearly revealed will.

Walking away looks much more attractive than sticking with it – be it ministry, marriage, a job or personal struggle. But learn from Jesus who takes the full chalice of man's sin and God's wrath, and in a steel act of his will, drank it all.ⁱⁱ He obeyed the clearly revealed will of the Father.

And you know, pray does amazing things. When we pray like Jesus, saying “Thy will be done” we are **seeking His purpose and power and perspective** and we're empowered to face Gethsemane. *If the eternal Son needed prayer like this, how much more do we?*

 **6th Guidance through Gethsemane**
Prayer brings power, protection and perspective.

Notice the **contrast** between Jesus relying on God's strength through prayer vs. the disciples relying on their own strength. He's telling them to watch and pray lest they fall in the spiritual battle that night. And we all need to hear this command to keep watch and pray today.

We're all in a spiritual battle and Jesus is saying, “*Get involved in the spiritual battle going on! Pray!*” **Prayer is powerful and Satan knows that.** I would submit to us that part of the reason we lack power to live effectively and see the Lord use us to transform lives is due to prayerlessness. We fall asleep in the prayer meeting. We treat prayer like a last resort, if we have time for it, rather than treating it like the .51 caliber of spiritual war. Prayer is the big gun – “*Say hello to my little friend*” big. Seriously, Luke says an angel ministered to Jesus as He prayed. There's invisible things happening in response to prayer. **To pray is to get involved in the battle.**

Continuing in Verse 41

“Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough; the hour has come; behold the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going; behold the one who betrays Me is at hand!”

III. JESUS PREPARES TO CONFRONT HIS BETRAYER (VV. 41-52)

One man said this is where the hourglass of the passion flips over. It's important detail showing us that **Jesus was strengthened through prayer. Because Jesus has kneeled, He can now stand.** Only when we kneel, can we then stand. He doesn't wait for them to come to Him; **He initiates the encounter and the conversation** (see John 18), walking into the storm.

Verse 43 continues,

“Immediately while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, came up accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who were from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now he who was betraying Him had given them the signal, saying, Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him and lead Him away under guard.” After coming, Judas immediately went to Him, saying, “Rabbi!” and kissed Him. They laid hands on Him and seized Him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and stuck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me, as you would against a robber? Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures.”

So Judas comes with the religious leaders (which was against the Law for them to do), with some of the temple police, and a **cohort**, or detachment, of Roman soldiers. This word could refer to anywhere from 200-1000 men. Matthew describes them as a large crowd or multitude. This seems like a little much at first, but they are arresting a man who can walk on water and do all sorts of miracles! They’re also trying to prevent potential riots. A large cohort would.

Judas, we see, betrays Him with a **kiss, identifying Him** in the dark for them. It may be the most famous kiss of all time, **completing Judas’ hypocrisy**. It reminds us of Proverbs 27:6 – *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”*

When they go to arrest Jesus, **Peter ends up cutting off the ear of Malchus** the high priest’s servant, trying to prove something to Jesus, but only proving he’s a man of the fishing nets and not of the sword. Jesus heals the man’s ear and proves to Peter that He doesn’t need defended.

I like a question that one man asked in regard to this passage: *How many times have we taken our swords (our Bibles) and used them to cut people down in our own self-righteousness to prove something?* In their zeal, many believers use their Bible to cut people up. We need to remember **Jesus is about healing**, not hurting. Someone posted this quote from Randy Alcorn recently on Facebook: *“God’s truths are not bricks to throw at people. They are bread to feed people.”* If you’re using your sword to cut people down, put your sword away until you can handle it properly. The self-righteousness lops off ears to hearing the gospel. Jesus is about healing, not hurting.

Lastly, let’s get to these verses that all of you have been wanting to get to since we started Mark.

Verses 51-52

“A young man was following Him, wearing nothing but a linen sheet over his naked body; and they seized him. But he pulled free of the linen sheet and escaped naked.”

This is weird and quite honestly, it’s hilarious to me. It’s only found in Mark. And we can’t be dogmatic, but because of that, it is believed that the young man may be the young teenager John-Mark, who wrote this gospel. Early tradition suggests that also. It’s common for authors to do cameo appearances like that. Kind of like comic writer Stan Lee made cameo appearances in all

the Marvel movies. John in his gospel referred to himself as “*the disciple whom Jesus loved*” or “*the other disciples who ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first.*” It’s kind of fun for them to do without drawing attention to themselves.

