

Remnant Life Church

April 18, 2025

Good Friday

His Emotional Suffering

Matt 26:36-46

While I believe that every one of us recognizes that Jesus died a horrible physical death for us on the cross, few of us likely comprehend the agony He suffered even before the crucifixion in the Garden of Gethsemane

- The Gospels' recording of Jesus in these last few days of His earthly life show Him in a way we had not seen before
 - He is more emotional
 - He is much more expressive
 - He is perhaps more human in these final hours than at any other time of His earthly life
- The agony of Jesus in the garden, is the agony of a man and God in one
 - To understand that statement is to recognize and accept that even as He maintained His divine nature, Jesus still lived within His humanity.
 - IOW while He was a man in every way, He was at the same time still God
 - His dual nature was separate but coexisted perfectly in the life of Jesus
 - This is known as the Hypostatic Union
- And while we cannot fully comprehend what Jesus was dealing with at Gethsemane or certainly know the agony of the cross, we can gratefully acknowledge what they mean to each of us
 - They are the gateway to eternal life
 - They are the reason we can live in hope regardless of what is going on around us
 - They do not remove us from the struggles of this life or the attacks of the enemy
 - They do not ensure that all elements of our life are going to be fair or equitable
 - But what they do provide for us is an assurance, peace and a comfort knowing that this life is not all there is
 - For the Christian there is the promise of life eternal with Jesus in the presence of our perfect, glorious, Almighty God
 - That is what Gethsemane and Calvary means for each of us

This evening, I would like for us to look briefly a little more closely at Jesus' struggle in the Garden that night just prior to His arrest

READ – **Matthew 26:36-46**

This account takes place after Jesus and the disciples had left the upper room where the Last Supper took place

- Their menu (if you will) that evening was in strict compliance with the first Passover meal as given to Moses by God the night the death angel passed over the Hebrew people leading to their freedom from Egyptian slavery. (**Exodus 12**)

- And the meal Jesus and the twelve shared that evening is the origin of our ordinance of communion – which we will be taking together here in just a few minutes.
- We read in the account that after the meal, they traveled together to the Garden of Gethsemane
 - **Acts 1:12** then tells us that the Garden was about a Sabbath's day walk from the city on the Mount of Olives
 - What is a Sabbath's day walk?
 - Well, the Law said that there was to be no work performed on the Sabbath (Saturday)
 - But like many of the Laws, it had been taken to an unintended extreme by the religious leaders of Jesus time
 - Utilizing verses like **Ex 16:29** which says that people should stay near to their homes on the Sabbath and **Num 35:4-5** which is the distance of the land given to the Levites as pasture, this became the law of allowable distance traveled on the Sabbath
 - They declared that the distance walked could be no more than 2000 cubits
 - That amounts to a little over half a mile - which is the distance from the walls of the city to the Mount of Olives

I have always been intrigued by what Jesus was experiencing in the Garden that final night

- We read in **Matt 26:37**, *He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled.*
 - Sorrowful – IOL - loo-PAY-oh
 - To grieve; a penetrating sadness; to become uneasy
 - The time Jesus knew was coming, was now here
 - Troubled – IOL - ah-day-moe-NAY-oh
 - A great weight of spirit; to be filled with heaviness of mind; distress
 - Jesus is in great emotional distress
- What Matthew is telling us is that Jesus is experiencing a depth of emotion that would begin the agony of the cross
 - You see, the agony did not begin when the first lash of the whip tore into His back nor when the first vicious blow of the hammer drove the 6" tapered spike into His wrist
 - He began to agonize emotionally as he entered the Garden of Gethsemane

But I don't believe it was the physical death on the cross that Jesus was agonizing over in Gethsemane

- Certainly, the knowledge of what was to come would have been sufficient reason to be sorrowful and troubled
 - But He knew this part was necessary
 - As a matter of fact, He had stated in **Matt 20:28** emphatically that He came for the express purpose of dying
- The divinity of Jesus knew what needed to take place in order for mankind to be able to come into fellowship with God again – to defeat the effects of sin

- I believe His struggle that evening was regarding the human side of Him and would be able to make it through this horrific ordeal He knew awaited Him
 - It is out of that emotion that we read in Matt 26:39 -*My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.*
 - Now there was never a doubt of what the Son of God was going to accomplish
- Certainly, satan was incapable of dissuading or manipulating Jesus' divine nature
 - And because of that truth, satan's desire was for Jesus to endure and experience the cross only within the human element of His nature
 - Because if he could have accomplished that, He would have kept Jesus from being our Savior
 - Jesus would have been just another dead prophet
- But Jesus had been down this road before
 - Consider what Jesus is dealing with now in the Garden, a full-on spiritual attack by the father of lies, in light of what happened in the desert following His baptism by John the Baptist 3 years earlier
 - In the wilderness of the desert, without food or water for 40 days, satan threw all of the temptations most attractive to Jesus' humanity – power, wealth, and fame
 - But when that came to nothing we read in **Luke 4:13**, *When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left Him until an opportune time.*
 - Well, that opportune time had arrived and satan was back to attempt one last time to prevent the merciful plan of God to be brought to its fulfillment
 - And just as he had failed in the desert, he would fail here as well

The true agony of Gethsemane was that the Son of God would be carrying every sin of the world, every transgression of humanity on Himself and with it the indescribable grief of separation from His Father in that moment.

- Jesus cried out, *My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?* (**Matt 27:46**)
 - That word forsaken translates literally into utterly abandon
- Jesus suffered the unimaginable physical pain of the cross, He suffered the emotional pain of being deserted by His closest friends, and now He must suffer the spiritual agony of separation from His Father – yet He did it willingly for you

His agony paved the way for our access to the Father

- No longer separated by the uncrossable divide of sin
- The price was paid...in full so that nothing of our doing could ever be regarded as sufficient or responsible for the gift we have been given.

I would like to conclude our time together by quoting Oswald Chambers, the early 20th-century Scottish Baptist evangelist and teacher.

- Perhaps most well-known for the devotional *My Utmost for His Highest* which published four years after his death at the young age of 43
- This simple yet profound sentence is a perfect summation of what I have shared with you this evening
 - *Because of what the Son of Man went through, every human being has been provided with a way of access into the very presence of God.*