

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

58. The Victory in the Garden of Gethsemane

Mark 14:32-42

Mark 14:32–42 (CSB)

³²Then they came to a place named Gethsemane,

Gethsemane means: “*the oil-press*”. There at the foot of the western slope of the Mount of Olives was a garden where they extracted oil from olives by crushing them.

The suffering of Jesus did not begin at the place of the Skull when they fastened the hands and feet of Jesus to a Roman cross with wrought iron spikes. It didn't begin before that at the Antonia fortress where they tore the body of Jesus to shreds by the Roman scourge and crowned Him with thorns. It didn't even begin at the house of the High priest where they blindfolded Jesus and repeatedly struck Him in the face. The suffering of Jesus started in this garden where things got crushed.

and he told his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” ³³He took Peter, James, and John with him,

These three were witnesses to how right there in that garden Jesus the Messiah settled it in His heart that He would take the sin of the whole world upon Himself.

and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.

In this moment Peter, James and John were witnessing something they had never seen. They had been with Jesus 24/7 for nearly three years and they had never seen anything like this in Jesus. I believe Mark is giving us Peter's eyewitness account. Peter tells us that as he and James and John were following Jesus, Jesus *began to be deeply distressed and troubled*

deeply distressed

Handbook on the Gospel of Mark — *full of terror and distress.... the word denotes a distress which is the result of surprise, i.e. a dread caused by something unexpected*¹

Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament — *terrify, to be struck with terror*²

One author made this comment — *"Jesus came to be with the Father for an interlude before his betrayal, but found hell rather than heaven opened before him ...*³

As God incarnate — Jesus knew the purpose of His incarnation; knew that He was sent by the Father to rescue and redeem fallen man; knew that His life was moving towards the moment when He would take upon Himself all of our sin. He spoke of His sacrificial death time and again. But at this very moment in **Mark 14** the terror of the Cross came crashing in upon His humanity.

QUOTE: Henry Swete (professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1890) —

*its terrors exceeded His anticipations. His human soul received new experience—He learned upon the basis of the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8), and the last lesson of obedience began with a sensation of inconceivable awe.*⁴

That's why Jesus was not only deeply distressed — He was deeply troubled!

troubled

¹ Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. (1993). *A handbook on the Gospel of Mark* (p. 446). New York: United Bible Societies.

² Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 1, p. 264). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

³The Gospel of Mark by William L. Lane

⁴ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 1, p. 264). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament — *is from a word adēmon (ἀδημον), which means "uncomfortable," as one not at home.* ⁵

Not in the sense of home-sick, but in the sense of "this is totally unfamiliar." The reality of what was before Him was utterly outside of anything He had ever experienced. In a bit we'll see why He was so not at home with it.

How horrifying was the cross? So horrifying that Jesus looked at Peter, James and John and said

³⁴He said to them, "I am deeply grieved to the point of death.

This is uncharted waters in His humanity. Jesus said that the horror of the cross was so great, so shocking, that in the deepest part of His humanity — in the depth of His soul — He was experiencing a sorrow that was so crushing it could have killed Him!

Vincent Taylor — *a sorrow which threatens life itself* ⁶

"...Remain here and stay awake." ³⁵He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take **this cup away from me.**

WHAT is **this cup** Jesus is talking about?

***Revelation 14:9-11** And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into **the cup of his anger**, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."*

⁵ Wuest, K. S. (1997). *Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: for the English reader* (Vol. 1, p. 264). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁶ Vincent Taylor — *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 553,

THAT is the cup that Jesus was talking about. Jesus knew all along that saving us meant that He would drink the cup of God’s wrath! In one of his letters Paul the apostle tells us that Jesus *delivers us from the wrath to come (1 Thes. 2:10)*. The only way for **us** to be *delivered from the wrath to come* was for Jesus to endure the wrath of God! There in the Garden of the Oil Press that cup was horrifyingly imminent. There in the Garden of the Oil Press the very essence of that cup was horrifying — terrifying! Timothy Keller said that it was almost as if the Father set the cup before Jesus and said — “This is what it tastes like. This is what it smells like.”

QUOTE: Kent Hughes — *“The cup was steaming with a brew that was so awful, so fearful, so dreadful, so unbearable, so appalling, so horrendous that Jesus’ soul was revulsed and convulsed.”⁷*

The reality that His Father was going to fire down upon Him the full measure of divine wrath that we deserve was not just horrifying — was not just shocking — it was heartbreaking. Jesus had been at home with His Father for eternity (In the beginning was the Word and the Word was *with* God). Jesus had only known perfect love, perfect union, perfect fellowship with His Father. How could **He** bear the Father’s wrath?

