

Gethsemene

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[0 : 00] Mark's Gospel, chapter 14, verses 26 to 42. And let us center our attention upon these words at the beginning of verse 32.

And we came to a place which was named Gethsemane. Now, the more I meditate upon the sufferings of our blessed Lord in obtaining eternal redemption for us, the more I realize the stupendous nature of those sufferings.

As we poor sinful mortals contemplate the sufferings of Christ, it's as if we stood before a fathomous ocean, the depth of which none can understand.

One thing is certain, and that is that no human sufferings can be made a recompense to the justice of God for the sins of men.

In Gethsemane and on Calvary, and right through the suffering life of our dear Lord, we stand face to face with that infinite cost which God required at the hand of our surety that His church and people might be saved in the Lord with a never-lasting salvation.

[1 : 21] As we turn our thoughts to Gethsemane, may we remember that we are on holy ground. Our minds are small, and the subject is infinite with solemn.

Gethsemane, the olive press. And why so-called? Let Christians guess. Yes, it was the garden of the olive press, a garden in which were many olive trees.

In it there was an olive press from which the oil of the fruit of those trees was pressed out after the harvest was gathered in. It was with a deep inner meaning that our Lord chose this garden as a place of communion with His Father before He proceeded on His way to Calvary.

At that time, the garden was only known locally. But ever since, down through all the ages, it has been known to His people as the Garden of Gethsemane.

We see in our blessed Lord the real olive tree through whom and by whom comes that golden oil which flows into the heart of His people.

[2 : 39] In the fourth chapter of Zechariah, the prophet is told to behold that golden candlestick in the wilderness with a golden bowl at the top and on either side of the candlestick the olive trees attached to them with the golden pipes through which the golden oil flowed to maintain the light of the candlestick.

Now this is a picture, a type of Israel of old. And there's you who will in Joshua the two olive trees who are instrumental under God in supplying to Israel all those blessings and gifts and graces which it was necessary for them to receive.

And we can go far beyond that. We can see in that candlestick, that lampstand, a picture of the church of God in this wilderness world of sin and shame.

A picture of every individual member of it. The olive trees representing under the old dispensations the Ubal the Prince and Joshua the High Priest.

These olive trees stand really and truly for our most blessed Redeemer who is a king-priest upon his throne. A priest after the order of Melchizedek who was also king of Salem.

[4 : 05] King-priest upon his throne. And through the great transactions of Gethsemane we have him who can be represented not by one olive tree but by two.

And through whom the golden oil of God the Holy Ghost flows into the souls of poor, lost, ruined, sinners in its melting, softening, feeding, illuminated power.

For just as the golden oil was of the very essence of the fruit of that tree, so the Holy Ghost brings into my heart the fullness, the blessings, the peace, the pardon, the light of him who is my olive tree in Gethsemane's garden was bruised and pressed even unto the grave.

And we can never exaggerate when we speak of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot praise him too highly and you can never exaggerate when you speak of the sufferings of our

blessed Lord.

Although it's so easy to glibly describe him. How often have we read of him with hearts that are like flintstones, unknown, apparently careless.

[5 : 23] but at other times we have some melting and our hearts are graciously moved. Now, as we look at Gethsemane's garden, let's see that which came to our Lord personally.

We see him there at the time of the Passover. Here we see him, as described in our chapter, there, bent down in infinite agony.

He who is our peace through the blood of his cross. Before we pass on, let us look for a moment at the journey which he took to the garden.

We see it typified in David. David, do you remember, went barefoot and weeping all over the brook kingdom at the time of the rebellion of his son Absalom.

Why was he barefoot and weeping? Not only because of Absalom's rebellion, but because he had been told of the treachery of Ahithophil who had joined the enemy.

[6 : 33] And just as David went barefoot and weeping over Kidron, so our blessed Lord, not barefoot or weeping, but our blessed Lord passed over Kidron on his way to the garden of Gethsemane.

And he too knew what Ahithophil's treachery meant as it was worked out in the person of Judas who had joined his enemies to betray him.

And there, there following our Lord was that little flock of sheep. The eleven disciples who had heard him. And friend, bless God for the hearing.

The eleven who had heard him when he opened up his heart to them in John chapters 14 to 16.

And at last, when he opened up his heart for them as he addressed his father in that wonderful intercessory prayer of John 17.

A type of his intercession for his church and people all down the ages. He closed the first part of his discourse in the upper room with these words.

[7 : 45] These things have I spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer.