But it still doesn’t answer the question, “*What in the world are you doing in the garden with a sheet over your body? Basically, his boxer shorts?*” And maybe this is a long, dead end road and I’ll have to apologize to Mark in heaven, but in the book of Acts, we find out that Mark’s wealthy mother has a nice house in Jerusalem where the church meets. They had a large prayer meeting there in Acts 12 for Peter and it’s where Peter went when the Lord released him miraculously. Guess who was probably there at the prayer meeting? Young Mark. Mark knew Peter and after his own Gethsemane experience, walking away from the mission with Paul and Barnabas, Mark returns home and eventually becomes Peter’s disciple (1 Pet. 5:13). There is not a doubt in my mind that Peter’s story ministered to Mark. This is basically Peter’s gospel, just written by Mark.

But you’ve got to think *that if this upper room belonged to Mark’s mother*, then he was still there after Jesus left and when Judas arrived with the cohort, for whatever reason he had to leave quickly, maybe escaping through the window to run and tell the disciples they were coming. So he ends up escaping again *au naturel*. Then again it could just be any man following the commotion of the cohort crowd late at night wondering what’s going on so he can gossip in the morning...

What’s the purpose of it in this text? Well, it at least furthers the thought that the disciples chose shame over following Jesus. It adds to the scattering, to show that no one is left. Maybe it point forward to the way Jesus takes our shame on the cross being stripped of His dignity on our behalf.

As we finish, let me ask, “*Have you trusted this Shepherd that was struck on your behalf? That stripped Himself of glory to bring you into glory?*” Out of self-sacrificial love, against self-preservation, He died for your sins and by trusting in Him you can have eternal life.

But also, like the poem says, we all have our own Gethsemane’s. When we were in that storm up on the table, my wife and I could tell that it wouldn’t last long because we could see the light on the other side through the rain. That’s something the disciples missed. They were so overwhelmed with sorrow that they missed Jesus’ tone of triumph and regathering in His as He quotes Scripture. Part of Jesus’ confidence from the beginning to the end in this passage is due to His knowledge of Scripture. Everything happening is “*to fulfill the Scriptures*” (v. 49).



7th Guidance through Gethsemane

Rest in God’s promises to you that must be fulfilled.

When you’re in Gethsemane, you need to remember the promises written about you in Christ, in the Scriptures. That you are an adopted son and no longer a slave (Gal. 4:1-7). You have the Spirit in your heart and an intimate Abbe Father relationship with God. You are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph. 1). And whether you have a good day or bad day, you are a trophy of His grace. And what you need sometimes is a reminder of how the story ends

and it ends with us as overwhelming victors in Christ. Nothing can separate us from Him. He'll never leave us nor forsake us. Think about all the precious promises of God to you that must be fulfilled and hold them fast in your heart.

GETHSEMANE

In golden youth, when seems the earth,
 A Summer land for singing mirth,
 When souls are glad, and hearts are light,
 And not a shadow lurks in sight.
 We do not know it, but there lays
 Somewhere, veiled under evening skies,
 A garden all must sometimes see,
 Gethsemane, Gethsemane,
 Somewhere his own Gethsemane.

With joyous steps we go our ways,
 Love lends a halo to our days,
 Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,
 We laugh and say how strong we are.
 We hurry on, and, hurrying, go
 Close to the borderland of woe
 That waits for you and waits for me;
 Gethsemane, Gethsemane,
 Forever waits Gethsemane.

Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
 Bridged over by our broken dreams,
 Behind the misty caps of years,
 Close to the great salt fount of tears
 The garden lies; strive as you may,

You cannot miss it on your way.
 All paths that have been, or shall be
 Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

All those who journey soon or late,
 Must pass within the garden's gate ;
 Must kneel alone in darkness there,
 And battle with some fierce despair.
 God pity those who cannot say :
 "Not mine, but thine;" who only pray,
 "Let this cup pass;" and cannot see
 The purpose in Gethsemane.
 Gethsemane, Gethsemane,
 God help us through Gethsemane.

ⁱ William Lane, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: v. 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 512.

ⁱⁱ Kent Hughes, *Jesus, Servant and Savior* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 354.