

The Humble Prayer Of Jesus In Gethsemane.

Text: Mark 14:36

Suggested Hymns:

423, 57 pt. 1, 160, 518, 383

1) A brief overview of the text

2) What Jesus prays for

3) How Jesus prays

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Mark 14:36, ³⁶ *And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Great, indeed, were the sufferings of His soul which the Lord experienced in Gethsemane. The very words used by the Holy writer tell of the greatness of His agony and anguish. We read of this in Matthew 26:37, ³⁷ *And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.* Jesus was sorrowful and in a state of consternation. The Greek word for "*deeply distressed*" signifies a sorrow that makes a man neither fit for company, nor desirous of it.

We read in Mark 14:34, ³⁴ *Then [Jesus] said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death."* Jesus was encompassed all around, surrounded by, and enveloped in sorrow.

What was the cause of this sorrow? Firstly, Jesus was now engaged in an encounter with the powers of darkness. We read in Luke 22:53, ⁵³ *When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."*

The prince and ruler of this world has come. Jesus says in John 14:30–31, ³⁰ *I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.*

The devil is rallying his forces, preparing for an assault, and the battle will be decisive. The Serpent makes his fiercest assault on the Seed of the woman and directs its sting, the sting of death, to the very heart of Jesus.

Secondly, Jesus is now bearing the iniquities which the Father laid upon Him. Jesus was suffering for all the sins of all the world. He knew the hostility of this sin, how provoking to God, and how ruining to man sin is.

These factors were the cause of why Jesus was “*sorrowful and deeply distressed*.” It bends Jesus to the ground, and He seeks comfort in prayer. Thus we find our suffering Saviour on His knees in prayer. Let us therefore consider today *The Humble Prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. A Brief Overview Of The Text

We also read of this prayer in Matthew 26:39, ³⁹ *[Jesus] went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”*

Jesus fell on His face. This is the only time in His whole life that we are told that He assumed this common Old Testament prayer posture. His first prayer was a heart-wrenching plea: “*O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.*”

There is no question about the sincerity of these words. Jesus had a genuine desire to be relieved of the agony He had just begun to endure. Although He knew of no alternative — and suggested none — He earnestly desired that there might be one.

Jesus’ second prayer is slightly different from His first one. Instead of saying “*if it is possible*,” Jesus said, “*If it is not possible?*” His vision is beginning to clear. It is as though before His first prayer the crushing load of sin that He was bearing and the furious assaults of Satan had combined to cloud His vision.

Recently Jesus had explained to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to suffer all these things. But once He was alone in Gethsemane, the burden seemed too great. Until He took it to His Father in prayer.

Not only do we notice a difference between His first and second prayers, but after His second prayer Jesus does not bother to rouse Peter, James, and John again. The feeling of desperation is fading. A grim determination is growing in His heart. After His third prayer, He is able to say, *“⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”* Yes, prayer changes things. Prayer gives strength.

It is also worth noting that even Jesus did not always get what He asked for when He prayed. There certainly was no sin in asking for something that His Father chose not to give Him.

But when we say prayer changes things, that does not mean all you have to do is pray long enough and hard enough, and God will give you what you want.

Part of the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray is, *“Thy will be done.”* Jesus’ prayers in Gethsemane demonstrate what it means to pray the Third Petition: *“Lord, bring my will into perfect harmony with Your good and gracious Will.”*

Jesus never ceased to desire the redemption of the world with all His heart. Even as His blood stained sweat dropped to the ground, He was willing to endure all the agony and loneliness if there was no other way to do it.

Never for a moment did Jesus feel that the price He was paying was too great and that He would rather permit all people to be cast into hell. If there was no alternative, He was determined to go ahead, and the very assurance of His heavenly Father that there was no other way would be a source of strength and encouragement to Him.

2. The Humble Prayer Of Jesus In Gethsemane

What Jesus Prays For

To whom does Jesus pray? In our text Jesus says, *“Abba, Father.”* He addresses Himself to God. The Syriac word is here retained, which signifies *“Father,”* to indicate what emphasis our Lord laid upon it. It speaks of child-like love and trust.

