

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor David Bennett

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Key verse: Matthew 26:36-46

“Garden to Garden”

I wanted to start this message by telling you that in around 30-45 minutes I am going to ask you to come forward to the altar if you have anything you need to leave here today. I just wanted to let that marinate with you as we get into his word today. Directors I would ask you to stand by to assist in case we have people that need to be prayed with or prayed for.

Before we get too deep into the message this morning let me first set the stage on where we are in this part of the Bible.

- Jesus had just finished his **last supper** with his most trusted disciples.
- He had just predicted his **betrayal** by Judas Iscariot.
- He had just observed the **Passover**, instituting the Lords Supper.
- He told Peter about his upcoming **denial of him**, and then made his way to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus and his disciples came to a place called the Garden of Gethsemane.

Not the difference between the Garden of **Eden** and the Garden of **Gethsemane**.

- In the 1st Garden the 1st man fell by yielding to temptation, and having his will, (Sin entered the world)
- In the 2nd Garden the 2nd Adam (Jesus) conquered sin by yielding to the will of God.

1 Corinthians 15:47 (TNIV) ⁴⁷ *The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.*

- The Garden of Gethsemane was a place of Victory for Jesus and consequently for us as well.
- That Victory did not come easy, but at a very heavy price.

Ok now you understand where we are at lets dig a little deeper and see what happened there. Look in your Bibles for today's text;

Matthew 26:36-46 (NIV)

³⁶ *Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."* ³⁷ *He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled.* ³⁸ *Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."*

³⁹ *Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

⁴⁰ *Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.* ⁴¹ *"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

⁴² *He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."*

⁴³ *When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.* ⁴⁴ *So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.*

⁴⁵ *Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.* ⁴⁶ *Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"*

By looking at our text today we will get a glimpse of the level of **anguish** that Jesus experienced in the Garden on the night he was betrayed.

Nearly everyone knows of the suffering Christ suffered at the hands of the Romans and how he suffered on the cross but don't give much thought to the agony he went through in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The word Gethsemane appears only two times in the Bible, However, the events recorded there in the Garden are in all four of the gospels.

Gethsemane is an Aramaic word that is translated, "**Oil-Press.**" In Jesus' case this is very true; it was a place of intense pressure for him.

Jesus probably entered Gethsemane not long before midnight, the Thursday of the Passover week in 33 A.D.

- At this point of his life his three year ministry was behind him.
- He had preached his last sermon.
- He had eaten his last Supper
- He was about to be betrayed by one of his Disciples.

Jesus knew everything that lay ahead of him that night, his arrest, and desertion by his disciples.

- The Mock trials, he would have to endure.
- The floggings and beating at the hands of the Romans.
- Being nailed to the cross.
- The pure agony of his very painful death.

But that was what lie ahead of him, now was his **last chance** to fortify himself in the Garden in order to face what lay ahead.

Now just look and listen to this...If Jesus, our Lord and Savior needed to go the God in prayer to face what lay ahead of him, **how much more** do you think we need to come to him in prayer?

Come to him in order to gain;

- Guidance.
- Strength.
- Face what lies in front of us!

Let me go on record here and say that there is none except Jesus himself that knew all that Jesus went through during those precious moments in the garden.

This leads us into our first point in today lesson;

1. In the Garden there was Grief and Distress.

Matthew records Jesus words in Gethsemane in the NASB version as “*My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death.*”

Notice the difference in feeling between when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness in Matthew 4:1-11 and now. In the wilderness temptation Jesus looked Satan in the eye and defiantly said, **Get thee behind me Satan!**

But now he was grieved and distressed.

Put yourself in that type situation, knowing that within 12 hours you would be dead, but not just dead but would die a very slow and painful death.

That’s a real definition of stress; Ask any person who has sat in the hospital and been told, “**It’s Cancer**” and they can tell you what stress is.

Saints please hear me; Jesus knew everything that was about to happen to him.

John 18:4 (NASB)

⁴ *So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him ...”*

Luke 22:44 (Amplified Bible)

⁴⁴And being in an agony [of mind], He prayed [all the] more earnestly and intently, and His sweat became like great clots of blood dropping down upon the ground.

Notice Jesus was **crying out** to God Fervently. Not like Father God please give me this wish that I have been praying for.

He was crying out to God, let me see if I can put it a way that you might be able to understand it a little better.

