

Praying Under Pressure

Text: Mark 14:32-42

Subject: How Biblical Praying Produces a Healthy Heart!

Intro

1. Apart from the crucifixion, Gethsemane was the most intense moment of Jesus' life.
2. It was in Gethsemane where Jesus teaches us how to pray under pressure.

Question: Why does Jesus pray in the garden?

Answer: Not to escape or avoid the pressure.

He Prays In the Garden....

- ◆ To be able to endure the pressure and face it head on.
- ◆ To be able to receive God's strength in time of need.
- ◆ To be able to embrace the cross the right way.

Question: Why is the garden prayer in your bible?

Answer: To teach us how to pray in our gardens of life!!! (And everybody faces pressure)

Question: Why is the garden of Gethsemane listed in all four gospels -

Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, (and) John 18?

Answer: Because everybody here will have their Gethsemane (I repeat)

Question: Why is Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane?

1. The word "Gethsemane" means "oil press" or "olive press"
2. Gethsemane was part of an olive orchard at the foot of the Mount of Olives.
3. It was a plot of land where an olive press extracted oil from the olives.
4. It was located just beyond the Kidron Valley (1/2 mile from the city wall of Jerusalem).
5. It was a place that Jesus loved to retreat to (so He could get alone and pray).

(Get A Picture Of This Now)

- ◆ Jesus has been sitting at a table fellowshiping with His disciples.
- ◆ He delivers the great discourses that John records.
- ◆ He leaves the Upper Room after singing a hymn (which was Psalm 116, 117 & 118)
- ◆ And He walks through Jerusalem, out to the garden and experiences a change.

Question: What changes from the calm conversation He has with His disciples?

Answer: Mark 14:33: *"And He taketh with Him Peter, James and John and (notice) **began to be sore amazed and very heavy.**"*

(v. 34) *"And saith unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.**"*

1. **"Sore Amazed"** (EKTHAMBEISTHAI) which means terror and bewilderment.
2. **"Very Heavy"** (ADEMONEIN) which means extreme trouble and distress.
3. **"Exceeding Sorrowful Unto Death"** which means agony of soul and sorrow.

- ◆ Jesus feels such intense pain that He is about to explode.

Question: How do we know that Jesus is suffering beyond description?

1. Jesus said so! And Jesus began to sweat great drops of blood.
2. God had to send an angel to strengthen Jesus in the garden!

Question: Why is Jesus suffering? (Three reasons)

1. **Physical Pain Is Intense** - Jesus knows He will be crucified and His body will hurt.
2. **Emotional Pain Is Intense** – Jesus knows He will face Calvary alone.
3. **Spiritual Pain Is Intense** – Jesus knows He will carry the weight of your sin and mine.

(It's The Cup Of Suffering)

Question: What is the cup of Jesus?

Answer: It's not dying (Jesus already knows He will rise again).

(The Cup Is:)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ◆ The denial of Peter | ◆ The weight of our sin |
| ◆ The kiss of Judas | ◆ The pain of the cross |
| ◆ The forsaking of the disciples | ◆ The injustice of man |
| ◆ The baptism into suffering | ◆ The taking of our guilt |

Fact: The presence of the cup is very real in life.

Question: Have you ever been to the garden?

Question: Have you ever been overwhelmed with pain?

Question: Have you ever been crushed with a broken heart?

Question: Have you ever asked God “**Why**”?

Question: Have you ever been mistreated unjustly?

Fact: The “cup” in Jesus’ day was known as a word to denote anguish and sorrow.

Fact: The cup was the ancient method of punishing someone.

Fact: A cup of poison was placed into the hands and people were forced to drink it.

Fact: Socrates was killed when the magistrates of Athens forced him to drink a cup of hemlock juice.

Fact: The cup in the garden refers to the pain that touches your life.

Question: What’s the secret to survival in garden seasons on life?

Question: How do you pray in times like these?

Question: What enables you to be spiritually healthy (and not become a casualty)?

Question: How can you not become cynical, critical and callous when you experience your own garden?

Ask: What will enable you to stay spiritually healthy (regardless of external pressures?)

(There are only **two choices** when we hurt)

1. Take your pain and run from God (and accuse Him of not being fair.)
2. Take your pain and run to God (and find grace and help in time of need.)

I. I See Jesus Praying With Faith

Question: What did Jesus do in the garden?

Question: Why did Jesus go there?

Question: Why did Jesus take His disciples with Him and then leave them to go a little farther to pray?

(Verse 36) "Father",

1. "All things are possible unto thee."
2. "Take away this cup from me."
3. "Nevertheless, not what I want, but what You want."

(Notice The Words) - "**Father, all things are possible for you.**"

Question: What is Jesus acknowledging here?

Answer: That Father has the **authority** to remove this,
That Father has the **power** to spare Him,
That Father has the **ability** to do anything!

- ◆ This will keep you from cynicism and bitterness
- ◆ This will protect you from "poor me" and a martyrs complex.

(How? Because You Understand :)

- ◆ That God has the power to spare you the cup.
- ◆ That God has the power to shield you from sorrow.
- ◆ That God has the power to stop your Gethsemanes. **(In other words)**

(The Cup Reminds Me Always)

- ◆ That in the midst of my cup God is still in control and over all.
- ◆ That God is not deflated or defeated by your sorrow or anguish.
- ◆ That God knows who you are, where you are, and what He is doing.
- ◆ That God could remove your cup, but will also (in your garden) give you faith to endure **until you pass through Gethsemane.**

II. I See Jesus Praying with Surrender

Question: What's the secret in allowing the cup to help me (and not hurt me?)

