

Will You Keep Watch With Me?

Description

36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He told His disciples
37 And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to show grief
and distress of mind and was deeply depressed.
38 Then He said to them, My soul is very sad and
deeply grieved, so that I am almost dying of sorrow. Stay here and keep awake
and keep watch with Me.
39 And going a little farther, He threw Himself upon the ground on His face and
and desire.

Matthew 26: 36-39 AMPC

The sequence of events in the Garden of Gethsemane is truly my favorite passage in the Bible because it creates the clearest picture of Jesus the man/human. It is here that we see Jesus experience sorrow, grief, depression, and possibly doubt, not for others, but for the first time, himself. Every other passage that involved Jesus with the exception of Lazarus' death showed a Jesus that experienced grief or sorrow at the plight or condition of others. Here in Gethsemane Jesus is finally at the doorstep of his purpose; betrayal, death for the sins of others, and the faith that his Father (God) would resurrect him on the 3rd day. Matthew 26 I believe paints the clearest picture of the life of Jesus, and provides an example for what carrying our cross looks like. Before v36, Jesus shared in the Last Supper (the 1st communion) with his disciples, and released Judas to fulfill his purpose which was to betray Jesus to the Pharisees/Sadducees. From there Jesus informs the other 11 disciples of what would happen to them over the next 72 hours and beyond. Peter openly refutes Jesus' words which caused Jesus to tell Peter that he would actually deny him 3 times before that very night was over with; a stark contradiction to Peter's bold talk that he would never betray him. All of this makes what happens next that much harder to swallow; he takes the remaining 11 disciples to Gethsemane so that he could pray before he was turned over to the Pharisees/Sadducees. It is here that we see Jesus attempt to find support in his trusted friends. He leaves 8 of the disciples behind and selects his chosen 3 (James, John, & Peter) to travel further inside the garden with him so that they could pray with him in his time of distress. He had selected this same group on an earlier occasion (Mountain of Transfiguration, Matthew 17) where they were given the privilege of witnessing him speak with Moses and Elijah, and hear the voice of God. It is also here in Gethsemane where Jesus is most vulnerable with those that he trusts the most, and should have known or supported him best.

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Jesus here shows emotions that he had not shown before during his life or ministry, and it is important that he didn't show or express these feelings with just anybody. He became vulnerable with those who had shown themselves to be worthy of that level of vulnerability. Jesus provides us a clear example

that even though he was spiritually, mentally, and most likely physically stronger than his inner circle, he was not too important or advanced to need someone to lean on. Jesus also shows us that you are never too holy or spiritually mature to experience normal emotions such as doubt, fear, regret, sadness, depression, distress, etc. When Jesus realizes that the severity of the moment is too much for him to bear alone, he selects what should be his prayer warriors, his spiritually/emotionally mature friends and enters into a time of prayer. I believe that we should also realize that in addition to soliciting the prayers of others, we must never cease to continue praying for ourselves.

Reflection Time

Have you identified the individual(s) who will stay awake with you? More importantly are you able to stay awake and pray for yourself? Have you identified a time or place when you are able to pray best, or where you are able to spend quality time with God? What do you do when you feel distressed or depressed? If you haven't handled adversity well in the past, create a healthier plan to address it, and identify others who can provide healthy, Christian support for you in those times. Will you allow others to hear or see you when you are experiencing adversity, or do you hide your pain/emotions? Have you confided or leaned on the wrong people at another time in life? How did that impact you, and have you recovered advanced past that moment?

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1. Faith
2. Is It Me

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1. Faith
2. Is it me?
3. Jesus
4. Lent 2021
5. Matthew
6. New Testament
7. The Disciples
8. The Gospels
9. Understanding
10. Wisdom

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