I have overcome the world. And so, he led them forth from the upper room through the streets of Jerusalem over the brook to this garden where he had determined to speak to his father.

The place where the last solemn conflict should begin which was to end in the triumphant cry it is finished.

We see then in the garden of Gethsemane our blessed Lord beginning if I may say so, beginning to walk his way to Calvary.

Beginning that strenuous and awful conflict which is our subject this morning. When they reached the garden he took three of them into it leaving it at the gate and to Peter, James and John he said tarry ye here but he led them to a secluded spot in the garden sit ye here while I shall pray.

[9 : 09] Now, I have no doubt that they thought that once more they were going to gaze upon their Lord clothed in light and majesty as they were permitted to do in the Mount of transfiguration.

They expected that they should see the answer to our Lord's petition Father glorify thy son. But there in the garden they who have been permitted to behold our Lord in the brightness of his own and his Father's glory there they were destined to behold the commencement of his most solemn humiliation.

Or consider the contrast. John chapter 17 verse 24 says Father I will that they also who thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory.

What ternest, certainty, majesty, blessed assurance there is in these words Father I will compare you that verse with the description that we have here in our chapter of an event which took place within a very short space of time perhaps within the hour.

He went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from him.

[10 : 50] Do you see the contrast? Behold the height of the glory and the depth. Behold the eternal Son expressing his Father's will that his people should behold his glory.

And behold the very same person going and falling on the ground in the garden and asking that if it were possible the cup might pass from him.

I am told that a rapid change from an extreme of joy to an extreme of grief has been known to snap the cart of life. And so, so we see that which began to cause our Lord this agony of soul.

Now, let us look more closely at what this seminary displays to us by speaking first of those who should have been the watchers and secondly of the conflict and thirdly of the great and blessed outcome.

there were three who were appointed to watch three to whom the Lord said watch and pray. Now we know the names the inner circle of the disciples Peter, James and John.

[12:19] They were no more loved by the Redeemer than were the eight at the gate but these three were specially selected by him time and again that being made witnesses of some of the most outstanding events in his life and ministry they should place upon record for us what they saw and heard.

And these three, in common with the eight others, are not to be regarded only as individuals but as representing the whole church and people of God, representing all who have been elected by grace.

Now what they saw and heard and what the blessed Lord of life and glory said to them and did for them in the days of his sojourn here upon earth, he says and has done for all his dear people throughout all ages.

And therefore we are right in thinking of these three watchers as representing the church and people of God, representing poor sinners whom our Lord was redeeming at this time.

And what of these men? Ah, they saw something of his sufferings, but not very much. And why? Why? They slept.

[13:49] Oh, what apology has loved to make for weakness. Well, it is expressed by our dear Lord. The spirit indeed is willing, that is, it's ready, but the flesh is weak.

Three men with ready spirits to take our Lord's word. Three men with ready spirits, but three men whose flesh was weak. That very night they passed through a most exciting experience. They had partaken of the Lord's Supper. They had heard of those wondrous words. They were conscious that something was about to happen, something of which they had the dimmest knowledge.

Every nerve was strained, and when they reached that quiet garden, and the Lord had withdrawn from them, they began to slumber.

The flesh was weak, minds, bodies, nerves were weary, but they were ready. the spirit indeed is ready. There was a willing mind, but they could not keep awake.

[14:57] They had some glimpses of the sufferings of our Lord. They heard a little of what was said under the olive trees of the garden. There they were, redeemed sinners in the purpose of God.

There they were, forgiven sinners, and yet how they failed, and slept. Here were three men brought into the garden, and bidden by the second person of the Godhead, clothed with a nature like their own, bidden to watch, to watch everything they saw, to hear everything, order that they might record it for generations coming after.

And they began to slumber. Oh, do not these three disciples represent, both you and me, reading this chapter, reading the Gospels, reading of that great, infinite, eternal, covenant, soul-suffering, love, which was revealed in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet sitting in church and going to sleep, reading the word of God with no more feeling than the print on the page.

Do we not know what it is to be in the position of the disciples, sleeping in the face of that wondrous transaction on which the eternal salvation of the souls depended, that event which was to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, unable to give heed to this blessed gospel which we long to hear continually with power.

And how does our blessed Lord deal with us? What does God say in Zechariah? I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered.

[17:06] Smitten, yes, but still the shepherd. Sheep asleep, sheep slumbering, but sheep still.

The shepherd watches his sheep though they sleep. And so too our Lord watches over his sleeping people. And like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear.

