

## NOT MY WILL BUT YOURS BE DONE

Luke 22:39-62

Key Verse: 22:42

*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”*

Today’s passage is mainly about Jesus’ prayer on the Mount of Olives, just before his arrest and trial. Prayer is important part of Christian life. We know that to live by faith means to have a personal relationship with God. But how can we have a personal relationship with the Lord? We need to spend time with him. We should talk to him in prayer, and listen to him by studying the word of God. The problem is that people do not take prayer seriously, even as they consider themselves Christians. Prayer to them is a bunch of mumbo jumbo. But Christian life without prayer is like a vacuum cleaner that is not plugged in to electric outlet. A person who does not pray cannot experience what the Almighty God can do in and around him. Let us open our hearts and learn from Jesus why and how to pray!

### I. JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE (39-46)

Look at verses 39-42. *Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”* Jesus knew that his time had come. He would be arrested on that very night. He would be tortured, severely beaten, and then he would be crucified. How did he prepare himself for the impending suffering and death? He went to the Mount of Olives, to an area called Gethsemane, which means “oil press.” There he knelt down and prayed to God. His prayer was so intense that his sweat dropped with his blood. We call this the “Gethsemane prayer.” We can learn a lot from his prayer.

**First, Jesus prayed regularly.** Verse 39 says that *Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives.* The words, “as usual,” tell us that Jesus prayed regularly. Jesus depended on God through his daily prayer (Lk 21:37). His life was always busy. Many people came to him for help from morning until night. But Jesus found time to pray. He got up early in the morning and went to a solitary place to pray (Mk 1:35). Hebrews 5:7 says: “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.” Sometimes, we neglect prayer with the excuse that we are too busy. Martin Luther said, “I have so much to do that I need to spend three hours in prayer.” This may sound strange but it is so true. The busier we are, the more we have to pray, because we need God’s help.

The Son of God prayed regularly. We heard that right after 9/11, church attendance increased a lot, but only temporarily. Many people prayed right after the tragedy in Las Vegas. This is a crisis-driven prayer life. Of course, it is natural for us to

pray more during emergency. But if we pray only during crises, we are telling God we don't need him unless we've got problems. Prayer is a time spent with our Lord. Jesus spent time with God by praying regularly. May God help us to set aside a time each day to be with him!

**Second, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”** In verse 40, Jesus said to them, *“Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”* He said this again in verse 46. Jesus knew that his suffering and crucifixion would be a time of testing for his disciples. He had prepared them in advance by warning them. Now he told them to pray. He knew that they would need God's help to face the temptations. They were about to witness the cruel and humiliating death of their Master on the cross. Would they still believe him as the Messiah? Would they be able to carry out the gospel ministry as he told them? Jesus knew that the only way for them to overcome the temptations was to rely on God. So he told them to pray. We also face many temptations in our daily lives. Our enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1Pe 5:8). We are not strong enough to overcome temptations on our own. We need God's help. We must ask God's help in our earnest prayer!

**Third, Jesus knelt down and prayed.** Jesus withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ... (41) The Pharisees' favorite mode of prayer was to stand up on the street corners (Mt 6:5) and lecture to God how holy they were. For them, prayer was performance in front of people. One day, a Pharisee and a tax collector went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself, “God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector.” But Jesus knelt down and prayed. This means that Jesus went to God in humility. And unlike the Pharisee, the tax collector offered a humble prayer. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his chest and said, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Jesus said: “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Lk 18:14). God said in 2 Chronicles 7:14, “... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” James said, “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up” (Ja 4:10). May God help us to learn Jesus' humble prayer!

