

# **Lesson 19**

*Mark 14:32-72*

## VII. Death of Christ [14:1-15:47]

### 4. Agony of Gethsemane [14:32-42]

#### Vv. 32-34

<sup>32</sup> They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” <sup>33</sup> He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. <sup>34</sup> “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

- a. The word “Gethsemane” means “oil press.” This garden was located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. He told the disciples to wait at the entrance of the garden as he went into pray. Similar to previous special experiences such as the raising of Jairus’ daughter [Mk 5:37] and the transfiguration [Mk 9:2], Jesus takes Peter, James and John with him.
- b. Jesus, knowing that he was just hours away from experiencing the horrors of the cross and its implications [i.e. separation from the Father], was overwhelmed with sorrow.

#### Vv. 35-36

<sup>35</sup> Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

- a. Jesus went just a little farther [“a stone’s throw” – Luke 22:41] from the three disciples and prostrated on the ground and began to pray loudly with great emotion [Hebrews 5:7 “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he **offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death...**”].

The fact that Jesus was extremely troubled can be seen from Luke’s words, “And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his **sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground**” [22:44]. This condition is medically known as “hematidrosis” whereby under extreme stress, a person’s capillaries can burst resulting in the blood mixing with sweat. It is a very dangerous physical condition.

- b. The terms, “Abba, Father” was not used by Jews when addressing God. While it was common for Jewish children to call their human fathers as “Abba,” it was not common for the Jews to address God as “Abba.” They considered it as an inappropriate and offensive way of addressing God. Jesus’ use of these terms signified his close relationship with the Father. In addition, due to the reconciling work of Christ on our behalf, believers also have the same privilege of calling God as “Abba, Father.”

Matthew 6:9 “**Our Father** in heaven”

Romans 8:15 “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “**Abba, Father.**”

Galatians 4:6 “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “**Abba, Father.**”

- c. In the Old Testament, “cup” refers to cup of blessing [Psa 23:5 “my cup overflows”] and cup of suffering as a result of God’s wrath [Isa 51:17 “cup of his wrath”]. Here in context, it refers to that of God’s wrath against sin that Jesus would bear on the cross. This would include a literal physical suffering and physical death as well as spiritual suffering and spiritual death [i.e. separation from the Father as being the bearer of our sins].

- d. Jesus never doubted God's power to change the circumstances "*everything is possible for you.*" The issue was if the removal of the cup was according to the will of God "*Yet not what I will, but what you will.*" Jesus' human will, while being distinct from that of the Father's will, was never in opposition to the will of God. It always yielded to the will of the Father.

#### Vv. 37-42

<sup>37</sup> Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? <sup>38</sup> Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." <sup>39</sup> Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. <sup>40</sup> When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. <sup>41</sup> Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

- a. That Jesus' first prayer lasted at least an hour is seen from the statement "*Could you not keep watch for one hour?*" That Simon Peter was specifically addressed in the first rebuke could have been as a result of the bold statements he had made concerning his spiritual strength [Mk 14:29, 31].

It is interesting to note that Jesus warned the disciples three times about the need for spiritual preparation to avoid falling into temptation and it was three times that Peter denied Christ [Mk 14:66-72]. It is also interesting [and comforting] to note that Jesus reaffirmed his love for Peter three times [John 21:15-17].

- b. Jesus, realizing that it was God's will for him to go through the cross, boldly goes forward "*Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!*"

### Application

#### 1. Biblical Prayer always seeks to accomplish God's will.

Jesus, through this experience, teaches us the importance of always seeking God's will to be accomplished in our prayers. While Jesus did not relish the prospect of the cross, he still submitted in doing the will of the Father. He did not run from accomplishing the will of God, but proceeded forth to accomplish it.

Even though Jesus received a "No" response for his three-fold petition, he still received the necessary strength from God to fulfill the will of God. Luke tells us that "*An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him*" [22:43].

Similar to Jesus' Gethsemane experience, Paul also received a "No" response for his three-fold petitions.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 "<sup>8</sup> *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it [i.e. the thorn in the flesh] away from me.* <sup>9</sup> *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

However, like Jesus, Paul also received necessary strength to yield to God's will. In Paul's case, he was reminded of the abundance of God's grace available to persevere through every trial "*My grace is sufficient for you.*" Thus Paul could successfully go through the trials without losing the joy in his heart.