We want to be lively in the service of God. We want to have every spiritual faculty of our nature aroused. We want to feel the life of God flowing through our souls that we may be able to say he loved me and gave himself for me.

The disciples, the disciples, friends, seeing little their types of ourselves and our experiences. disciples. But next, as we look at these disciples, those who would have watched, we see in our Lord's relationship to them the real humanity of him who is our elder brother, born of our bone and

flesh of our flesh.

[18 : 28] We see displayed here how completely our Lord can and will and does sympathize with us. For he is an understanding of the burdens of the flesh.

He knows what grieves us. Are you called to pass through deep waters? Ah, they are not to be compared with the deep waters our Lord was entering in the garden of Gethsemane.

He is the same today as he was then. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. There is union.

Your brain feels pain if your foot is trodden. And so there is a union between our Lord and glory and every one of his members here on earth.

In the garden our Lord said to these three disciples, I begin to be sore amazed, to be very heavy.

[19 : 32] My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Tarry ye here and watch with me. See here friends, see here an indication of the awfulness of sin.

what made the soul of our Lord sorrowful unto death? What made him say, I am sore amazed and very heavy?

Oh, it must be an awful burden to press so upon our Lord. What was it? The Father had laid upon him the guilt of all the people.

He was at this very time bearing the sins of his people. The load was such that he sweat blood, not caused by blows or crowns of thorns or nails, but from head to feet he sweat blood.

And this was God manifest in the flesh, God bearing the sins of his people. Oh, what an awful thing sin must be. How terrific in the sight of God the Father.

[20 : 44] God the Son to take upon himself and bear with a view to our atonement to be shortly accomplished on the cross.

What are your feelings regarding sin? Do you know anything about its guilt, about its pardon, about its vileness, about its pollution?

Do you look at sin in the light of this incarnate love, which in the garden began the final stages of putting it away?

glory? For my part, when I come to die, I pray that I may be engrossed with the Christ of God as seen in Gethsemane on Calvary and still with the marks of his stint sin atoning sufferings upon him on the throne of glory, saying, Where I am, there ye shall be also.

Again, in connection with the watchers of our blessed Lord, we see a blessed indication of the matchless love of Christ to poor, ruined sinners.

[22 : 04] We often speak of the covenant engagements of the Son of God made with his Father away back in eternity, in the fulfilment of which he came to suffer and bleed and die.

But always remember, my dear friends, that our Lord's sufferings were voluntary. His was a willing sacrifice. See him in the garden consenting with his human will to come under the wrath of God.

There had been and was essentially absolute harmony between the Father and the Son. But here the Son consents in Gethsemane to come under the wrath of God because he was the sin bearer of his people.

In the garden, as the sacrifice, he began to be scorched with the wrath of God. On Calvary, the sacrifice was consumed.

And yet, see in this matchless love of Christ, the light in which he regarded his disciples. Coming and going three times, mingling repeated visits to these three men with his soul-consuming and atoning curse.

[23 : 25] But though this atoning curse was upon him, still he remembered his disciples and their tiredness that overcame them. And his love for them brought him three times to them as they slept.

Ah, he never forgets his people. He never loses sight of them, even in the midst of his sin-atoning sacrifice. And secondly, look at the conflict.

There was one. It was called agony in one place. What was the conflict? And with whom?

It was not a conflict that was caused by fear of death. Ah, he was the subject of every sinless infirmity, and also every virtue which pure and unfallen manhood is capable of is to be seen in our most blessed lot.

So, with regard to his manhood, he is the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. But with that pure manhood is joined his divine person, and we see him in Gethsemane's garden showing infinite pureness, infinite virtue.

[24 : 56] Now, it was certainly not death that he shrank from, for he had often spoken of it with utmost calmness. he said, I am going to accomplish my decease at Jerusalem.

I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished. The conflict was not specially with Satan, for though he was never far from our Lord at this great crisis of his ministry, Satan is said simply to bruise his heel.

But, friend, this was more than a bruising of the heel in Gethsemane's garden. Our Lord was in the wilderness of temptation for forty days and nights, but nowhere do I read that there he sweat great drops of blood, though the conflict was long.

So, if it were not the fear of death or the conflict with Satan, what was it? The cup. That was the cause of his agony.

That was the cause of this soul conflict. And what was the cup full of? The wrath of God. And what did our Lord do with regard to that cup in the Garden of Gethsemane?

[26 : 21] He tasted it. He tasted of the wrath of God. And that cup of the wrath of God meant this, the averting of his father's face, the penalty, the burden.

