

He has just overcome in this struggle when through the branches of the olives he saw on the opposite sloap, a great mass of enemies coming to arrest him. The traitor was well aware of the places of prayer as used by Jesus. Add, he was afraid to put his hands upon him in the day and so they come by light, with lanterns, and torches, thinking that they might have to search for him in a cave or in a wooded section. But, he came forth to meet them and freely surrendered to them. Certainly, he received the answer that he must go god's will.

This past week I had the privilege of hearing reports on Russia, concerning the Christians who live there and who are groups of Bible believers. In thinking of this sermon on Gethsemane, in contrast to what these Christians are doing there, we realize that Jesus has the answer. For they tell us, that in Russia, that 21 yrs. ago, all of the Baptist churches were closed. And, then during the war with the Nazis, the leaders discovered that it might be well to let the people go back to church and worship. And they flocked back by the scores. And as they witnessed this great movement to the churchex, they said we will control this movement to Christ and regulate the no. of churches. And so, in the city of Moscow, there is only one Baptist church. We were told that there are about five thousand and ⁴⁰⁰⁰ ~~four~~ churches scattered around in that country. Because the gov't also seeks to control religion, by saying that the state will train the individual until he reaches 18. So, the gov't teaches them ~~XXXXXXXX~~ athesim until they are 18 and then the gov't says, if you can win them, it is up to you. Therefore, these Chrsitians suffer a great deal for the name of Christ. They can have no S.S., T.U, W.M.U., social activies, orpahnages, hosptials, or any of the things that help people such as we know can be a blessing through our church. They have only the services of worship. In Lenia last year, there were 318 applicants in the church, and only 88 were baptised. You see, you can't be baptised until you reach 18 yrs. And you cannot, be a member of the church if you either drink or smoke. They have some very regid rules and a person making application must wait until the church is sure they believe in Christ and that they are willing to suffer for Christ. Ans so, during the worship services which often last from 2 to 3 hrs., their witness is given. Notes are taken up, and at the appropriate time in the service, the pastor will read out the requests for prayer that have been made on paper. Some are requesting prayer for those in sorrow, those in need, and so forth.

Gethsemane

Matthew 26: 36-46

Introd.

Jesus has just instituted the Lord's Supper and rising from the table at midnight, they pass through the streets, and out of the town by the Eastern gate of the city, to the foot of Olivet, into the garden of Gethsemane. Here followed the awful agony and struggle of the final tempta-tion. All during his life, he was subject to temptation. It will be difficult for us to analyse all the elements of this scene. We will discover the struggle ended in complete victory. He had fought off the last remnant of temptation and is now able to go on and face death.

The scripture here infers deep sorrow. As though in all of his other experiences, he had never known what sorrow was. He was very heavy as now he comes under the weight of the cross. Even perspiration colored with blood run down his face. And he expresses strong crying and tears,

I. Things that did not bother him.

1. Being a substitute. The matter of being a substitute on the cross, making it possible for a sinner to draw near to God was not the thing that troubled his soul. This shall we shall never be able to completely understand. How that Jesus could suffer in the way of substitution and yet Gethsemane was not the altar upon which he was to be sacrificed.

2. It was not the fear of physical death.

He does not seem to be disturbed about the matter of having to die. Because when ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ we study the lives of the men like Polycarp, these men contemplated the matter of death beforehand and yet it did not seem to trouble them. They could face death triumphantly. Even criminals can climb the scaffold and be put to death without sobbing or sorrow. Therefore, I do not believe that it was fear of physical suffering or death that bothered the saviour here in the garden.

II. The thing that troubled him.

There can be only but one answer to this statement. That is, that he was to be made sin. He knew that he was about to be brought into the closest assocaition with sin. He knew that he was now to be made sin and bear the curse of shame for humanity. He was to be the propitiation for

sin. It is now that he knows the exceeding and sinfulness and horror at sin. And that here he becomes the scapegoat charged with guilt not his own, but the guilt of the world.

He has looked on this for a long time, as he was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world. He was reminded here of the times when the scapegoat was let go in the wilderness or the pigden dipped in the blood of its mate. All of this reminded him of sin. And, yet, Jesus, from the beginning knew that it was because he had nourished a seedling and a sapling tree that would someday be a cross. And as it came nearer to his soul, the prospect of bearing the sins of the world, brought about this deep grief.

It has been approx. 6 mos. before that he has set his face to go to Jerusalem. And, here in the Garden he struggles to discover the will of God.

