

Day Twelve

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

The Power

Luke 22:39-46(NLT) *Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. 40 There he told them, “**Pray that you will not give in to temptation.**” 41 He walked away, about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, 42 “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” 43 **Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. 44 He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. 45 At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to find them asleep, exhausted from grief. 46 “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.”***

The indescribable richness of all that Jesus has done for us, and all that He suffered through for us, will only be grasped in eternity. We can only imagine the garden. We’ve spent some time in the garden, but have barely scratched the surface. Jesus is in the press and the gospel of Luke records something that we do not see in any of the others. In the midst of Jesus’ prayer, Luke records that an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened Him. This should give us even more insight of what truly is happening here. We know from Scripture that right after the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness a similar thing happened. **Matthew 4:11(NLT)** *“Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.”*

I don’t like assuming, but it is safe to allow scripture to explain scripture. The difference between these two occurrences should give us cause to take a moment and thank our King. In the first instance, the angels came after the temptation, but Luke records that this angel came during the prayer of Jesus. This should give us an indication of the veracity of the enemy’s attack on Jesus. We know that Luke was a physician and Jesus is experiencing such extreme agony and sorrow that it physically affects Him. So, Heaven comes with strength! Jesus is battling the enemy and He presses into prayer with such fervency that His sweat falls to the ground like great drops of blood.

Reading in the book of Hebrews, we see the following: **Hebrews 12:3-4(LB)** *“If you want to keep from becoming fainthearted and weary, think about his patience as sinful men did such terrible things to him. 4 **After all, you have never yet struggled against sin and temptation until you sweat great drops of blood.**”* The writer of Hebrews admonishes us to look to Jesus when we are resisting sin and temptation. The Living Bible translates it for us in such a way that we can’t help but see Jesus in the garden. Jesus overcomes all temptation and testing. He pressed into the Father’s presence and received the power He needed to be victorious.

Now contrast Jesus' experience with the disciples. Jesus already told them that they were going to fail. But He also told them how to overcome. Our gracious Father will always give us an opportunity to pass the test. The same power that was available to Jesus was available to them. The difference, however, is when Jesus was pressed, He pressed into the Father's presence. He used His sorrow and grief to drive Him to His knees. Whereas, the disciples allowed their grief to push them into a place of depression and sleep.

Mark 14:37-41(NLT) ***"Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? 38 Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.' 39 Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. 40 When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open. And they didn't know what to say. 41 When he returned to them the third time, he said, 'Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!'"***

Jesus kept on coming back to the disciples. Maybe to see if there was at least one of them that would engage with Him in this fight. He even asks Peter, "Could you not just watch with me for one hour?" Then He warns him again to watch and pray so that he would not give into temptation. Jesus goes through the same process, comes back and finds all of them asleep. This time the Bible does not tell us if Jesus said anything. He probably did not need to; maybe He just looked at them because they did not know what to say. Honestly, I want to yell, "Are they brain dead? How many times must Jesus tell them what is going on? How many times must He ask them to engage with Him? If you were making this Jesus story up, you sure are doing a poor job if you wanted to paint the disciples as heroes." The truth is, the disciples are writing this about themselves. That can only mean one thing: They are telling the truth. The truth is not very flattering to any of them. When Jesus needed them the most, they could be counted on the least.

Before we look at them and get a sense of spiritual superiority, thinking to ourselves, "I would be there for Jesus and I would pray," ask yourself, are you praying now? Can you sacrifice an hour today? Let's not be naive about our own so-called superior commitment. Let's just remind ourselves how many times God has spoken to us about very specific things, yet many of us do not heed His warnings or obey His specific instructions. How many times are we, the church, asleep while the battle for eternal souls is being waged around us? We are living in strange days, but instead of these strange days causing us to seek after God, we can't wait for life to be back to normal. Maybe "normal" is not what Jesus wants for His church. Maybe maintaining the business-as-usual approach is not what the Father wants. Maybe, just maybe, this is

our hour. We could cower and hope to hold onto what we have, or we could follow our King's example: Fight on our knees and, if necessary, lay down our lives for the sake of Jesus.

Let me ask you a question: What happened to Jesus, was it fair? Was it just? Was it a good thing? Is it fair for the innocent to die for the guilty? Is it just for the pure to be punished for the impure? Is it fair for the righteous to be beaten in the place of the unrighteous? Yet, that's exactly what happened to Jesus. You might think, "Well, what happened to me is not fair. What happened to me is not just." You are right. Maybe things that have happened to you are downright wrong or even cruel. Maybe you have been betrayed or suffered loss...

But you really have one of two choices: you could respond like Jesus or respond like the disciples. When you are in your garden of pressing, your Gethsemane, you will **press into God's presence, press into God's purpose and press into God's power.** Or, like the disciples, you could allow your sorrow and anguish to put you to sleep. Here's the good news: Your Father will supernaturally give you the strength you need to face and overcome anything the devil might throw at you, but that power is only found in His presence, while you are fulfilling His purpose, for His glory! When you are faced with temptation and testing, His supernatural power is available to you, so draw from your Father's Presence...

Prayer:

- **Thank the Lord for His power that is available to you to overcome the temptations the enemy might throw at you.**
- **Ask that you will be vigilant and aware of the spiritual battle you are in, so that you may watch and pray.**
- **Ask the Lord to fill you with His presence.**
- **Pray for others that might be in a season of testing. Pray that they will see what they need to see and hear what they need to hear.**