This is just as we read in Romans 8:15, *¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”* Jesus holds God at His word, *“You are My beloved*

Son” which was spoken at His Baptism.¹ Very similar words were spoken at His Transfiguration.²

When Jesus prays, ***all things are possible for You***, He glorifies His heavenly Father as the all-powerful God.

Let us now look at the prayer itself. The first part is ***Take this cup away from Me***. Jesus asks for a favour. He calls His suffering a cup. Great as the suffering is and will be, it is not a bottomless pit, not fathomless as the sea. Jesus will not be annihilated by it.

But, nevertheless, it is a bitter cup, for it contains the fullness of God’s wrath, which must be drained, and it means death. The Scriptures say in Ezekiel 18:20,²⁰ ***The soul who sins shall die***. And in Romans 6:23,²³ ***For the wages of sin is death***.

At the thought of this, Jesus shrinks back and therefore begs that the Father take this cup from Him, in other words, He prays that He might be spared the suffering now at hand. This petition of Jesus indicates that He is true man.

It shows that He was ***“taken from among men,”***³ and that He was ***“touched with the feeling of our infirmities”*** and ***“tempted like as we are”*** as we learn in Hebrews 4:15. Christ admitted and expressed a reluctance to suffer.

However, Jesus adds the proviso, as recorded in Matthew 26:39, ***if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me***. This proviso changes the entire aspect of His prayer. ***“If it is possible,”*** that is, if His Father may be glorified, if man may be saved, if the work of redemption may be accomplished, without His drinking this bitter cup, He desires to be spared, otherwise not.

His prayer continues, ***nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will***. Willingly and gladly Jesus submits to the will of God. Even the human will of Christ, being sinless, is not averse to the will of God. Jesus will not permit His will to run counter to His Father’s will.

God wills that all people should be saved, and to carry out this will, Jesus is willing to submit. Therefore He offered Himself and gave Himself for us. Jesus did it with delight. We read in Psalm 40:7–8,⁷ ***Then I said, “Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. ⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart.”***

Likewise we read in John 6:39–40, ³⁹ *This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.* ⁴⁰ *And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

And in John 4:34 we read, ³⁴ *Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*

The hymn writer expressed it this way, ⁴

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth
The guilt of all men bearing;
‘Tis laden with the sins of earth,
None else the burden sharing.
It goes its way, grows weak and faint,
To slaughter led without complaint,
Its spotless life to offer;
Bears shame, and stripes, and wounds, and death,
Anguish, and mockery, and saith:
All this I gladly suffer.

3

Behold, the Lamb most willingly
Endures what God commanded,
His will conforms to God’s decree,
To do as God demanded.

This is a fine and perfect example of reliance upon the correctness and the righteousness of the Father’s will! Let us imitate it in all aspects of our own lives.

3. The Humble Prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane

How Jesus prays

Firstly, Jesus prays in deep humility. We read just before our text in Mark 14:35, ³⁵ *He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.*

Jesus prayed in deep humility to render satisfaction for our pride, and to give us an example. God says much about being humble. We read in Matthew 23:12, *¹² And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*

And in 1 Peter 5:5, *⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”*

The Psalmist says in Psalm 51:17, *¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart — These, O God, You will not despise.*

Secondly, Jesus prays with firm confidence. The words of Christ’s prayer leave no room for doubt, they breathe absolute trust.

Thirdly, Jesus prays with willing submission to the will of God. Jesus prayed with submission, and similarly we also do this because God is our Father and we are His adopted children. We read in Romans 8:15, *¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”* And in Galatians 4:6, *⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!”*

Note, however, just because there is submission does not mean that there is no confidence. On the contrary we are full of confidence. We read 1 John 5:14, *¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.* And in Matthew 8:2, *² And behold, a leper came and worshiped [Jesus], saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”* There is no doubt in that prayer!

Fourthly, Jesus perseveres in prayer. We read in Mark 14:35, 39, 41, *³⁵ He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. ... ³⁹ Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. ... ⁴¹ Then He came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

Note that in James 5:16 we are told to *pray for one another*. And that *The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*. In Rom. 12:12 we are told to continue *steadfastly in prayer*.

So in conclusion, may the Lord give us perseverance in prayer, humility in prayer, confidence in prayer, and submission in prayer. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Mark 1:9

² Mark 9:10

³ Heb. 5:1

⁴ Hymn 57 v 1, 3