Answer: The secret is in the prayer of Jesus.

"Nevertheless, not My will but Yours be done."

Question: Where did Jesus win the victory at His cup experience?

Answer: In the Garden of Gethsemane!

Question: How did Jesus win the victory at His cup experience?

Answer: In prayer to the Father!

Question: How (in prayer) did Jesus overcome and not yield to enemy temptation?

Answer: When He prayed one word.

Question: What's the one word that spares us from the spoil and poison of our gardens?

Answer: "**Nevertheless** not my will but thine be done."

- ◆ Jesus is not wrestling with God's will, he knows it.
- ◆ Jesus is not rebuking God's will, He is surrendered.
- ◆ Jesus is not blaming God for something, He is yielded.
- ◆ Jesus is simply pouring out His soul in prayer until He conquers something.

(What Is It?)

- ◆ **It is those, gardens, and sorrow when what you want, differs what God allows...**

1. Jesus begins with **“Remove this cup”**,
2. Jesus concludes with **“Nevertheless, not what I want, but what You want.”**

◆ Peter grabs a sword and wants to fight! ◆ Jesus takes the cup and wants to surrender!

(And I Discover Something- Listen Carefully)

◆ **That when we surrender ourselves to God when there is a cup we cannot change, we receive the power in prayer that we need to embrace the cup we face! (Repeat)**

(Notice Verse 39)

“Jesus went away and prayed these words again a second time.” (Which means)

- ◆ Quit beating yourself up (when the answer is delayed).
- ◆ In Matthew 26-44, **“Jesus went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.”** (Quit beating up yourself over things you cannot change).

Jesus prays with faith (protects you from despair).

Jesus prays with surrender (protects you from anger towards God).

III. I See Jesus Praying With Grace and Strength

◆ Positionally, grace is described in Ephesians 2:8,9

“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”

“Not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

◆ Practically, on a daily basis, grace is described in Phil. 2:13:

“For it is God which worketh in you both, to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

Question: What happens to you when you pray like Jesus in your Gethsemanes?

Answer: Your reward is great indeed:

(Write These Four Words Down)

1. **“Courage” to face your tomorrows**
 - ◆ Jesus knew He would be betrayed, arrested, scourged and crucified.
 - ◆ But in the crisis, he prayed and kept on going with calmness.
 - ◆ He didn’t hide from Judas, He faced His trouble head-on!
 - ◆ His courage enabled Him to face His tomorrows.
2. **“Persistence” to pray until**
 - ◆ Jesus prayed with perseverance.
 - ◆ Jesus prayed with intensity. ◆ Jesus prayed the second time and the third time.
 - ◆ Jesus wrestled in prayer and prayed until the breakthrough came.

(What Else In Prayer?)

3. **“Strength” from God Himself**
 - ◆ The Father gave Jesus strength to go on (in prayer).
 - ◆ Jesus prayed alone – to show His disciples where His strength came from.
 - ◆ God Himself will enable you to drink any cup that He places in your hands.

♦ Luke 22:43, *‘There appeared an angel from heaven to strengthen Jesus.’* (The word “strengthen” literally means “to infuse with strength.”)

Question: What was the consequence of this strengthening?

Answer: *“He prayed more earnestly”* (more intensely).

4. **“Resignation” of your will to God’s will**

Question: What brought Jesus through His darkest hour?

Answer: Resignation of His will to Father’s will, in prayer!

- ♦ Proper decisions while under pressure,
- ♦ Victory won because of resignation of His own will.
- ♦ Rising from prayer and walking out of the garden, in faith (not fear).

Question: How does your garden affect your decisions?

1. The garden teaches us to pray and depend upon God, (not ourselves).
2. The garden teaches us to choose to surrender to the will of God (there’s no other road to joy in life).
3. The garden teaches us to pray 1, 2, 3 times for the same request, (its okay to pour out your heart to God).
4. The garden teaches us how to come forth victoriously as Jesus came forth, (rising from your knees to face whatever is before you).
5. The garden teaches us how to prevail under pressure by running into the arms of our Heavenly Father.

Question: What is so encouraging about the disciples falling asleep (instead of praying) in the garden?

Question: What is so encouraging about their failure and weakness?

1. Jesus doesn’t dismiss them and write them off.
2. Jesus picks them up to start over again.
3. Jesus is saying that guilt and self-blame are out and over with.
4. Jesus says to them and us:

“Get up, get over and get on with life – I haven’t given up on you at all”!

♦ Jesus forgave His disciples who failed and Jesus will forgive you as well.

Conclusion

Question: What happened to Jesus while praying in the Garden?

Answer: The same two things that happen to us in prayer:

1. There was not the removal of the cup, but the **removal of the fear** of the cup (and)
2. There was the **infusion of divine strength** for the upcoming challenge of the cup.

- ♦ We miss the purpose of prayer when we only use prayer to tell God what we want.
- ♦ Real prayer is to enable us to be strong. (Why?)
- ♦ So that we are able to face whatever is ahead of us – in the strength of the Lord!

Amen!
Bill Kirk