QUOTE: Jonathan Edwards — *He felt what the prophet Nahum said, “Who can stand before [him]? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire ...”*

The very thought that in a matter of hours He would become sin for us on the cross — the very thought that in a matter of hours He was going to endure His Father’s wrath instead of His Father’s love — the very thought that in a matter of hours His Father would turn His back to Him so that we would never have to see the back of God again — all of **THAT** made Jesus so sorrowful that it almost killed Jesus right on the spot! The heaviness of **THAT** was crushing Him — in the Garden of the Oil Press.

Luke — who was a physician — gives us this amazing observation:

⁷ R. Kent Hughes. “Luke (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition).”

Luke 22:43–44 (CSB) ⁴³Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. ⁴⁴Being in anguish, he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. anguish, he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.

There in that garden Jesus was in such agony of soul that His body begins to fail Him — His capillaries began to burst and the blood came through the pores of the skin.

No one has ever known, nor ever will know, the suffering and sorrow Jesus experienced in **that** garden. We can't comprehend the depth and strength of love involved in the submission of Jesus to the will of the Father.

By submitting Himself to the will of the Father Jesus committed to taking upon Himself the sin of Charles Manson, the sin of Hitler, the sin of every child molester, the sin of every abortion, the sin of every lustful thought, the sin of all of our selfishness, the sin of every foul thing that has come out of our mouth, the sin of every foul thing we've ever done against the law of God — the sin of the entire world.

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon — *The crucifixion of Christ was the crowning sin of our race. In his death we shall find all the sins of mankind uniting in foul conspiracy. Envy and pride and hate are there, with covetousness, falsehood, and blasphemy, eager to rush on to cruelty, revenge and murder. As all the rivers run into the sea, and as all the clouds empty themselves upon the earth, so did all the crimes of man gather to the slaying of the Son of God. It seemed as if hell held an assembly, and all the various forms of sin came flocking to the rendezvous. Army upon army, they hastened to the battle. As the vultures hasten to the body, so came the flocks of sins to make the Lord their prey.*

It's no wonder Jesus said — *I'm not at home with this!*

Let's look at VERSE 36 again

³⁶And he said, "Abba, Father! All things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, NOT what I will, but what YOU will."

Matthew and Luke give us this parallel account

Matthew 26:39 (CSB) *“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

Luke 22:42 (CSB) ⁴²*“Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me— nevertheless, NOT my will, but yours, be done.”*

THIS IS SO HUGE! Jesus is saying

Father, if it's possible — if man can be saved, redeemed from his sin by any other method — by being good — by being religious — by being sincere, let this cup pass from Me.

THIS IS SO HUGE — Jesus said that He had a cup to drink. Jesus asked if it were possible for this cup to pass from Him. The perfect, omnipotent Father listened to the agonized pleading His perfect Son for an alternative way to rescue and redeem us. If there was any other way, He would have done it. I know that what I'm about to say offends a whole lot of men and women. If there was any other way to save us the Father would have done it. But since there was not, He willed his Son's death.

The suffering of Jesus should re-shape the way we think about how MUCH we are loved by God the Father! How can He set such a great love upon you and I? I'd like to encourage you this evening if you don't know that love. His love for you and me is SO great that it pleased Him to watch His only begotten Son taking what we deserve so that you and I could take our place with Him in glory.

I can't imagine the heartache that God the Father suffered to in order for you and I to become His own. I have two sons — amazing young men. I cannot imagine what it would be like for Sean or Nathan to know that it was *my will* to put the sin of everybody who hated me on either of them — instead of pouring my love out on them pour out all my wrath them — and when they in agony cried out “DAD!” — turn my back on them.

The Bible actually describes His love for you and me as a love that surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:19). To this day I still do not understand it — but it is a love

that can be known — known by experience — and when you do you are forever changed!

DON'T MISS THIS — Even though every emotion in His heart — every fiber and every cell in his body rose up against the prospect of drinking that cup to the dregs — **Jesus said** *Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*”

Matthew tells us that Jesus prayed that prayer three times — and each time ended with the same resolve: *Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.*”

Jesus **wrestled** with the prospect of crying out from the cross “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus wrestled with the prospect of drinking the cup of God’s wrath.

