

I. Opening Song / Meet and Greet

II. Transition - **Picture of Olive Press goes up**

A. In order to produce olive oil, olives are crushed – including the pits, which is where a lot of the oil is stored. In the first century, the machine that crushed olives and collected the oil looked like this. (The big heavy circular stone used here is called a Millstone – which Jesus references a few times).

B. Here is why I am noting this: this machine is called a Gethsemane. An olive press is called a Gethsemane. A Gethsemane is something designed to crush things.

C. In our passage today, Jesus ends up in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. He comes under crushing pressure for reasons we'll explore in just a bit. I want to be sure the play on words is not lost on you. I want to be sure all of what Christ took on for you is not lost.

D. Our communion service today is going to be a bit different. We are dividing up the sermon, spending more time in prayer and, of course, headed into communion. A big theme is Christ's suffering on our behalf. Hold on to that idea and let it inform this time of worship.

III. Song Two

IV. Transition - one of the worship tea reads Luke 22:39, **while painting of this scene play on the screen.**

A. 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." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

V. Song three. As song three ends, the campus pastor is on stage and immediately leads into this next section

A. Our study of Luke has brought us to the Garden of Gethsemane on the night that Jesus was betrayed.

1. The evening began in the Upper Room, where Jesus turned the Passover Meal into Holy Communion, upending a 1,400 year-old tradition by claiming that it was about him.

2. During that meal, Judas slipped away to alert the Roman authorities about Jesus. They needed him to lead them to where Jesus was staying – when he was away from the crowds – so they could arrest him quietly. They also needed Judas to identify him.

3. After the meal Jesus had offered a few comments to the twelve – which we looked at last week. The gist of these comments was: it’s going to get hard. Be prepared for difficulties.
- B. We now step even closer to what Jesus calls “the hour when darkness reigns.”¹
1. Darkness is a big theme in Luke 22 and 23. As you may know, when Jesus dies everything goes dark in the middle of the day.
 2. But this is not just physical darkness, it is spiritual darkness.
- VI. To help you understand the context – **SHOW MAP.**
- A. After dinner, Jesus leaves the city of Jerusalem to walk East through the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives, where he has been staying during Passover.
1. The group doesn’t have enough Hilton Honors points for all of them to get a room.
 2. I’m joking. There is no Hilton. There are no hotels. People opened their homes to travelers but there are not enough rooms in Jerusalem for all the people who have come to town for the Passover so Jesus and his disciples have been camping outside the city gate.
- B. Before heading up the hill, Jesus stops at the Garden of Gethsemane – which is a garden with lots of olive trees, and which we’ve already ends up being a bit of a pun – to pray. He takes Peter, James and John with him away from the group and asks them to pray, and then he goes a bit further away still and prays.
- C. It’s worth noting that earlier the disciples had asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. They do not ask – at least as far as we know – to be taught how to lead or speak or walk on water. But they do ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. Clearly, having been up close with him for a few years, they determine that part of his power – part of what makes him unique – is his prayer life.
- D. And we are given a few passages where we can listen in on Jesus praying and learn as well.
1. The Lord’s Prayer – which is also called the “Our Father” – is the prayer he teaches his disciples. This is not necessarily a prayer he would pray, but it’s a prayer he would have us pray.
 2. In John’s Gospel, we are given a long prayer – called the High Priestly Prayer – that He prays during the last week.² It’s not recorded in Luke, but it’s a prayer for us – that we would love each other, get along and be about our assignment.
 3. We also get this time of prayer.
- VII. We are about to pray. What can we learn about prayer from Jesus’ prayer in the Garden.
- A. I am assuming that you know a few things.
1. Prayer is communicating with God.
 - a) His primary means of speaking to us is Scripture – which is full of prayers we can pray.
 - b) Our primary means of communicating with him is prayer.
 2. There appear to be four types of prayer

- a) Adoration – praising God for who He is
 - b) Confession – agreeing with him that we are broken
 - c) Thanksgiving – thanking Him for things he’s done
 - d) Supplication – listing our requests
- 3. I further want to note that just about everyone prays
 - 4. And that most people think their prayer life could use an upgrade.
- B. But, what can we learn from this passage in particular?

VIII. I want to suggest seven quick things.

A. One: Go to God when you are in crisis. You do not want to only go to God when you are in crisis. But you certainly want to go to him when you are. Jesus did and we have other passages telling us to:

- 1. Psalm 50 tells us to turn to God in times trouble.
- 2. James tells us the same thing.

