

# Gethsemane: Jesus our Comforter, our Life, our Example

Covenant Church, Pastor Zack Phillips

Sunday, March 24, 2019

## **Matt. 26:36-46 (NRSV)**

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."

### 1. Jesus our comforter

**Matt 10:21-23** And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

And what sort of Jesus did Francis behold in these final years of his life, filled as they were with illness and a sense of futility, with suffering and disappointment? What kind of Jesus was a consolation for Francis as he saw many of his companions abandon him and give up his most cherished hopes for the simplicity of their lives? What Jesus could make sense to a man with such noble aspirations who had to face the fact that almost everything seemed unattainable?

*[Francis] looked to the image of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane*, arrested and taken away on false charges of sedition and treason, while every one of his companions fled for safety and deserted him. He looked to Jesus outcast and alone.<sup>1</sup>

**Heb 2:18** Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

### 2. Jesus our life

**John 11:33-35** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep.

**1 Cor 15:54-57** When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Spoto. *The Reluctant Saint: The Life of Francis of Assisi*. New York: Viking Compass, 2002: p. 169 (my emphasis).

**“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”**

**“Where, O death, is your victory?**

**Where, O death, is your sting?”**

**The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**1 Cor 15:19 If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.**

### 3. Jesus our example

#### **Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-8)<sup>2</sup>**

Jesus *took* with him *Peter* and James and his brother John (17:1)

led them up a high *mountain* (17:1)

[Jesus’] *face* shone like the sun (17:2)

Jesus talks to Moses and Elijah (17:4)

“Peter addresses Jesus” (17:4)

*While he was still speaking...* (17:5)

But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “*Get up...* (17:7)

#### **Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46)**

He *took* with him *Peter* and the two sons of Zebedee (26:37)

they went out to the *Mount* of Olives (26:30)

Jesus fell on his *face* (26:39)

Jesus talks to God (26:39, 42, 44)

“Jesus addresses Peter” (26:40)

*While he was still speaking...* (26:47)

*Get up*, let us be going (26:46)

#### **The Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9-13)<sup>3</sup>**

Our *Father* (6:9)

*Your will be done* (6:10)

*lead us not into temptation* (RSV 6:13)

#### **Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46)**

My *Father* (26:39, 42)

*your will be done* (26:42)

pray that you *may not enter into temptation* (RSV 26:41)

#### **Jesus’ three prayers**

**v. 39**

“My Father,  
if it is possible,  
let this cup pass from me;

yet not what I want  
but what you want.”

**v. 42**

“My Father,  
if this cannot pass unless I drink  
it,

your will be done.”

**v. 44**

[He] prayed for the third time,  
saying the same words [as the  
second time].

**Heb. 5:7-10 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and**

<sup>2</sup> Parallels noted in W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*. International Critical Commentary. 3 volumes. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997: vol. 3, p. 495. In this chart, italicized words are words that are identical in the Greek and quotations represent Davies’ and Allison’s words.

<sup>3</sup> Parallels noted in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, vol. 3, p. 497. Again, in this chart, italicized words are words that are identical in the Greek.

**having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.**