

Luke 22:39-53
September 13, 2020

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Let me give you a few descriptors found in today's lesson: a costly cup, a hypocritical kiss, and a useless sword. Where are we? [The Garden of Gethsemane]

Q: I don't know if you've ever thought about this, but why do you think Jesus retreated to a "garden" as the place to go before being led to his crucifixion? [Let people engage]

Transition: Human history began in a Garden (Gen. 2:7–25) and so did human sin (Gen. 3). For the redeemed, the whole story will climax in a "garden city" where there will be no sin (Rev. 21:1–22:7). But between the Garden where man failed and the Garden where God reigns is the Garden of Gethsemane, the Garden where Jesus accepted the cup from the Father's hand. The first Adam rebelled in the Garden of Eden and brought sin and death into the world, but the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) submitted in the Garden of Gethsemane and brought life and salvation for all who will believe. Let's read the text and dig in.

BOOK:

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴¹ He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

⁴⁵ When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. ⁴⁶ "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Jesus Arrested

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

⁴⁹ When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" ⁵⁰ And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

⁵¹ But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

⁵² Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? ⁵³ Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns."

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Each of us must decide whether we will go through life *pretending*, like Judas; or *fighting*, like Peter; or *yielding to God's perfect will*, like Jesus. Will it be the kiss, the sword, or the cup?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 268-270). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

THE NIGHT THEY ARRESTED GOD

Luke 22:39–53

Perhaps the best way to grasp the spiritual lessons behind the tragic events of that night is to focus on the *symbols* that appear in the narrative. The Bible is a picture book as well as a book of history and biography, and these pictures can say a great deal to us. In this passage, there are six symbols that can help us better understand our Lord's suffering and death. They are: a lonely Garden, a costly cup, a hypocritical kiss, a useless sword, a crowing cock, and a glorious throne.

A Lonely Garden (Luke 22:39)

The Son of man left the Upper Room and went with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. This was His customary place of retirement when in Jerusalem (Luke 21:37). Knowing that the Lord would be there (John 18:1–2), Judas led his band of Roman soldiers and temple guards into the Garden to arrest Jesus, who willingly yielded Himself into their hands.

But why a Garden? Human history began in a Garden (Gen. 2:7–25) and so did human sin (Gen. 3). For the redeemed, the whole story will climax in a “garden city” where there will be no sin (Rev. 21:1–22:7). But between the Garden where man failed and the Garden where God reigns is Gethsemane, the Garden where Jesus accepted the cup from the Father's hand.

John informs us that when Jesus went to the Garden, He crossed the Kidron brook (John 18:1). John may have had in mind King David's experience when he left Jerusalem and fled from his son Absalom (2 Sam. 15; and note especially v. a). Both David and Jesus were throneless kings, accompanied by their closest friends and rejected by their own people. The name *Kidron* means “murky, dark,” and *Gethsemane* means “olive press.” Surely these names are significant.

Guides in modern Jerusalem can take visitors to four different sites that lay claim to being the ancient Garden of Gethsemane. Perhaps the most widely accepted one, and surely the most popular, is outside the east wall of Jerusalem near the Church of All Nations. The olive trees there are indeed very old, but it is not likely that they go back as far as the time of Christ since the Romans destroyed all the trees in their invasion of Judea in A.D. 70.

The geographical location of the Garden of Gethsemane is not as important as the spiritual message that we receive from what Jesus did there when He accepted “the cup” from His Father's hand. The first Adam rebelled in the Garden of Eden and brought sin and death into the world, but the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) submitted in the Garden of Gethsemane and brought life and salvation for all who will believe.

A Costly Cup (Luke 22:40–46)

Jesus left eight of His disciples somewhere in the Garden and took Peter, James, and John with Him to a private place to pray (Mark 14:32–33). This is the third time He has shared a special occasion with these three men. The first was when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead

(Luke 8:41–56), and the second was when He was transfigured before them (Luke 9:28–36). There must be a spiritual message here.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, the British expositor, has pointed out that each of these occasions had something to do with death. In Jairus' house, Jesus proved Himself to be victorious over death; and on the Mount of Transfiguration, He was glorified through death. (He and Moses and Elijah were talking about His "exodus" in Jerusalem [Luke 9:31].) Here in the Garden, Jesus was surrendered to death. Since James was the first of the apostles to die (Acts 12:1–2), John the last to die, and Peter experienced great persecution and eventually was crucified, these three lessons were very practical for their own lives.

Jesus is the Son of God and knew full well that He would be raised from the dead, and yet His soul experienced agony as He anticipated what lay before Him. In the hours ahead, He would be humiliated and abused, and suffer shame and pain on the cross. But even more, He would be made sin for us and separated from His Father. He called this solemn experience "drinking the cup." (For parallel uses of this image, see Pss. 73:10; 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15–28.)

