

Watch & Pray Mark 14:32-34

I. INTRODUCTION – Read Vs. 32-42

A. *Moving*

1. My family moved a lot when I was growing up; 7 times before I started 7th grade.
2. It seemed like I was always saying goodbye to friends.
3. One move in particular stands out.
 - a. we lived in a suburb of Chicago called Glen Ellen.
 - b. we'd been there for 2 years, probably the best 2 years of my entire childhood.
 - c. it was a new neighborhood only half built so there was still lots of open fields and places to play.
 - d. I had 2 really good friends, brothers who were only a year apart.
 - e. they lived 2 doors down & we did **EVERYTHING** together.
 - f. I remember those 2 years *vividly*.
 - 1) there were countless hours sledding down a snow covered hill a block away.
 - 2) ice-skating down the sleet covered streets to the neighborhood skating rink some parents had made on an empty lot.
 - 3) trapping field mice
 - 4) riding bikes on trails through the fields
 - 5) making forts in the brush and having the most knarly dirt clod fights during the summer and snow-ball fights during the winter.
 - 6) throwing M-80's into puddles & watching the plume of water shoot into the air.
 - g. but the most vivid memory of all was that of kneeling on the back seat of our family car, looking out the rear window as we drove away for the last time.
 - 1) my 2 best friends were standing on the sidewalk in front of our house, waving their last goodbye.
 - 2) I was about mid way through 5th grade so I tried hard to be man, tough.
 - 3) but I just couldn't hold back the tears.

B. Saying Goodbye

1. Certainly, one of the more difficult things Jesus faced that last night He spent with the disciples was knowing He would shortly be *saying goodbye* to them.
2. For 3 years He'd spent virtually every waking moment with them.
 - a. their friendship had grown incredibly deep.
 - b. and though they were pretty much a bunch of *knuckleheads*,
 - c. at least they were *His* knuckleheads & He was very fond of them.
3. At dinner that night, Jesus said to them, "No longer do I call you servants, but *friends*." [John 15:15]
4. So as they left the room where'd they shared their last meal, they made their way out of the City, across the little valley known as Kidron, and onto the lower slope of the Mt. of Olives.
5. There was a favorite spot there Jesus visited often called *Gethsemane*, a place among the many olive trees where an olive press had been set up.
6. The crucial hour has come, the moment for which Jesus had been born.
7. And now as He faces His greatest ordeal, He asks for His friends, the disciples, to pray.

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 32-34

³²Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

1. Luke tells us in his account that Jesus called them, not just to have a seat, but to pray. [Luke 22:40]
 - a. He wasn't the only one who would face an ordeal that night.
 - b. they would *also* be challenged with the temptation to forsake him.
 - c. only prayer would prepare them to *face* that challenge.

³³And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.

2. Don't miss this - After telling the other 8 disciples to take a seat & begin praying, He invites Peter, James & John to come closer to where He Himself will pray.

3. And it's *then*, when He calls these 3 *closer to Himself* that He begins to show the great emotion He's experiencing.

4. As the followers of Jesus, we know that we're **ALL** called to pray.
5. And many Christians, maybe *most*, are content to let their prayer life be a kind of hit & miss experience of asking God for help when they're in need.
6. They see the throne of God as rather like a heavenly Costco they go to fill their spiritual shopping cart.
7. They don't understand prayer as God intends, as a medium of exchange between themselves & Him; a vehicle for *relationship* with Him.
8. You parents, how would you like it if your children ignored you until they had some need,
 - a. then they came to you & said, "Dear Dad/Mom – You are so awesome & wonderful & I praise your glorious name."
 - b. "Will you please do this & that and give me the other."
 - c. "Thank you, Amen." Then they abruptly turned around & left?
 - d. and the only time you heard from them was when they did this once a week.
 - e. whenever you open your mouth to speak to them, they just ignore you and walk away.
9. Now, the fact is, that's the way many Christians treat prayer.
10. God wants prayer to be so much more. It's the medium for encountering Him.
 - a. it's the way we develop a *real* relationship with Him.
 - b. it's how we draw closer to Him & He to us.
 - c. He doesn't want us to see prayer as just a way to fill our spiritual shopping cart but as an intimate act of interaction with He Who is the Lover of our soul.
11. Like Peter, James, & John, He invites us *in, closer*, so we might see *His* heart & discover what *He's* thinking, feeling, & doing.
12. Prayer isn't just a way to *get stuff* – It's how we get *Him!*
- 34** **Then He said to them,**
13. *Who'd* He say this too? Peter, James & John – the ones who'd come closer.
- Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."**
14. Jesus wasn't the only One who'd be challenged that night.