Jesus knew the struggles we would have in accomplishing the will of God. His words, “*Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak*” clearly underscores this truth [v. 38]. He knew the battles we would have in trying to do what pleases the Lord.

Paul reminds us of this battle in Galatians 5:17 “*For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.*” In other words, while the new inner man as controlled by the Holy Spirit, desires to do God’s will, the presence of the old flesh opposes the doing of God’s will. The only way to overcome this problem is to “*live by the Spirit*” [i.e. yield to the Spirit] and “*not gratify the desires of the sinful nature*” [Gal 5:16].

The Bible clearly states that the Christian’s prayer must always desire to accomplish the will of God. 1 John 5:14 says, “*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*” Praying according to the will of God does not always mean that we will get a “Yes” response to our prayers. **Even a “No” response can be a result of God’s will being done in our lives.** It is not simply a matter of “Thy will be done” at the end of our prayers, as if it is a magical charm. We must truly mean it. **The real issue is whether or not we truly desire to do God’s will.**

Praying according to God’s will is not designed to change the circumstances of our life. Rather, it is a petition to the Lord **to help us gladly yield our will to align with his will.** This type of a mindset will help the individual in not only receiving the necessary strength to go through difficult circumstances without sinning, but also be joyful in the fact that through his obedience, God will be ultimately glorified.

Hebrews 12:2 says “*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*” The author of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus looked beyond the temporary pain and shame associated with the cross. He knew that by going through the cross [i.e. by accomplishing God’s will], he would complete his God-given work and as a result bring glory to God and also be in the presence of the Father. That was the joy he was seeking, i.e., to be reunited in glory with the Father in heaven as a result of accomplishing God’s will.

In the same way, we will also be with the Lord after our earthly journey is done. By fixing our eyes on Jesus and following his path of obedience by depending upon the strength that God provides, we too can accomplish God’s will for our individual lives, even if it means going through various trials.

### **For Reflection**

- When I pray, do I *really* seek for God’s will to be done?
- Do I accept “No” answers as part of God’s will for my life?

## 5. Betrayal and Arrest [14:43-52]

### Vv. 43-46

<sup>43</sup> Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders. <sup>44</sup> Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” <sup>45</sup> Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. <sup>46</sup> The men seized Jesus and arrested him. <sup>47</sup> Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

- a. Judas, the “*betrayer*” [14:42] led the crowd that consisted of the “*chief priests, the officers of the temple guard...the elders*” [Lk 22:52] and the Roman soldiers [John 18:12]. He had prearranged with them as to what the signal was that would reveal Jesus “*The one I kiss in the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.*”
- b. A kiss on the hand or the cheek was a common way of showing affection or respect to a Rabbi by his disciples. Judas however uses this custom as a sign of betrayal.

Jesus called Judas, “*Friend*” [Matt 26:50] and also asked him, “*Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?*” [Lk 22:48]. In addition, Mark’s description of Judas’ act “*kissed*” means “to kiss again and again.” It was the kind of kiss that one would give to someone they love very much.

In the light of these truths, the wretchedness of Judas’ betrayal is seen even more clearly.

- c. Jesus, without offering any resistance, allowed them to arrest him. However, Peter [John 18:10] in trying to defend Jesus only manages to cut off the ear of Malchus who was one of the servants of the high priest [John 18:10]. Jesus by healing the ear of Malchus [Lk 22:51] showed that he still had power. However, he refused to use that power to free himself, but yielded himself to the will of God.

### Vv. 48-52

<sup>48</sup> “*Am I leading a rebellion,*” said Jesus, “*that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?*” <sup>49</sup> *Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.*” <sup>50</sup> *Then everyone deserted him and fled.* <sup>51</sup> *A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him,* <sup>52</sup> *he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.*

- a. While he did not offer any physical resistance, Jesus did question their actions. He questioned their excessive use of force as if he was a dangerous criminal. However, Jesus could see all of these actions as a fulfillment of Scriptures [“*he was led like a lamb to the slaughter...By oppression and judgment he was taken away*” – Isaiah 53:7, 8].
- b. At this stage, just as Jesus predicted earlier, all of his disciples “*deserted him and fled.*” Some bible scholars believe that the young man that fled only with his undergarments [naked refers to the absence of outer garments] could have been Mark, the cousin of Barnabas [Col 4:10] and the author of this epistle.