B. Two: Pray to overcome temptation. This is what he told his disciples when he asked them to pray. **“Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”**

- 1. I have found that what helps overcome temptation is memorized Scripture. You want to memorize some passages that you can turn to when you come under temptation. Think of it as heavy artillery.

C. Three: Prayer is hard. At one level it’s easy. People worry that you need to have just the right words. No. no. no. But the discipline of praying can be challenging. Our minds tend to wander. Or we tend to fall asleep.

- 1. In the parallel passage in Matthew we see that the disciples fell asleep three times. He kept waking them up and they kept falling asleep. *And we see that Jesus works up quite a sweat praying. So, it can be work,.*
- 2. By the way, don’t worry about falling asleep praying, as long as you are praying at other times.

D. Four: We should ask others to pray for us. Jesus was humble. When he was in crisis he asked others to pray for him. We do not do this very well. We have people up front after services that are seldom accessed because, we either do not see the value of prayer or there is too much pride.

E. Number Five: Posture may help. Luke reports that Jesus withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,

1. Kneeling was not the normal way a first century Jew prayed. The common way to pray was standing with your eyes lifted to heaven and your arms stretched out. This is what you find the prophets doing in the Old Testament. This is what I saw a lot the last time I flew to Israel. In the airport and on the plane and But here Jesus kneeled, suggesting that he was really struggling.
 2. I have found kneeling to be helpful. I usually get on my knees in the morning because it helps facilitate a tone of submission.
 3. At other times, I am more likely to go for a walk or stand or whatever.
- F. Number six: we should make our requests known. Some people never progress past prayer as a litany of asks – God give me this and this and this. Some people don't think they can ask. All they say is, "your will be done." Yes. That's great. But Jesus asked.
1. **"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me;**
 2. Jesus expresses his needs. Let me be clear, pray for what you want. By all means. Make that clear. For starters, God already knows – more importantly, it helps you understand your own heart. And often that is about all I need to do to say, "I'm being pretty shallow right now. I'm a bit nervous right now." Our prayers reveal our heart – not just to God – he isn't learning anything – but we might.
- G. Seven: Defer to God. Prayer includes yielding. Jesus asks for what he wants, but then he pivots to, **...yet not my will, but yours be done."**
- IX. There are many other things we can learn about prayer from other passages
- A. And we have other prayers from Jesus we can learn from – such as the Book of Psalms – which are filled with the prayers Jesus prayed
 - B. There is a lot more to learn about prayer. So, take the Ten Day Prayer Challenge.
 1. If you regularly get emails from me, you will get an email today (Sunday) at noon. It gives you a chance to sign up for ten emails that will come over the next ten days, that give you a prayer challenge.
 - a) For instance: 1) To sit quietly before God; 2) To memorize the Lord's Prayer; 3) To skip lunch and pray; 4) To ask someone else to pray for you.
 - b) These are not out of reach. You can do this. Take the challenge.
 - c) By the way, if you do not get emails from me and you want to take the prayer challenge, you can: 1) Give me your email address or; 2) Text XXX to XXXXXXXX; or 3) Go to our web site to sign up.
 - C. There is more to learn about prayer, but right now I simply want to pray.
 - D. Over the next five minutes, let's spend some time in prayer. **(HAVE MUSIC PLAYING QUIETLY HERE)**
 - E. I am going to provide some prompts for you along the way – most of which will come from Jesus' example in Luke 22. Please bow with me.
 - F. To start let's note that Jesus tells his disciples to pray so that they will not fall into temptation. So let's begin our time with confession and then a prayer for strength.

1. David models a soft heart of repentance in Psalm 51. There he concedes that sin has coursed through his veins since his conception and that he has made a mess of things right now. Let me encourage you to sit for a second with a classic, ancient prayer. It's one line: Lord **Jesus** Christ, Son of God, **have mercy on me, a sinner.**

a) Sit with that for a moment. Meditate on each of the four parts; 1) Lord Jesus Christ; 2) Son of God; 3) Have mercy on me; 4) A sinner

2. Now let me encourage you to invite the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any specific matters to confess. And as he does, express your remorse. Silently say, Lord, forgive me. (30 seconds)

G. I'd invite you now to join me in as we confess our sins together with the words on the screen:

1. Heavenly Father, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole hearts, nor have we loved our neighbors as we love ourselves.