The cup was the awful cup of woe to him because the father put it into his hand. The cup in Gethsemane was the same in its source, its ingredients, its design, as that which he emptied upon the cross of Calvary.

And what when our Lord tasted that cup, what was in it? Hell, hell. What is hell? Separation, wrath, penalty, forever.

He tasted that cup, and he had known no sin, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

And he said, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

[27 : 42] Let me say, and I tremble lest I should use any illustration that would mar the solemnity of these awful realities. Let me say, our Lord in the garden dipped his feet into the sea of God's wrath, the raging sea of God's wrath against sin, and the spray of that solemn sea of wrath came up to his soul.

If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. In other words, his holy soul shrank from contact with the bitterness and awfulness of that cup.

It could not be otherwise, because our Lord was holy, and the awful and ponderous load of sin was laid upon him.

Our Lord was one with the Father, and the cup was placed in his hand by his Father. Martin Luther said, In Gethsemane, the Lord Jesus Christ was looked upon by God as if he was an innumerable multitude of sinners.

And that is true. Substitute, representative in Gethsemane and Calvary, God looked upon him as if he were an innumerable multitude of sinners.

[29 : 18] A multitude that no man can number. And all that was due to their sins was expressed in that cup of suffering.

Everything due to our sins, that is, if we're going to heaven, everything due to our sins was expressed in that cup. He tasted death for every man, and the taste brought this cry of agony and woe from his sacred lips.

All hell was in that cup, infinite, eternal suffering. But look at his person, God as well as man, and therefore all that he was was equal to an eternal hell which an innumerable multitude deserved.

He began to be amazed, depressed in spirit. He said, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, no way out except by swallowing up death and victory, no way out of these sorrows but by the way of the cross, the recompense of God's justice, the fulfillment of God's most holy love, and the conflict was so great that his sacred blood was driven out in the form of great drops of sweat.

Now, what it fully means, I do not know, but our blessed Lord must have been brought very, very low, for afterward an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him.

[31 : 08] What did the angel do? Well, it is not for us to ask. He came to strengthen the drooping manhood of our dear Lord. But lastly, look at the triumph and the outcome.

it was a conflict between the human soul of our blessed Lord and his covenant. How did he triumph?

By expressing this with his whole heart, not what I will, but what thou wilt. And after these words had been spoken, our Lord went forth and said, He that betrayeth me is at hand.

They all rose up, the noise of the crowd is heard, and now he goes forth calmly, in no dread of death. Whom seek ye?

he. And when they replied, he said, I am he. And they went backward and fell to the ground. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would lead us in meditation to Gethsemane's garden, and from Gethsemane to Calvary's cross, from Calvary to the top of Mount Pisgah, where we shall see the land of glory.

[32 : 35] In Isaiah chapter 53, verse 11, we read, He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied.

Here in Gethsemane is the travel of our Savior's soul. He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied.

And I ask you, my friend, what is it that will satisfy the Son of God? What is it that will satisfy the Lord Jesus Christ?

He will be satisfied when he sees all his dear people gathered safely round him, and when he sees a poor tried sinner brought to his feet.

He shall be satisfied. You and I have Gethsemanes in our little lives. In essence, they're totally different from that of our dear Lord.

[33 : 46] I was thinking of Luke's words. He was removed from them about a stone's cast. Now, that was simply with regard to the actual distance between his person and theirs.

But, you know, in Gethsemane, he was removed not by a stone's cast, but in bearing that awful wrath of God, he was removed by a distance which we cannot measure.

Our Gethsemanes are seasons when strength is strained to its limit. Oh, that when we come to these places, we may know more and more of the strengthening power of the Lord Jesus Christ and be enabled to say, Father, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

My dear friends, hold fast to the gospel. Though the devil may tell you that you have no part in it, cling to it. The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, he will not, he cannot desert to its false. Amen. Let us pray. Gracious and ever-blessed God, we give thee thanks for a saviour who was willing and ready to suffer for us.

[35 : 16] we thank thee that Christ Jesus left his throne and glory above, to come down to this earth, to be tempted of Satan, to be reviled by a man, to suffer the death of the cross for sinners such as we are.

We thank thee that having suffered, he passed through the grave and hell and ascended up on high to open the gates of heaven to them that believe.

O gracious one, strengthen our belief and keep us ever looking only unto Jesus. Keep us ever mindful, O Lord, of that love that heareth bear to us as sons of men.

Part us now with thy blessing, see us to our homes in safety, come out with us in the evening for we ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.