## Application

### 1. Christian Love does not Retaliate Evil with Evil.

The response of Jesus on the night of his betrayal starting with the washing of Jesus' feet clearly indicates that Jesus did not simply say with words, "Love your enemies" [Matt 5:44], but lived them out. How hard it must have been for the Lord when one who was so close to him could turn around and betray him with sweet kisses! Reminds one of David's words in Psalm 55:12-14 <sup>12</sup> *If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him.* <sup>13</sup> *But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend,* <sup>14</sup> *with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God."*

Jesus was not as some skeptics say, a victim of circumstances. He was in total control of the situation. When Peter recklessly drew his sword to protect Jesus, we find Jesus responding with these words, <sup>52</sup> *"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.* <sup>53</sup> *Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?* <sup>54</sup> *But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"* [Matt 26:52-54]. Jesus had the power to retaliate and crush his enemies instantly. Yet, he did not retaliate. He yielded to the will of God. The apostle Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:22-23 <sup>22</sup> *He [Jesus] committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.* <sup>23</sup> ***When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.***"

**In addition, Jesus reached out to heal the ear of Malchus – an act that showed his divine power and also his love for those that hurt him.**

When we are treated in a harsh or unjust manner [be it in the home, workplace, church, etc.], we must learn from the example of Jesus in not retaliating in an evil manner. Rather, we are called to respond with love.

Romans 12:19-21 <sup>19</sup> *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.* <sup>20</sup> *On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."* <sup>21</sup> ***Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.***"

Luke 6:27-28 <sup>27</sup> *"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,* <sup>28</sup>  ***bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.***"

Let us remember that God is in control of every situation, including those times when we are misunderstood, slandered and treated harshly. He graciously allows even a seemingly unfair situation in our lives to accomplish his sovereign purposes.

### For Reflection

- When I am treated in a harsh manner, do I tend to hit back or respond with kindness?
- When I am treated in a harsh manner, even if I do not retaliate outwardly, do I inwardly develop a bitterness towards the person hurting me?

## 6. Trial before the Sanhedrin [14:53-65]

### v. 53

<sup>53</sup> They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together. <sup>54</sup> Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

- a. According to John 18:12-14, Jesus was first taken to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the high priest at that time. Prior to Caiaphas, Annas was the high priest until A.D. 15 when Rome removed him from that position. However, he was still regarded by many as the true high priest.
- b. From Annas' residence, Jesus was taken to the residence of Caiaphas where other leaders of the Sanhedrin assembled for this trial. The Sanhedrin was the Jewish court that consisted of 71 members including the high priest.
- c. Peter, though he fled from the garden, mustered enough courage to go right into the courtyard of the high priest's home [John 18:15-16] to be a witness of these events.

### Vv. 55-59

<sup>55</sup> The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. <sup>56</sup> Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. <sup>57</sup> Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: <sup>58</sup> "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.' " <sup>59</sup> Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

- a. In order to obtain a verdict of death sentence against Jesus, the religious leaders desperately sought witnesses. The Mosaic law required the need for at least 2 witnesses whose testimonies agreed before they could pass a death sentence.

Deuteronomy 17:6 "***On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.***"

- b. Many false witnesses came forward with false charges. Some even tried to twist the meaning of Jesus' prediction concerning the destruction of his body and the following resurrection in three days as a prediction concerning the destruction of the temple [John 2:19-21]. All in all, their statements were not in agreement and thus their charges as a whole was invalid.

### Vv. 60-64

<sup>60</sup> Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" <sup>61</sup> But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" <sup>62</sup> "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." <sup>63</sup> The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. <sup>64</sup> "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death.

- a. Realizing the situation, the high priest stood up and questioned Jesus in a manner that would make him appear guilty. He repeatedly kept asking Jesus if he was the "Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" By this line of questioning, the high priest was associating deity ["Son of the Blessed One"] with the office of the Messiah ["Christ"]. The Jews out of reverence toward God used the term "Blessed One" instead of "God." The high priest hoped for Jesus to affirm these claims and could thus find him guilty of blasphemy.

