

MIDWEEK OF LENT 2: PARTICIPANT

Week 3: Week of March 17

GETHSEMANE

Luke 22:39–46

OPENING

Go to dark Gethsemane,
All who feel the tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away;
Learn from Jesus Christ to pray.

—“Go to Dark Gethsemane” (*LSB* 436, v. 1)

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 22:39–46), Luke takes us to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prays to His heavenly Father and submits Himself to His Father's will. At the heart of this scene is the humble obedience of Christ to His Father's will for our salvation.

Surrounding this scene, however, is a picture of disciples who are struggling to pray and in need of encouragement from their Lord. Their sorrow overwhelms them, and Jesus not only encourages them to take solace in prayer, but He also gives Himself to suffering for our salvation that He might open to us the gift of prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luke's Passion Narrative simplifies the story of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Read the Passion accounts of Matthew (26:36–46) and Mark (14:32–42) and identify the ways in which Luke's account differs from theirs. What does Luke accomplish by relating the event in this way?

2. Jesus encourages His disciples to “pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Luke 22:40, 46). What are possible temptations that could have assaulted the disciples?

3. Why is prayer a good response to temptation?

4. Though the disciples fall asleep in the midst of their suffering, Jesus prays in the midst of His suffering. What does Jesus mean when He asks His Father to “remove this cup from Me”? (cf. Isaiah 51:17–23; Jeremiah 25:15–29).

5. Why is the fact that Jesus submits to His Father’s will good news for the disciples and for us?

CONCLUSION

Luke places the willing obedience of Jesus to His Father’s will in the context of the disciples, who are struggling to pray in the midst of temptation. This stark contrast reveals the wonder of God sending us a Savior from sin. Although we are weak and unable to pray in the midst of temptation, there is one who is strong and endures the wrath of God for us. By grace through Him and faith in Him, we are encouraged to pray.

As the writer to the Hebrews reminded the early Christians, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us in our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15–16).

CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, You sent Your Son to accomplish Your desire for our salvation. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He humbly submitted to Your will and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Send us Your Holy Spirit and inspire our prayers. In times of temptation, turn us to You. Teach us to see Jesus, who accomplished Your will for us, that by His grace and through His Spirit, we might accomplish Your will in the world.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.