What this really amounts to, is the atonement made for the sins of the world. Jesus here realized that we were sinners beyond hope, and now God must provide some way of escape.

The Bible tells us in the very opening chs. of sin coming into the world and of God's regard in reference to sin. Man had ruined his Eden and now he must be saved by an atonement. There must be an execution. The penalty must be paid. This was to be made by a perfect sacrifice. And it was brought about by the mercy of God. Jesus came in absolute obedience and he was man and also God. On the one hand, he was too weak to carry the cross because of human exhaustion. On the other hand, he was mighty and able to raise the dead because of divine power. The atonement is the son pouring out his life's blood and opening the gates of mercy. This was done for all sinners. What do you think. How do you feel about the appeal? Does not the love of Christ constrain you?

Why did Christ die at all - if not for us? He had never sinned and the only account to be given of his death is that he died not for himself but for us.

III. How was this sorrow met?

The Bible tells us that in the hour of the greatest sorrow that he made supplication unto the Father. And he asked if it might be done some other way. And the Father said that it must be by the way of Calvary. And, so to meet the emergency of his sorrow, Jesus turned to prayer. Let us note 2 or 3 items concerning this prayer.

1. It was secret prayer. Leaving the majority of his disciples, he took those who had been with him on the Enchanted Place - 8 distinct miles - slope of Mount of Olives 3 miles from eastern wall of Jer - beyond Kidron - trees protected today

Large group left as outer guard - could not fight the battle in this prayer - late hour - made thin bit of human sympathy of Mt. of transfiguration - a little way into the garden and commanded them to be watchful. While he went a stone's throw away, Matt. says that, he went a little farther. He went just beyond the view of these disciples., that he might tread the winepress alone. The disciples who were left behind were overpowered by sleep. I am confident that no individual heard all of this prayer that Jesus offered in secret. *Forward a little - could not fight the battle in their presence - Sad discovery - eyes heavy - sleep or else no longer had your watchful interest -*

2. It was an humble prayer. From the scripture, he fell on his face, he knelt down as to humble himself and became obedient unto death.

3. It was a sincere prayer. It was genuinely earnest as he repeated the words over and over again. Cup, and pass, and will, and Father. Here in Matt. we discover that these words were prominent as he repeated them. And we also discover that it was a sincere prayer because of the drops of perspiration that were red like the juice of a grape. *Cup = figure of death. Now about to taste Matt. 26:22.*

4. It was a prayer of submission. Where he says, "Nethertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." v. 39. We must remember that Jesus was co-equal in his nature with the Father and he was conscious that he had come to earth to do the father's will. This was revealed when he was discovered in the temple when he was left in the temple. He remarked that he must be about his Father's business. Now he comes to go through the fiery furnace. There is no alternate. This is truly obedience.

IV. The answer to his sorrow.

We as Christians could well profit by Jesus' example as when we have sorrows and burdens to bear, we might well pour out our hearts and pray unto him for aid.

The Father hears his prayer and answers. The cup was not taken away. This was his mission. And, so, the brutal crowd would come through the garden and he would at last triumph over the grave. He was not fearful because he knew that God would win the victory.

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This report reminded me that Jesus also calls upon us to come and watch with him. He takes us to the dark shadows of sorrow and bids us to suffer with him.

If we would see the force in the heart of Jesus here in the garden it would bring us to tears. Does Jesus love me so? That he would be willing to go all the way to the cross? Is it possible that I could love sin more? Our hearts should actually melt as the words of the beautiful hymn, I saw one hanging on a tree, in agony and blood, who fixed his languid eyes on me, as near the cross I stood. And then the second part: A second look he gave which said I freely all forgive; this blood is for thine random paid, I died that thou mayst live. And so you see, his whole heart was broken, and tears came forth like rain. If the death of Christ does not constrain us, nothing else will. For Jesus was made a sin offering for us. How beautiful is the contrast of the Mosaic system. The victim was bro't out to be slain. The blood was carried in and sprinkled on the mercy seat. The high priest went in only once a year on the day of Atonement. Two goats were bro't forward, the priest laid his hands on them and confessed publically his sins and the sins of the people. One was driven far away in the wilderness. The other was slain. The meanwhile the people stood outside, confessing their sins and expecting remission only thru the shedding of blood. The whole world stood around calvary while Jesus bore the sin upon the cross. We may think foreign missions is a hard job. But, Jesus left heaven on a foreign mission. He did not shrink but he was willing to suffer and so from the garden to the cross - just for you.