**Jesus, by answering, “I am” clearly stated that he is the Messiah, the Son of God.** In addition, by quoting from Daniel 7:13, “*you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven,*” Jesus clearly claimed equality with God. In addition, Jesus was warning them that though they are judging him at present, he will be their Judge in the future as he comes “*on the clouds of heaven.*”

- b. That the Jews understood his claim of equality with God is seen by the fact that the “*high priest tore his clothes*” and also charged Jesus with “*blasphemy.*” This was not the only instance when the Jews understood Jesus’ claim of divinity.

John 5:18 “*For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.*”

John 10:33 “*“We are not stoning you for any of these,” replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”*”

- c. Using the claims of Jesus, the high priest proceeded forth to urge the Sanhedrin to reach for a verdict. Without any delay, the Sanhedrin proceeded forth to condemn Jesus as being “*worthy of death.*” The Mosaic law in Leviticus 24:16 prescribed death as the punishment for blasphemy, “*anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death.*”

Mark indicates that “*all*” the members of the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus as worthy of death. However, Luke 23:50-51 reads, “<sup>50</sup> *Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, <sup>51</sup> who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God.*” The possible explanation is that either some members of the council such as Joseph [and possibly Nicodemus] were not physically present during this trial or that their minority voices had been overlooked against the majority’s decision.

#### v. 65

<sup>65</sup> *Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy!” And the guards took him and beat him.*

- a. Having condemned Jesus to die, some of the members of the Sanhedrin proceeded forth to physically abuse the Lord. Spitting on someone’s face was very degrading and insulting [Deut 25:9]. By striking Jesus after blindfolding him and saying “*Prophecy to us Christ. Who hit you?*” [Matt 26:68], they were taunting him to use his Messianic power to identify the persons that were hitting him.
- b. The temple guards upon receiving Jesus from the hands of the Sanhedrin proceeded forth to “*beat him*” also.
- c. Again, in these acts, we see the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures that predicted the suffering of Christ.

Isaiah 50:6 “*I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.*”

## 7. Denials of Peter [14:66-72]

<sup>66</sup> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. <sup>67</sup> When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him. “You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus,” she said. <sup>68</sup> But he denied it. “I don’t know or understand what you’re talking about,” he said, and went out into the entryway. <sup>69</sup> When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” <sup>70</sup> Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” <sup>71</sup> He began to call down curses on himself, and he swore to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.” <sup>72</sup> Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

- a. Just as Jesus predicted, Peter denied Christ three times. Based on Peter’s Galilean dialect, the people around him concluded that he was a follower of Jesus, who was also considered as a Galilean. Except Judas Iscariot, all the other eleven disciples of Jesus were from Galilee.
- b. In the third denial, Peter is more vehement. The phrase “*He began to call down curses on himself and...swore to them*” does not signify that Peter used profanity. It simply means that Peter placed himself under God’s curse if his statements were found to be false.
- c. Luke gives additional details concerning Peter’s denials. “*The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times”*” [22:61]. This act broke the heart of Peter as “*he broke down and wept.*”

### Application

#### 1. Dependence upon God leads to Obedience, Dependence upon flesh leads to Sin.

Upon observing Jesus’ response during his trial [53-65] and Peter’s response during his trial [66-72], we see what happens when one depends upon God and what happens when one depends upon his own flesh. Jesus by submitting to the Father’s will through diligent prayer in Gethsemane was prepared to face this trial. He even warned Peter and the other disciples, “*Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak*” [Mk 14:38]

In his humanity, Jesus showed to us how he constantly depended upon the Father for strength. He urged all of us to do the same. In Luke 18:1, he urges us to “*always pray and not give up.*”

How often the tendency is to rely on our own human strength and wisdom to be successful! How often we have failed as a result of such an approach! Let us learn from our mistakes. We must always remain humble and constantly seek God’s strength to overcome temptation.

And even during those times when we have failed, we must genuinely confess and repent of our sins in order to experience the forgiveness of God. Peter genuinely repented of his sins and found mercy [John 21:15-17].

## Quiz 19

1. **The primary purpose of God-centered prayer is for God to:**
  - a. Change the circumstances
  - b. Align our will with the will of God
  
2. **When we are insulted or treated in an unfair manner, which of the following is a biblical response?**
  - a. As long as we do not outwardly retaliate, we are not sinning.
  - b. It is not simply the absence of outward retaliation, but God expects the absence of an inward bitterness.
  
3. **The Jews did not clearly understand the claims of Jesus as to his divine nature.**

True      False