

LESSON 4



JESUS NEARING HIS DEATH

Scripture Text: Mark 14:10-11, 18-21, 27-43

Jesus foresaw His death and knew it would be hard for the disciples to understand. Though it was a time of great distress for Him, He did not forget to show them the real meaning of His suffering. Judas was chosen by Jesus to be one of the twelve disciples. He was in the very presence of Jesus, physically, yet he separated from Him spiritually. Why? What happened in between that made him seek a way to betray Jesus to His enemies? Did he fail to watch and pray? Did he allow evil thoughts and desires to come and remain in his heart? Let us see what God's eternal Word has to say about the answers to these questions. Compare with Matthew 26:36-46.

MEMORY VERSE: . . . *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* *Matthew 26:39*

The Sinful Plot

Mark 14:10-11 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve . . . Judas was chosen by Jesus to preach the Gospel. He was given power over unclean spirits and to heal disease. **Went unto the** chief priests to betray Him unto them. The priests wanted revenge. They allowed a spirit of resentment to work in their hearts and cause them to murder Jesus. Judas failed to watch and pray, as many do today, and allowed the spirit of greed to place the love of money before his love for Jesus. Both being evil, they bargained together to do evil. When we have a spirit that desires to betray Jesus, the enemy will make it convenient to do so.

Mark 14:18-21 One of you . . . shall betray me. This was a most serious moment in the life of Judas. He was about to be turned over to Satan, but Jesus, by naming him out, offered him one last opportunity to repent. Judas failed in his time of visitation. How about you, dear one? Judas had to suffer the consequences of his decision. So will each of us. Judas went out and it was night (John 13:30). When one turns from Jesus, He always goes into darkness.

It Is Possible to Fall

Mark 14:27-31 Walking from Jerusalem to Gethsemane, Jesus said, **All ye shall be offended**—all the disciples would be turned aside from Him. A lack of spiritual power and weakness in the flesh would cause this. Fear and bewildered disappointment would cause all of the disciples to be offended because of Jesus. Peter would even deny Him. Jesus quoted the prophecy which He was fulfilling (Zechariah 13:7). **But he spake . . . I will not deny thee . . . Likewise also said they all.** Each man thought he was strong in himself. Jesus tried to help them to see and understand their weakness in themselves (1 Corinthians 10:11-12; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

Gethsemane

Mark 14:32-36 And they came to . . . Gethsemane . . . Sit ye here, while I shall pray. In Gethsemane Jesus left eight disciples waiting and went farther on with Peter, James, and John. Then He left them to wait and watch and went yet farther on to pray. Jesus needed their friendship. A terrific battle was raging in His heart, right against

wrong, God against Satan, the flesh against the spirit. His human nature and His divine nature were in a life-and-death struggle on which depended the salvation of lost mankind. The eternal fate of all the world was held in Jesus' hands. In this greatest battle and greatest victory that the world has ever known, all the powers of Satan and hell were hurled at Jesus. He was **sore amazed**—as the terrible ordeal loomed before Him, His human nature felt fear and great amazement.

The thing coming to pass was greater than He had expected. **My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death . . .** If possible **take away this cup**. The terror He faced here was not a concern with the probability of physical pain. It was not of the body nor of the mind, but of the soul. **Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt**. By keeping His trust in His Father, by submitting fully to Him, by deciding to carry out the plan they together had made, this great victory was won. It was the will of the Heavenly Father that Jesus suffer and die. There in prayer, alone, Jesus won the victory for all time. On Calvary He only carried it out. Jesus received no as an answer to His prayer that if it were possible this cup would be taken away. No is sometimes God's will. To seek and accept God's will is real prayer.

The Flesh Is Weak

Mark 14:37-43 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping . . . couldest not thou watch one hour? What a small favor to ask one who had made such broad statements earlier. Lip service only. How much might the disciples have learned if they had stayed awake, watched, and prayed with Jesus! **Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation**—this is the only way through which temptation loses its power. When Jesus said to Peter, **the flesh is weak**, He could speak from His own present experience with that flesh. Because He knows and conquered it, He is able to make us conquerors also (Hebrews 2:18).

The problem of suffering is one of the most difficult with which Christianity has to deal. The suffering of the saints and of those who live holy, blameless lives remains as a bewildering issue to the human race. Atheism and unbelievers have never come up with any satisfactory answer. Christianity faces the problem firmly because of the fact that Jesus Himself suffered. It is a part of God's will and plan that His followers suffer for His cause (1 Peter 2:21; 4:1; 2 Timothy 2:12). We must heed His warning through God's Word. Jesus knows all the ways that we are weak. He will give us strength to endure to the end. As we try to flee from trouble because it is painful, we miss the spiritual structure it is designed to work in us.

JUST A THOUGHT

**People seem to be able to stand adversity
but not prosperity.**