DON'T MISS THIS — Right there in **THIS** Garden — in the dark of night when no one was looking — Jesus could have let countless billions of men and women (including you and me) spend forever drinking the cup of God’s wrath that we deserve.

Right then and there in **THIS** Garden, **Jesus SUBMITTED to the will of the Father** — *Father, I know that You love lost mankind so much that You sent me to drink the cup of Your wrath and indignation that they deserve to spend forever drinking. And I love You so much that I want Your will, not my own.*

Right then and there Jesus COMMITTED to dying on the cross — *I love them so much that I will lay aside the infinite and perfect love I have had with You for all eternity — I will drink that cup, so they won’t have to drink it. I’ll be forsaken by You so they can be accepted by You.*

It was right there — right then — in the garden where things were crushed that the issue of the Cross was settled! Right then — there — Jesus was **fully submitted** to the will of the Father — **fully committed** to go to the cross. When we read in **Colossians** how Jesus triumphed over principalities on the cross — making an open display over them — THAT victory was won in THIS garden!

DON'T MISS THIS — It was in a **perfect garden** where our first parents said — **NOT** Your will, but **MY** will be done. EVERYTHING broken in our world

— including you and me has its cause in THAT decision in THAT garden. It was and still is in THAT decision where true humanity is lost. The trademark of fallen culture is that we want our best life, peace and justice, health and comfort on those same terms.

HERE IN MARK 14 the God who made us is now in another garden — the garden where things got crushed. He’s there to rescue us from every consequence of the *NOT Your will but MY will* life we have all chose. The only way for us to be rescued would be for Jesus to say, *Never-the-less — NOT MY will, but YOUR will be done.*

THAT is the essence of the cross.

THAT is the essence of the rescued life.

THAT is what it is to be truly human.

Hell cannot stand against THAT

³⁷Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn’t you stay awake one hour? ³⁸Stay awake and pray so that you won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” ³⁹Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. ⁴⁰And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹Then he came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up; let’s go. See, my betrayer is near.”

When Jesus rose from prayer — we see Him drenched in sweat and blood — but we don’t see Him *greatly distressed and troubled*. We see Jesus fearless and determined. Nothing would deter Jesus from taking upon Himself the sin of all the world. He knew that Judas was literally upon Him and He said, ***“LET’S GO!”***

CLOSE

There are concrete, specific and personal implications of the suffering of Jesus and the submission of Jesus

The suffering of Jesus and the submission of Jesus should create in us a profound sense of reverence and awe of Jesus because He not only stepped into our humanity — He willingly walked into the Garden of the Oil Press and came face to face with the horrifying reality of the cross.

The suffering of Jesus and the submission of Jesus should re-shape the way we think about ourselves — cause us to see that sin is SO bad — we are SO bad, and we are SO lost that we deserve the cup of God’s wrath.

DON’T MISS THIS — There in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus exchanged cups. In the upper room He had given them the cup of fellowship —fellowship that He had enjoyed with the father from eternity past – and He said *drink of THIS cup*. But there in Gethsemane He took our cup – the cup of God’s wrath that we had earned. He was taking what we deserved.

The suffering of Jesus and the submission of Jesus should re-shape the way we think about how MUCH we are loved— SO loved that when Jesus was horrified by the reality of that cup, He still committed to drink it!

I know that there is not one cell in my being that — left to itself — desires anything else but MY will be done.

Jesus drank the cup. The ONLY conclusion is that Jesus provided the ONLY way for man to be saved.

The reason why the cross of Jesus offends people is because it tells us JUST HOW BAD sin is — JUST HOW LOST we are. Sin is SO bad that the ONLY way to deal with it was by the perfect Son of God enduring the wrath that we deserve.

But it is the suffering of Jesus and the submission of Jesus that melts my heart— causes ME to desire His will — constrains me in the most beautiful way to say “*NOT my will — but your will be done*”

ONE LAST WAY THING — The suffering of Jesus and the submission of Jesus should re-shape the way we think about the nature of Christian Community.

D.A. Carson — *I suspect that one of the reasons why there are so many exhortations in the New Testament for Christians to love other Christians is because this is not an easy thing to do...Ideally, however, the church itself is not made up of natural “friends.” It is made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything of the sort. Christians come together, not because they form a natural collocation, but because they have been saved by Jesus Christ and owe him a common allegiance. In the light of this common allegiance, in light of the fact that they have all been loved by Jesus himself, they commit themselves to doing what he says – and he commands them to love one another. In this light, they are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus’ sake.*