A comparison of the Gospel accounts reveals that Jesus prayed three times about the cup and returned three times to the disciples, only to find them asleep. How little they realized the testing and danger that lay before them! And how much it would have meant to Jesus to have had their prayer support as He faced Calvary! (see Heb. 5:7–8)

Dr. Luke is the only Gospel writer who mentions "sweat ... like great drops of blood." His use of the word *like* may suggest that the sweat merely fell to the ground like clots of blood. But there is a rare physical phenomenon known as *hematidrosis*, in which, under great emotional stress, the tiny blood vessels rupture in the sweat glands and produce a mixture of blood and sweat. The first Adam sinned in a Garden and was condemned to living by the sweat of his brow (Gen. 3:19). Jesus, the Last Adam, obeyed the Father in a Garden and conquered Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12–21).

Luke is also the only writer to mention the ministry of the angel (Luke 22:43). In fact, both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts give angels a prominent place in the work of the Lord. Angels could not come to die for our sins, but they could strengthen our Saviour as He courageously accepted the cup from His Father's hand. Dr. George Morrison said, "Every life has its Gethsemane, and every Gethsemane has its angel." What an encouragement to God's people when they wrestle and pray about difficult and costly decisions!

A Hypocritical Kiss (Luke 22:47–48)

Someone has defined "kiss" as "the contraction of the mouth due to the enlargement of the heart." But not all kisses are born out of a loving heart, for kisses can also be deceitful. In the case of Judas, his kiss was the basest kind of hypocrisy and treachery.

It was customary in that day for disciples to greet their teachers with a loving and respectful kiss. Judas used the kiss as a sign to tell the arresting officers who Jesus was (Matt. 26:48–49). Jesus had taught in the temple day after day, and yet the temple guards could not recognize Him!

The presence of such a large group of armed soldiers shows how little Judas really knew about the Lord Jesus. Did he think that Jesus would try to run away or perhaps hide somewhere in the Garden? Judas must have expected Jesus and the disciples to resist arrest; otherwise he would not have enlisted so much help. Perhaps he feared that Jesus might perform a miracle, but even if He did, what can a group of armed men do against the power of Almighty God?

Judas was deceitful; he was a liar just like Satan who entered into him (John 8:44; 13:27). He defiled almost everything that he touched: his name (*Judah* = "praise"), the disciple band (Luke

6:13–16), gifts given to Christ (John 12:1–8), and the kiss. He even invaded a private prayer meeting, defiled it with his presence, and betrayed the Savior *with a kiss*. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov. 27:6).

A Useless Sword (Luke 22:49–53)

The disciples remembered (and misunderstood) His words about the sword (Luke 22:35–38), so they asked Him if now was the time to make use of their two swords. Without waiting for the answer, Peter rushed ahead and attacked a man who turned out to be Malchus, a servant to the high priest (John 18:10, 26–27).

Why did Peter do this? For one thing, he had to back up the boastful words he had spoken in the Upper Room (Luke 22:33) and again on the way to the Garden (Matt. 26:30–35). Peter had been sleeping when he should have been praying, talking when he should have been listening, and boasting when he should have been fearing. Now he was fighting when he should have been surrendering!

Peter made a number of serious mistakes when he attacked Malchus with his sword. To begin with, Peter was fighting the wrong enemy with the wrong weapon. Our enemies are not flesh and blood, and they cannot be defeated with ordinary weapons (2 Cor. 10:3–6; Eph. 6:10–18). In His wilderness temptations, Jesus defeated Satan with the Word of God (Matt. 4:1–11), and that is the weapon we must use (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).

Peter also revealed the wrong attitude and trusted the wrong energy. While Jesus was surrendering, Peter was busy declaring war! And he was depending on “the arm of flesh.” His whole approach to the situation was not at all Christlike (John 18:36) and stands as a good warning to us today. The lost world may act this way, but it is not the way God’s servants should act (Matt. 12:19; 2 Tim. 2:24).

It is just like Jesus to act in grace when others are acting in malice (Ps. 103:10). He showed grace to Peter by rebuking his presumptuous sin and repairing the damage he had done. He showed grace to Malchus, a lowly slave, by healing his ear, and He showed grace to the whole world by willingly yielding Himself to the mob and going to Calvary. He did not come to judge but to save (Luke 19:10; John 3:17).

Our Lord’s last miracle before the cross was not a big flashy thing that attracted attention. It is likely that very few of the men who were there that night even knew what Peter and Jesus had done. Jesus could have summoned twelve legions of angels (Matt. 26:53), one legion (6,000 soldiers) for each of the eleven disciples and one for Himself, but He did not. Instead of performing some spectacular feat, He lovingly healed the ear of an obscure slave and then presented His hands to be bound.