When you are standing beside one of your **kids in the hospital**, or holding your loved one in your arms right after a bad car crash, and you know you only have moments, that they are teetering back and forth between **life** and **death**, you cry out to God.

You cry father **God help me please!** Take my life instead, please spare my child. That's the difference!

My bible says that Jesus prayed fervently!

We can see that Grief and Distress were there, but point number two is;

2. Temptation was there.

Read vs. 41, *“Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into **temptation**, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”*

Jesus was praying to prepare himself for what was coming. His disciples should have been praying as well, in fact they should have surrounded him laying hands on him and constantly prayed over him.

The problem is the second half of the verse. *“The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”*

They were asleep. In his greatest hour of need up to that point!

The Bible tells us that **three times** the Master prayed to his father, that if it be possible, to take this cup from him, the whole bitter cup of his suffering to come.

Why do you think Christ prayed the prayer three times? Why not once, you know God hear him the first time so why three times?

I can only speculate why Christ prayed three times, vice one, but I believe that Christ was tempted **again** and **again**.

Remember back to his temptation in the wilderness Jesus was tempted three times, and here in his last day in the Garden of Gethsemane he prayed to the Father three times.

It says in verse 44, *“And he left them again, and went away praying a third time, saying the same thing once more.”*

The **“Same Thing”** was once again to see if there was any other way that this thing, could be done, can this cup pass from me?

By understanding the strain of Gethsemane, it will help you appreciate the words of the writers of Hebrews 4:15, *“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”*

There was Grief and Distress in the Garden, there was Temptation in the Garden, there was also someone else in the garden;

3. Satan was there

In his depiction of Gethsemane in The “Passion Of Christ” Mel Gibson pictured Satan as standing there tempting Christ the entire time.

This I believe is where Jesus had to do hand to hand combat with Satan himself, but not just Satan but all the host of hell.

I mean put it this way, if you were a football team and you were playing a very close game and its late in the 4th quarter, you wouldn't send in your Jr. Varsity team, no you would keep your superstars out on the field until you won the game.

I honestly believe in Christ last hours, Satan would come against him with everything he had; **nothing would be held back**, what would be the point?

Let's look again from Garden to Garden.

- In the first Garden (**Eden**) Satan was there trying to corrupt Gods plan.
- In the last Garden (**Gethsemane**) Stan was there once again trying to corrupt Gods plan.

There was a temptation to leave his work unfinished....

You can hear Satan whisper, are you sure you are called to bear the sin of all mankind?

You can almost imagine Satan Hiss;

- Are you sure you want to die like this?
- Are you sure they are worthy of your holy life?
- Are you sure this is your mission? What more do you have to give for them?
- Are you sure anyone will even recognize your sacrifice?
- You have no friends anywhere.
- Look to heaven and see that God is turning his back on you.
- He is even holding back his compassion for his only son!
- Look around and see your most trusted disciples, they are sound asleep
- You know they will disown you when you are taken.

- Look at your mother, her heart will break at the sight of you on the cross.
- The Jews are thirsty for your blood and the Romans will gloat when they nail you to the cross.
- You have no friend left on the earth or in heaven and all of hell is against you.
- You can't save them, they will all perish as soon as I sink my teeth into them, and your scattered sheep will be my prey.
- You are completely alone now.
- Are you sure it has to be done this way?
- Is there no other way?

Saints make no mistake about it; **Christ suffered greatly** in the Garden, hounded by the complete forces of Hell.

Can you imagine what a perfect and Holy Jesus felt like when all the sin of the world was poured on him?

There is no way to explain the pure shock that Jesus felt with the weight of that Sin.

Here is just a hint of how his body may have reacted. Think back to a very hot summer day, and you find yourself at the edge of a deep well, or in today's terms at the edge of the deep end of a swimming pool. Back home we call that place the **Blue Hole Creek**. It was a well that came from underground and ran into a small creek and it was very very cold, hence its name Blue Hole creek, right outside Scottsboro Alabama. There was a rope swing that would allow you to swing out over the water and drop into the freezing water below.

As soon as you hit the water, it was so cold your body reacted. You would come up out of the water and be grasping because it was so cold it would take your breath away.

Saints that's nothing take that feeling and multiple it by a million and that is still not even close to what our Lord faced in his last twelve hours on this earth.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (Amplified Bible)

²¹For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [endued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness].

Galatians 3:13 (Amplified Bible)

¹³Christ purchased our freedom [redeeming us] from the curse (doom) of the Law [and its condemnation] by [Himself] becoming a curse for us, for it is written [in the Scriptures], Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (is crucified);

Think about the above verses for a second, every sin, of every human being who ever lived or ever will was piled upon him.