- a. when the mob came to arrest Him, the disciples would be put to a test of loyalty.
 - b. Jesus knew the only way they'd be able to pass that test was if they faced it *prayerfully*, strengthened in their relationship with God.
 - c. so He told them to *watch*. The word means to be *vigilant*, awake & alert to danger.
15. Did Peter, James & John watch? No, they fell asleep!
16. After Jesus went a few paces farther & threw Himself into the most fervent prayer *to prepare Himself* for the challenge *He* was about to face – He returned to find the 3 fast asleep.

B. Vs. 37-38

***37* Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? *38* Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."**

- 1. We might think the reason Jesus called them to pray was *for Him*, to help Him in His hour of trial –
- 2. But that was not the reason they needed to pray – He urged them to pray for *their own sake!*
- 3. Jesus said something here everyone of us experience on probably a daily basis – that the spirit *is* willing but our flesh is weak.
 - a. oh how we *want* to live for God, how we *want* to experience the victorious Christian life.
 - b. we *want* to make a difference for God in our world.
 - c. that's what our spirit wants – but the flesh, well, it has it's own set of desires & they run *counter* to the spirit.
 - d. if we're honest, we'll admit it's usually the flesh that gets it's way.
- 4. Jesus tells us here how to deal with the flesh – *Watch & pray.*
- 5. We hear that, & the spirit immediately says – **YES! PRAY!**
- 6. But what does our flesh say? Not pray, but **PLAY!** And if not play, then **SLEEP!**
- 7. What's the solution? It's as simple, or as difficult, as a *choice.*
- 8. We have to choose; flesh or spirit. Which will it be?
- 9. What did Peter, James, & John choose?
 - a. they chose the flesh & went back to sleep.

- b. and when they woke the 2nd time, it was to the mob which had come to arrest Jesus.
- c. in the face of that challenge, because they'd not prepared themselves through prayer to face the challenge of the test of their loyalty, they fled & forsook Christ, their Friend!

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Change of Plans*

1. This is not the message I had originally planned on sharing this morning.
2. I was going to share something out of Deuteronomy.
 - a. we're finishing Mark and our next book will be Deuteronomy.
 - b. I had a title & text all picked out for this weekend – you see it in the bulletin.
 - c. but as I sat down to prepare on Friday, the Spirit wouldn't let me go forward.
 - d. I felt compelled to share this message instead.
3. The reason why is because I strongly believe God is calling us as a church to prayer.
4. Something is happening among us. Many people have told me recently how they're being moved to pray more and are learning things about God and about prayer they've never known before.
5. There's a strong sense that God is about to do something profound & He's moving His people to prayer in *preparation* for it.
6. I have to tell you I've never witnessed the level of demonic attack as I have in the last few months.
 - a. and there's not one shred of subtlety to the enemy's strategy.
 - b. it's a bald-faced, blatant assault – almost like he's daring us to resist him.
 - c. he's tried to intimidate, cause confusion, stir up strife, & cause fear.
 - d. the temptation to discouragement was been fierce.
7. Yet through it all, the Lord has been a strong tower of refuge.
8. I've found the words of David in the Psalms to be a wonderful expression of what it means to find strength in God.
9. As I've said to many recently - If it takes this level of trouble to bring about this sense of the presence & power of God, then **BRING IT ON!**

10. So I share this message today because I believe God is calling us,
 - a. as a congregation & as individuals, to prayer –
 - b. watchful, persevering prayer.
11. Trying times lie before us – a season in which *all of us* will be faced with a test of our loyalty to Jesus.
 - a. we've recently seen some *fail* that test.
 - b. as we saw in our study last week, God invites those who fail & fall back again.
 - c. but does anyone here doubt He would rather we *don't fail* in the first place?
 - d. the key to passing the test is being spiritually vigilant in prayer.

B. Doing It

1. Here's what I believe God is calling us to at this time . . .
 - **Daily prayer**; morning & evening
 - **Prayer partners**; another or small group – organic! / Husbands & Wives
 - Some to **a ministry of prayer**
 - **Intercessors**; Room 208, Sunday Night
 - **Watchmen**; Read Ezekiel 33
 - **One Wednesday evening a month** – Prayer!
2. **Keep a prayer journal** –
 - a. record what you prayer for & what God shows you in prayer.
 - b. leave room after each to record when & how God answered the request & confirmed what He showed you.
3. Finally – when you read **the Word, read it prayerfully!** [Explain]

C. Get Ready

1. God is calling us as a church to take a bold step forward here, that He has something absolutely incredible planned for us.
2. But it can't & won't happen without hearts & lives prepared through prayer.
3. Revival awaits – It awaits those who will heed the call of the Spirit to prepare the way for His refreshing streams by digging channels for them through prayer.