Each of us must decide whether we will go through life *pretending*, like Judas; or *fighting*, like Peter; or *yielding to God’s perfect will*, like Jesus. Will it be the kiss, the sword, or the cup?

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 260-261)

b. Jesus on the Mount of Olives (22:39–46) (Matt. 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42)

The account of Jesus’ praying in Gethsemane is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels but not in John. However, John recorded that Jesus went to “an olive grove” because Jesus “often met there with His disciples” and Judas “knew the place” (John 18:1–2). There may be deep significance to

the fact that in some of His final hours Jesus faced temptation (Luke 22:46) in a garden. Man fell into sin because of temptation in a garden (Gen. 3). And man's deliverance from sin comes about in spite of further temptation in a garden. Jesus, the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), did not fall into temptation but followed the will of God which the first Adam failed to do.

22:39–44. Luke says the place was **the Mount of Olives**. Matthew and Mark refer to the place as Gethsemane, which means "olive press." The "garden" was a grove of olive trees on the Mount of Olives (John 18:1, 3).

Jesus ... prayed fervently for the trial to pass, but He submitted Himself to His **Father**. Because the **disciples** slept, Jesus was alone praying and being buffeted by the temptation to forsake the Father's plan, which was that the Son must go to death and bear the sins of the whole world. The words of His prayer showed that He was concerned **not** with His own interests but with the interests of the Father (Luke 22:42). Only Luke recorded that **an angel** ministered to Jesus in the garden (v. 43). Jesus was **in anguish** with His **sweat** being **like drops of blood falling to the ground**. Luke may have been alluding to God's words to Adam that he would earn his food by the sweat of his brow (Gen. 3:19).

22:45–46. Jesus **found His disciples ... asleep, exhausted from sorrow**. The disciples were most depressed because of Jesus' teaching that He would die. They were not only in physical danger, which was bound to come on them, but also they may have faced spiritual danger as the temptation raged in the garden. Twice Jesus told them to pray that *they* would **not fall into temptation** (vv. 40, 46).

3. THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS (22:47–53) (Matt. 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–50; John 18:3–11).

22:47–53. Luke recorded three elements in the betrayal and arrest of Jesus. First, **Jesus** knew that **Judas** would betray Him (vv. 47–48). A large **crowd** including the religious leaders (v. 52) and soldiers (John 18:12) came into the grove with Judas **leading them**. Judas had agreed on a sign for the people who had come with him—he would **kiss** the One they were to arrest. Jesus, by His words, showed that He already knew all about the betrayal, including Judas' secret sign.

Second, **Jesus** had compassion for people even in the midst of His own arrest (Luke 22:49–51). After Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (named Malchus, John 18:10), using one of the two swords the disciples possessed (Luke 22:38), Jesus **healed** the man.

Third, **Jesus** pointed up the hypocrisy of the religious leaders (vv. 52–53). Jesus asked them why they had not arrested Him during the **day** as He taught **in the temple**. The reason was obvious, that out of fear of the people they looked for a way to arrest Him secretly (19:48; 20:19; 22:2). Thus, He could tell them, **This is your hour—when darkness reigns** (v. 53). Not only were they coming out under the cover of darkness, but they were also acting as the forces of darkness to kill the Messiah. The garden experience must have ended by about 2:30 A.M., for the six trials of Jesus were completed by morning and Jesus was on the cross by 9:00 A.M. The arrest in the garden was illegal for it was done at night and was accomplished through a hired accuser.

Butler, T. C. (2000). Luke (Vol. 3, pp. 372–374). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

C. The Glory Decision: The Father's Will Wins (22:39–46)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *Jesus faced Calvary from Gethsemane, submitting to the Father's will but still having to warn the disciples to pray in the midst of temptation.*

22:39. Prayer was a way of life for Jesus. He had a special place in the Mount of Olives where he habitually went for prayer. The disciples followed, an ironic statement in light of Christ's original call to "follow me" (5:8–11, 27–28; 9:23, 59, 61; 18:22–28). Now they followed, but only to fall asleep in Jesus' greatest moment of need and in the face of Satan's renewed attack on them. They followed, but not in the way a person takes up a cross and follows.

22:40. Jesus gave them a prayer assignment. It centered on their chief need. The renewed activities of Satan called them to pray to escape temptation as Jesus had escaped Satan's tempting. Judas and Peter were not the only ones Satan wanted. He wanted all of Christ's disciples and would tempt each of them. Only prayer and Scripture can successfully fight such evil power and overcome temptation.