**Fourth, Jesus prayed to obey the will of God.** Look at verse 42. *“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”* Here the cup did not mean a championship cup like the Stanley Cup for hockey or the America's Cup for sailing. It was the cup of suffering and death. The cup meant he had to die on the cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus had to decide whether to drink the cup of suffering and death. While on earth, Jesus was fully human. He wanted to avoid the terrible suffering, if possible. No one wants to die at the age of 30, let alone the most humiliating death on a cross! There is nothing wrong for us to express our true feelings to God when we pray. We can tell God what we honestly feel about things. Jesus prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me.” However, Jesus did not insist on what he desired. He prayed that God's will may be done. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane teaches us important truth about prayer. We often ask God to do what we

want rather than to ask him what he wants us to have. We often present to God a list of things to do for us, about our study, our career, our human relationship, and our marriage, our children, and so on. We are so focused on what we want that we ignore what God wants for us. In other words, we try to change God's mind through our prayer. But Jesus teaches us that to pray is to learn to submit to the will of God. We should pray to God to help us to make our desire to be in line with his will.

Crucifixion was the most severe and shameful form of torture and execution used by the Romans. It was so cruel that no Roman citizen was subject to this form of execution. Crucifixion involved hammering huge nails through the victim's wrists to a crossbeam. His feet were also nailed to a vertical stake. As the victim hung dangling by the arms, the blood could no longer circulate to his vital organs. Only by supporting himself on his nail-pierced feet could the victim gain relief. But gradually exhaustion set in, and death followed, although usually not before several days. To hasten death, the executioners sometimes broke the victim's legs with a club. Then he could no longer support his body to keep blood circulating, and death quickly followed. The body was left on the cross to decompose or to be eaten by scavengers. To the Jewish people, crucifixion represented the most disgusting form of death: "... anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse" (Dt 21:23).

We can understand why the human Jesus wanted to avoid the cup if possible. The physical and emotional suffering would be unbearable for any person. However, to Jesus, there was something much, much worse than the physical suffering. It was the separation from God when all the sins of the world were put on his shoulder. He had to go through the pain of God's forsaking him as he was punished for the sins that he did not commit. It was for our sins, he was abandoned. Jesus remained silent when the soldiers beat him with a metal-tipped whip and chunk of his flesh were flying off. But on the cross, when the burden of sin was on him, he cried out in a loud voice, "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34)

Look at verse 42 again. "*Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.*" Through his prayer struggle Jesus submitted to the will of God. He accepted to become the suffering servant about whom Isaiah prophesied (Isa 53:5). Based on the word of God, Jesus knew that he had to be the sacrificial Lamb of God for the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). Jesus had told his disciples about his rejection, suffering and death. He said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (9:22). He knew what lied ahead of him. And his prayer struggle helped him to be ready for the events.

Jesus said, "...yet not my will, but yours be done." What a beautiful example in making a decision to obey the will of God. However, this kind of decision-making is not easy for us. Some people want to be faithful believers, yet do not make a decision of faith. They wait until some events force them to move in a certain direction. They are like dead fish flowing down the stream. But Jesus made a decision to obey God's will

which was to die on the cross for the sin of the world. It was prayer that empowered Jesus to make a decision of faith to take the cup of suffering and death.

Jesus fought a spiritual battle in prayer. Jesus prayed intensely, so intensely that he was completely exhausted. God sent an angel from heaven to strengthen him (43). Then he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground (44). This is how Luke, a medical doctor, described Jesus' spiritual battle in prayer. His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

When Jesus rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. We understand that they had a long day. A lot had happened that day, including the shocking prediction of Jesus that one of them would betray him. They felt that their heads were exploding. Jesus told them to pray with him. But they fell asleep. Their spirit was willing, but their flesh was weak (Mt 26:41). Their stomach was full and their self-discipline was lacking. What did Jesus say to them? Look at verse 46. *"Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."* Jesus again told them that prayer is the only way to overcome the temptation of Satan. Prayer is the most potent weapon for us. May God help us to wake up from our spiritual slumber and pray!

