

The Garden of Gethsemane
Message 02 of 5 in the series: "24 Hours That Changed History"

A. After the Last Supper, Jesus and His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

Gethsemane - "oil press," a private olive grove where Jesus and His disciples often spent time together

"They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, 'Sit here while I go and pray.' He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed. He told them, 'My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.' He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. 'Abba, Father,' he cried out, 'everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.' Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak.' Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before. When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open. And they didn't know what to say. When he returned to them the third time, he said, 'Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But no—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!'" Mark 14:32-42 (NLT)

1. Jesus' honest prayer shows He understands how difficult it can be to surrender to God's will, especially when every part of our flesh is screaming to run away.

"He prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood." Luke 22:44 (NLT)

"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."

Hebrews 4:15-16 (NLT)

2. Spiritual battles are often won or lost before a crisis comes.

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are." 1 Peter 5:8-9 (NLT)

3. Praying for God's will to be done is a great way to pray effectively.

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'" Matthew 6:9-10 (ESV)

Note: Jesus practiced making the Father's will His own, just as we should too.

"So Jesus explained, 'I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.'" John 5:19 (NLT)

B. In the middle of the night, Judas led a mob to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

"And immediately, even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders. The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: 'You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss. Then you can take him away under guard.' As soon as they arrived, Judas walked up to Jesus. 'Rabbi!' he exclaimed, and gave him the kiss. Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest's slave, slashing off his ear. Jesus asked them, 'Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there among you teaching every day. But these things are happening to fulfill what the Scriptures say about me.' Then all his disciples deserted him and ran away." Mark 14:43-50 (NLT)

1. Jesus was no helpless victim — He knew He was about to be arrested and killed, and that He could call down angels to stop them.

"'Put away your sword,' Jesus told him. 'Those who use the sword will die by the sword. Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?'"
Matthew 26:52-54 (NLT)

"The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded." John 10:17-18 (NLT)

2. The disciples deserted Jesus just hours after proclaiming boldly they would never leave Him and were willing to die for Him.

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. On the way, Jesus told them, "All of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, 'God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there." Peter said to him, 'Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will.' Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me.' 'No!' Peter declared emphatically. 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!' And all the others vowed the same. Mark 14:26-31 (NLT)

3. Jesus died on the cross to rescue helpless, weak, cowardly, hypocritical sinners like us.

"...Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."
Luke 5:31-32 (NLT)

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