22:41–42. Prayer time for Jesus. Every major decision called for special prayer time for Jesus (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28–29; 11:2; 18:1). Jesus knew what lay ahead. The cup of the blood of the new covenant must be spilled. Yet he, as a human being, did not want to suffer. He did not want to die. He would have liked to have found another way to follow God's plan. Still, he submitted to the Father. The Father's will he would do, not his own. The Father's will he knew was best. The Father's will was what he always prayed for and did, even when the human side wanted something else.

22:43. Verses 43–44 are missing from many of the best Greek manuscripts and may reflect the interpretation by an early Christian scribe. Christ found immediate answer to his prayer, but in a somewhat unexpected way. Rather than tell him what to do, God sent an angel to feed and encourage him. The angel's presence reaffirmed what Jesus knew. He had to face the task God had placed before him. He had to go to the cross. But he went with heavenly presence, heavenly strength, and heavenly nourishment.

Angels played a significant role in Luke. Gabriel guided Zechariah, announcing John's birth (1:18–19). Gabriel also told Mary of Jesus' birth (1:30–38; cf. 2:21). Angels delivered Jesus' birth announcement to the shepherds (2:9–14). Angels thus prepared for the coming of Jesus and for the exodus of Jesus as he looked to the cross.

22:44. Prayer was not a small thing for Jesus. It was a time of anguish as he sought God's will for his life. Just like us, he faced a difficult decision and suffered emotional distress while he tried to make it. He became so emotionally involved that he perspired profusely. His perspiration became so heavy that it did not run in little rivulets like water. Rather, it dropped from his skin as if each drop of sweat were as heavy as a drop of blood. Herschel Hobbs observes, "With a physician's touch Luke says that his 'sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' He broke out into a bloody sweat which became clotted blood" (*Life and Times of Jesus*, Zondervan, 1966, 180).

22:45–46. Jesus' prayer time came to an end. It was time to get back to the world of rejection and arrest. So he walked over to the disciples, hoping to find them in prayer. Instead, they were sleeping. Luke explains their sleeping. Finally, the reality of what Jesus said was creeping into their consciences. They realized Jesus expected to die. They began grieving his passing while he was still with them. Their grief wore them out. But while sleeping away their grief, they yielded to temptation by not praying for power to withstand temptation. Again, Satan had won a battle. But Jesus invited them to pray so temptation would not be too much for them.

D. Darkness Arrests Glory: Betrayal at Work (22:47–53)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *God's plan sometimes allows the powers of darkness to win a victory over God's people, even over his Son, but the victory is always short-lived.*

22:47–50. Prayer time led to arrest time. The temple police arrived to arrest Jesus. Judas led them to identify him and to locate his private prayer spot. The betrayer approached Jesus to greet him with a kiss, a traditional sign of friendship and the sign of Judas's betrayal.

Jesus pointed out the irony and duplicity of Judas's act. Would he use the sign of affection to disaffect himself from Jesus and betray him to the enemy? This was betrayal and pretense carried to the extreme.

Armed with two swords, the disciples were ready to act. Here was the ultimate opportunity for self-defense, the chance to defend Jesus from arrest. First, they asked Jesus if this was the appropriate time to use the swords.

Not waiting for an answer, one of the disciples used a sword to sever the right ear of one of the high priest's slaves. Ironically, the high priest, while arresting Jesus, was not able to protect his slave. Again, Luke indicates that the priests were not in control. They were simply instruments working on their own decisions but carrying out the plan that God had decreed long ago.

22:51. Jesus was ready to display his power. Certainly, he could call down angels if needed to disperse and disrupt the arresting crowd. Instead, he interrupted his disciples' brief stab at self-defense. Would the disciples have been willing to see this as the time to bring in Jesus' kingdom? Could this have been the start of the rebellion against Jewish religious leaders and even Rome? No. Jesus displayed his power in another way. He quieted his disciples, quelling any revolution they might think of starting. Then he used his miraculous power to restore and heal the slave's ear. Healing was his power game, not revolution.

22:52–53. Jesus turned the mob's actions around. Here was a quiet, peaceful teacher and healer. Every day he went about his ministry healing and helping people. Any time they could have easily taken him. Instead, they waited until the cover of darkness and brought the entire leadership team as well as the armed police. Did they think he was a criminal leading a rebellion? No, he had already shown they were the thieves by the way they mismanaged temple business (19:46). He saw through their pretense. They could not claim to the crowds who hung on Jesus' words that they had found him in criminal activity under cover of darkness.

They must know one thing. They were not in control. This was their hour, but they did not control history's hours. God set up the system of day and night, light and dark, twenty-four hour days. He controls each hour. He had assigned this hour to them to do their business of darkness. They operated in the dominion of darkness—under the rule of Satan. He had another victory, but only because that was God's plan.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 22:39-53). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.