Think about this for a second, when you **tell your spouse a lie**, (This is just an example Shirley) you know that awful feeling you have, how the guilt eats away at you. And that was just a small thing now imagine all the sin of the world, all poured on Christ.

Many think that the sin of the world was not poured on him until he was on the cross and God turned his head from him because he couldn't stand to see the sin, it was during that moment that **Christ yelled out**, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?"

I am not going to try and sit here today and tell you that the sin was placed on him prior to that point but I will tell you that regardless if he felt in Gethsemane or just contemplated what it was going to feel like in a few hours, the pressure was there.

Grief and Distress were there, Temptation and Satan was there, it was also a place of;

4. Loneliness was there.

In Christ greatest hour of need, where were his trusted disciples?

As was said earlier, the Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. They were asleep.

Psalms 22:1 records Christ's words a thousand years before it happens.

"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Psalms 22:11 said, "*Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*"

Once again you can see the scene of Satan hissing;

- Look to heaven, there is none to take this cup from you.
- You are the Son of God and had legions at your call, now all of Heaven begins to turn their back on you.
- They cannot stand to see the "Sin" you are becoming.
- Look over the earth that you created. The ones you love so much, they don't have a clue what's going on.
- Look at your dearest friends, your trusted disciples; they will claim they don't even know you before this night is over.
- There is nowhere for you to turn to, you are completely alone.
- You are completely alone, forsaken, forgotten.

Saints, how many times in your life **have you heard the enemy** tell you lies just like that?

Very convincing lies, ones that make you doubt what you believe.

Make no mistake about it Satan didn't save one fiery arrow from his quiver, he used all he had. Every doubt, every temptation there is.

You can see that there was Grief and Distress, there was Temptations and Satan, and there were more Temptations and much Loneness there. And the last thing that was present was;

5. Courage was there.

Verse 46 says, “*Arise lets us be going, behold the one who betrays me is at hand.*”

Can you imagine how the Son of God was agonizing over the flood of suffering that was about to happen to him?

Matthew 26:39 (Amplified Bible)

³⁹And going a little farther, He threw Himself upon the ground on His face and prayed saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will [not what I desire], but as You will and desire.

Despite all the horror he faced, after his period of prayer in Gethsemane he wrestled with temptation so much that cause his blood vessels to rupture and seat drops of blood.

Jesus gathered his strength and went forth to **face head on** the pain, the agony, the cross.

If you hear nothing I am saying to you today, listen to this... **Our Savior Prays...**

There is **power** in prayer!

Make no mistake about it, Christ suffered greatly after Gethsemane, perhaps more intense, but his mind was quiet. He was ready to meet it face to face.

Like some tested **combat vets** can tell you. Of men who when the first shots start going off, and the battle comes to them and intensifies, and they are in greater and greater danger, they remain calm and collected.

They may be **wounded, and bleeding**, they may even be dying, yet still quiet and calculated, they meet their enemy head on.

When Christ arose he went head on and was never swayed, every **Devil** from hell and every fiend of the **Pit** were summoned against him, and in spite of the very best Satan had to throw at him he stood and said in verse. 46, ***“Arise lets us be going, behold the one who betrays me is at hand.”***

He faced it all for you and for me... look to your neighbor and say it was all **for you....**

It says in John 10:17-18. *“I lay down my life that I may take it up again, No one has taken it away from me, but I lay it down on my own imitative.”*

John 3:16-17(KJV)

*¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world **through him might be saved.***

The garden of Gethsemane was a place of suffering and strength, a place of distress as well as a place of Victory.

Sin entered in the 1st Garden and it was in the 2nd Garden that Christ arose ready to defeat the very **power of Death**, to break the hold of Sin on the world.

What was it that turned this place of suffering into a place of power?

- Prayer that is fervent and persistent.

- Prayer in which one submits to the will of God
- Prayer that enables us to face the path laid before us.

There will be times when you will have to **face your** own Garden.

- Times of distress
- Times of surrender
- Times of loneliness

But be assured such times can also be a time of comfort and strength provided we spend it in prayer and a willingness to accept the fathers will in our lives.

Don't leave your Garden without being strengthened today.

I offer you the opportunity to come to the altar today, to have that resolve, that determination that the Devil will not rob you of your blessings.

Let us pray.....