2. We are often so wrapped up in things that do not really matter that we have taken little note of the opportunities around us to be your hands and feet. Forgive us. Amen

H. As we continue in an attitude of prayer, I want to assure you of the love and grace of God – as John has written, “When we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

I. From that vantage point I want to encourage you to come before God with your needs. In Luke 22 we note that Jesus told God what He wanted – He asked the Father to take the cup from him. I want to invite you now to pray for the Lord to move in the areas where you are looking for help.

1. Confess your desire. “Lord, I want this Job. Lord, you know that I want to beat this cancer.” Be honest with the Father about what hardships you don't want to face anymore, what opportunities you are looking for. Take a moment and express your desires to him. (30 seconds)

J. After expressing his desires, Jesus prayed that God's will would be done. He yielded. Let's submit our plans to God's. Let's pray that God's will be done in in our lives, our homes, our church and our city. Ask for the strength to face whatever happens. (15 seconds)

K. Father, I want to pray for those who are hurting today. Who need hope. Who need a job. Who need a break. Who need a break-through. Who are lonely. I want to pray for those who have put their game face on this morning and are acting like they've got things under control, but do not. I am praying for those who are really hurting this morning. Please meet with them. Encourage them. Minister to them in ways only you can minister.

L. Father, I want to pray for this church. May we know your will and be bold in leaning into it. May we be a group of men and women who yield our lives and who seek to carry out your plan. May we be gracious with others. May we be the kind of outpost of heaven the church is supposed to be.

M. Father, I want to pray for our mission partners – In India, Ghana, Turkey and around the world. I want to ask for your blessing on them and also on our local partners – NCCP, Love Inc., PADS, the Matthew Homes and Job's Initiative, on other churches in the area.

N. Father, we pray for our country – for our leaders, starting with President Trump and his cabinet, and including members of the House and Senate – both in DC and Springfield. Give them wisdom Guide them. Help us to find ways to hold things together. Help us be citizens that help promote the common good.

O. Father we pray for peace around the globe. We ask for your blessing on those who are struggling in the midst of chaos or corruption. Father God, we are looking for your will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

P. And now I invite you to join me as we pray the Lord’s Prayer together. **WORDS ON THE SCREEN.**

X. Fourth Song / Announcements / Generosity Moment / Offering

XI. We now return to our passage but we are going to focus on a very different set of things. We had been looking for what we could learn about prayer. I now want to use this as a launching point for communion.

A. This is the battle before the battle, and it’s a time of profound discouragement for Jesus. We are told that He suffers great anguish – and Luke, the doctor, tells us that he sweats great drops as if blood.³ What is happening?

B. Is Jesus surprised that things are going wrong? No. Jesus had been telling everyone he was going to die. He was headed to Jerusalem in order to die as the Passover Lamb.⁴ This was the plan.

1. He is about to take on our sin and to suffer the wrath of God. This is what is meant by the term “cup.” Jesus will pray “let this cup pass from me.” If you dig into that term in Ps. 75, Isaiah 51, Jeremiah 25 – and then later in Rev. 14 – that the term cup is code for God’s wrath.⁵

2. I do not know if you have connected the dots on this, but Jesus is about to absorb the punishment for your sin. And that is, the wrath of the Father.

a) God the Father is just. Holy, righteous, perfect. He cannot wink at sin.⁶ He cannot dismiss evil. It has to be paid for.

(1) Judges that say, “I am going to be kind to this murder or rapists. That is the nice thing to do.” are not good judges.

(2) Things have to be made right. Someone has to pay. This is always the case.

(3) If you invite me over to your house and I accidentally break a lamp, you will say, “It’s OK. It’s OK. I didn’t like that lamp. It was old.” I’ll say, “I need to buy you a new one.” The point is, someone needs to pay for the lamp.

(4) God doesn’t forgive sin, he forgives sinners. But someone has to pay. Sin must be atoned for. Our moral debt must be paid.

3. Thankfully, God is not only just, He is also loving. So he pays the debt. And that leads to God the Father pouring out his wrath on God the Son. Jesus is going to pay it. People do not like talking about this. Some call it Cosmic Child Abuse. But this is what the Bible teaches.

