



### Lent reflection for Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

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Matthew 26: 36-46

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.' Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

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Today's reflection is by Zach Parkman

This is a pretty heavy reading. Jesus unable to sleep, probably racked with anxiety and struggling with the knowledge of his own physical torture and death. Praying to God, "Let this cup pass from me: yet not what I want but what you want." Accepting the will of God in the face of his own fears. The Gospels often paint Christ in a very sage-like position, floating above petty human concerns like personal wants, desires, dreams and self doubt. I sometimes forget the humanity of Jesus, that he was completely man and had all the same drives and needs that I have. I'm sure it was a lonely existence being the Son of God and he would crave companionship. In this dark hour he asked three of his closest companions, Peter, James & John, to join him in the garden to pray and so that he wouldn't be alone. And what do they do, these three men who had discarded their old lives, cast away everything to follow Jesus? They fall asleep. Twice.

I can't judge them too harshly (although I do still judge), but who hasn't let a friend down? I wonder if they looked back on that night later in their life and shuddered? Asked themselves, "What happened? What was I thinking?" The answer is they weren't thinking. They were sleeping. They didn't know that Jesus was on the verge of being handed over to the authorities and ultimately put to death. Even after Jesus wakes them, rebukes them and asks again for them to pray, they begin to doze off. This man, who had inspired each of them to begin an entirely new life, was in obvious distress and in need of their camaraderie and they couldn't stay awake the one hour that he asked.

And this is the way it goes in life. We always think that we have more time and so we put off the things that should be done at that moment. Sometimes we put them off too long. Sometimes an hour is too long a time. As virtuous as it may be to make efficient use of our time in this life, as much as we can strive to prolong it and stretch it out, when it is gone it is gone. This is a tough life lesson that as I get older I get stark reminders off more and more often. A missed deadline. A forgotten lunch date. A loved one passing on. This Easter I really want to cherish the time that I have with those that are closest to me and really make an effort to be there for those that reach out. Even if just for a moment.

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