## II. JESUS IS ARRESTED (47-53)

While Jesus was still speaking to his disciples, a crowd came up to them. The man leading the crowd was Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve. He had apparently made a secret arrangement with the Jewish leaders. The one he kissed would be Jesus. Judas used a symbol of affection to betray the Lord. Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" Two other gospels report that Judas called Jesus "Rabbi" before he kissed him (Mk 14:45; Mt 26:29). Judas thought he sold an ordinary rabbi for 30 silver coins, but Jesus reminded him that he was betraying the Son of Man, the Messiah, the one who would come as the Judge of the living and the dead. Judas would be accountable for what he did on the Day of Judgment (69). It was deeply disturbing moment for Jesus. but he was not emotionally upset. Jesus still tried to help Judas to see his actions from God's point of view.

Then Jesus' disciples realized what was happening. They said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear (49-50). According to John 18:10, it was Peter who did this. Peter did not pray so he did not know what to do. In his fear, he used his sword. It was an expression of his loyalty to Jesus. He was willing to do something for Jesus. But he made things worse, not better. Suppose his action ignited a sword fight and all the disciples were killed. Who would preach the gospel to the ends of the earth after Jesus' resurrection? Without prayer, the disciples had no spiritual direction.

Look at verse 51. *But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.* Jesus took charge of the situation, primarily to protect his disciples. He healed the man whose ear had been cut off. Jesus was different from his

disciples. Jesus had the spiritual power and authority to rule over the situation, even while being arrested. His prayer had prepared him.

*Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns” (52-53).* Jesus made it very clear to everyone that he was not leading a rebellion. Jesus did not allow his messianic ministry to be misunderstood in such a way. Jesus was a Bible teacher and a shepherd for his people. He taught the word of God publicly and openly. He had no hidden agenda. The religious leaders could find no fault with Jesus. They were driven by the power of darkness, the devil. And for an hour, darkness reigned--with God's permission.

When Jesus prepared himself with prayer, he could face the ordeal of his arrest with wisdom and strength. He was not a victim; he ruled over the situation. Although Jesus was arrested by the religious leaders, Jesus was the true victor in the sight of God and men. We cannot but marvel at the sheer heroism of Jesus. But we must remember that it was his spiritual battle in Gethsemane that enabled him to be ready for the situation. When he prayed, God helped him to overcome the power of death.

### III. PETER DISOWNS JESUS (54-62)

Judas' betrayal was a heart-breaking event for Jesus. But Peter's triple denial was another blow to the broken heart of Jesus. We know how much Jesus loved Peter. Peter was the top disciple, and there was no doubt that he was loyal to Jesus. He had declared that he was ready to die with Jesus (22:33). He was confident about his human loyalty toward Jesus, but he did not pray. He did not struggle to depend on God, even while Jesus struggled in the Mount of Olives. He gave in to his desires and slept. So in his human limitation he denied the Lord three times.

Look at verse 54. *Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance.* Peter followed at a distance. His human attachment to Jesus was strong. At the same time, fear was growing in his heart. He could not just let Jesus go. At the same time, he could not follow too closely. Following Jesus at a distance was an expression of his dilemma. He was not spiritually prepared for the events that were taking place. When the high priest's people had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them (55). He tried to hide himself in the crowd. But it did not work.

A servant girl saw Peter sitting there and said, “This man was with him.” But he denied it. “Woman, I don't know him,” he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” “Man, I am not!” Peter replied. About an hour later another said, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.” Peter replied, “Man, I don't know what you're talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

At that moment, the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter (56-61a). Jesus did not say a word to Peter, but his eyes spoke to him. They said, "I knew you were going to do this. It is because you did not pray. You did not listen carefully to my words. Now you will cry many tears over your failure. But you will turn back. You will become a spiritual man. You will become a shepherd for my people." Then Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times" (61b). Peter realized that Jesus' word was the truth. He realized that he was arrogant before the word of Jesus. So he had failed miserably. He went outside and wept bitterly (62). It was most painful for Peter. But it was used by God to help him grow as a useful man in God's history.

Today, we learned how to pray from Jesus. Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done." Jesus prayed that God's will be done. In the course of our life, we must make decisions, such as what to do after graduation, whom to marry, how to serve the Lord, and so on. We must pray as Jesus did so that we can make decisions of faith to obey his will, rather than follow our own desires. May the Lord raise us up to be men and women of prayer!