4. And this has been the plan. Jesus is not surprised by the plan.

C. Is Jesus scared? I would be. Crucifixion is a terrible way to die. Horrible. It's a slow, painful, humiliating way to die. I'd be scared. But I don't think that is what is going on with Jesus.

1. For starters it would be out of character for Jesus. He has faced raging seas, demonic opposition, ugly threats by powerful people and shown no sign of panic.

2. Secondly, it would be disconcerting because it would suggest that others – including many Christians – have gone to their death with more resolve or dignity than Jesus.⁷

3. I do not think Jesus is scared.

D. Is he stressed because his friends have deserted him.

1. Peter and Judas are about to betray him – and arguably they are among his closest friends. That is not nothing. It's one thing if, after the service, a first-time guest comes up and says, "this service was horrible. I am never coming back." It's another level if one of the long-time leaders. It's still another if it's a friend. And it's a whole new level if it's Sheri.⁸

2. Jesus is about to be betrayed – and oh by the way, Peter, James and John, who he keeps asking for a little help – keep falling asleep. I don't think this helps. But I don't think he was looking to them for lots of support to start with.

XII. So, what is going on? Jesus is in anguish. It's so bad that the father sends an angel.⁹ It's so bad that he is sweating profoundly.

A. What is happening? I think Jesus discovers that his connection with the Father is fading. If you read all four accounts what you see is, Jesus grows more agitated as he prays. And things get so bad that – he not only asks for support from Peter, James and John, and not only breaks out in a huge sweat and needs the encouragement of an angel – but Matthew reports that He is astonished.

B. He is shocked. And he is in agony – which is the only time that word is used to describe Jesus.

C. What is going on? I think the real pain is the withdrawal of God the Father.

D. While preparing for the events of the next 24 hours, Jesus steps aside to pray only to discover that, as he seeks to draw more fully into the presence of His Father, His father has already withdrawn. He has never known a time when he didn't enjoy a perfect, loving, life-giving, joyful relationship with the Father. And now the Father is turning his back of Christ.

E. Jesus is becoming sin – and as sin He is being cut off from the Father.

1. William Lane, a noted Biblical scholar, puts it like this, "The dreadful sorrow and anxiety was not from shrinking from the prospect of suffering and death. It was rather the horror of one who lived wholly for the father, and who came to be with the father for a brief interlude before his betrayal, and found hell rather than heaven open before him."

XIII. This is a rich passage.

A. It completes a kind of grand arc. In the Garden God says, “Obey me about tree. If you do you will live.” Here God says to Son, “Obey me about the tree. And if you do I will crush you.”

B. There is a lot going on here. Right now, I want you to understand that the agony Jesus suffers comes from taking on our sin. This was all happening because he was taking our sin upon himself. Yours and mine. That is the claim. He did that for you.

C. And, this is unthinkable at another level in that the Father turns his back on the Son. As all of the parents out there know, you’d rather be scorned 100,000 times than to scorn your child. It’s unthinkable. In a time of their desperation to turn your back.

D. And yet, when Jesus take on our sin, the Father looks away. So He looks away until the sin is paid for. This is the amazing plan of God. It’s a marvel – and the more you think about it, the more amazing it is.

XIV. And now we turn to communion

A. Jesus is an example for us. We can learn things from him by following his example – such as how and when to pray.

B. But Jesus is more than an example. He is our savior. And we focus on his death every month because His death overcomes the darkness. And so we come to this table.

¹ Luke 22:53

² John 17

³ There is a medical condition where, in cases of extreme duress people’s capillaries burst and blood can seep through pores. But Luke does not say he is sweating blood. I think he is using a simile. And suggesting that he was sweating so much it was like drops of blood from a wound.

⁴ Mt. 16:21

⁵ Ps. 75:6; Isaiah 51:17; Jer. 25:15; and Rev. 14:9

⁶ Habakkuk 1:13

⁷ Keller notes that it would be a bit odd if Jesus was scared. It would also mean that a lot of other people have faced death with more resolve. Socrates essentially said, “Give me the hemlock. Down the hatch.” And many Christians following Jesus have done so with great courage.

⁸ Thanks to Tim Keller for this illustration. From a sermon he preached on Luke’s account of the Garden of Gethsemane events.

⁹ It’s worth noting that the angel appears to Jesus. It is assumed that many times angels are there but they do not appear. The father sends an angel to appear and support Jesus.