

*In  
The  
Garden*



## Looking Unto Jesus—In the Garden

*Hebrews 12:2, “**Looking unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

We continue our series of looking unto Jesus and we look unto Jesus...In the Garden. We look in the Garden of Gethsemane and we see our Lord and Savior facing trials and temptations that no man has ever faced. Yet, through his example, we can learn a tremendous amount on how to face temptations in our own lives.

*Luke 22:39-53, “Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ And He was withdrawn from them about a*

*stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, ‘Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.’ And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’ When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, ‘Lord, shall we*

and we go into retreat and we expect for others to come and minister to us. But notice what Christ did just before he was in the garden and even while he is there suffering. In the midst of these trials and temptations he prays for others. He prays for his disciples. He urges the soldiers to let them go and only take him. He even shows compassion on Malchus, one of the men that came to capture him, and he heals him. Even during the most trying time of Jesus’s life, he shows compassion and love for others around him. We would do well to follow this example. When we begin to struggle, when we begin to be tempted and tried, let’s turn our focus away from ourselves and show compassion to others.

### Conclusion:

As we close, I want for us to notice one final thing. Sometime after the conclusion of the Passover meal and before his entrance into the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus lifts up his eyes to Heaven and he begins to pray. He prays that, in his coming trials, God would glorify his Son. He prays for his disciples. But the prayer doesn’t stop there. He continues this prayer and he prays, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through

their word” (John 17:20). Jesus not only prays for his disciples that were gathered with him that night, but he also prays for you and for me.

That night, Jesus had a choice. A choice between returning to Heaven and drinking the bitter cup. A choice between what his flesh was telling him to do or what was best for you and me. A choice between saving his own flesh and saving your soul. And he chose you!

And all he asks is for you to choose him. To choose, during those times of trial and temptation, to follow his example, to kneel down before Him and rise to follow Him all the days of your life. What will you choose?

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carry out God's will.

I'm reminded of the apostle Paul and his thorn in the flesh in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12. Much like Christ, Paul prays three times for this to be taken away from him. And just like Jesus, three times the answer to his prayer is "No."

2nd Corinthians 12:8-10,  
"Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Paul follows the example of Christ and says that when he is in those times of trials and persecutions and temptations, times when he is weak, he will use those opportunities to follow the will of God; not to show his own strength, but to show the world the strength that we have through God.

When we view temptations and trials as opportunities to carry

out the will of God, the people around us can gain strength through our example. We gain wisdom and experience that will allow us to minister to others in ways that we never could before. And we are changed and shaped and transformed into the servant that God wants us to be. But it starts with our attitude during those times.

#### Christ Focused on Others

The last thing that I want for us to notice from the story of Jesus in the Garden stems from the attitude that we just discussed that Christ had in the Garden. When we take the attitude of using those times of temptation and trials as an opportunity to do God's will, our focus will shift toward others.

So often when we struggle and are tempted, we begin to ask "Why me? Why is this happening to me? Why do I have to go through this?" And our focus is on ourselves. But notice Christ's attitude during this time. Instead of being focused on himself, he shows great concern for others. What compassion Christ shows in the midst of his suffering!

Some of us, whenever the slightest thing goes wrong, have no time for anything or anyone else. The slightest bump in the road

*strike with the sword?' And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, 'Permit even this.' And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.'"*

Jesus and his disciples have just concluded the Passover meal. Jesus teaches his disciples about discipleship and service by kneeling and washing their feet. He talks to them about what is about to happen and he institutes the Lord's Supper. During the course of the meal, Judas has left and is on his way to betray Jesus. At the conclusion of the Passover Meal, Jesus and the rest of the disciples leave the upper room where they were gathered and head out into the streets of Jerusalem. They go out the eastern gate of the city and they cross over the brook of Kidron. As they ascend the Mount of Olives, they come to an enclosed wooded area called Gethsemane. Apparently it was a private olive grove that Jesus has permission to frequent.

Jesus leaves most of the apostles near the entrance of the garden and takes Peter, James, and John to the interior of the garden. He urges the apostles to pray so that they wouldn't fall into temptation.

As Jesus enters this garden, the battle for the fate of the souls of mankind begins. You might think that the suffering of Jesus started at Golgotha. Instead, his suffering begins in Gethsemane. He begins to face temptations and trials and stresses. By this point, Jesus had already spoken numerous times about what would happen to him. But it was on this night that the full weight of what was about to happen to him pressed down on him and he begins to face the onslaught of Satan. His sorrow is so strong that he feels like he's about to die.

The battle between God and Satan was raging that night in the Garden. And Jesus knew it. And he knew the cost of that battle and his role in the war. He knew that before the war was over, he would be taken captive. He knew that before victory would come pain and anguish. He knew that before he would ascend to the right hand of the Father, he would taste the bitter cup. He knew that before the stone would be rolled back on

Sunday, there would be the cross and all that came with it, on Friday. And as Jesus faces this onslaught, he begins to pray to his Father in Heaven to, “let his cup pass from me...”

Before Jesus that night, metaphorically, was a cup, a cup that he knew he would have to drink from. The idea of drinking that cup made him sorrowful unto death, even to the point of sweating as it were “great drops of blood.” But what was it about this “cup” that was stressful to him? What was it that caused him to beg his Father for another way? What was it that was so bad that he was tempted to not drink of it?

Maybe it was what he knew was waiting for him the next day. He knew the next day was the cross. He had, no doubt, seen people crucified. He had seen what crucifixion does to the body. He knew about the beating and scourging and pain that was about to occur. Is that what he was referring to as “this cup” that he was about to drink from?

I think that it was more than that. Jesus knew that what he was about to endure was even worse than the physical pain of the cross. In the cup that Jesus was about to drink were several things that are worse than just

physical pain.

First, Jesus was about to, for the first time, experience the guilt associated with sin. And you might be saying, “How could Jesus experience the guilt of sin? He was sinless?” But Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that “for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin...” Also Peter says in 1 Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree...” Jesus would bear the sins of the world. And he would face the wrath of God because of that sin. He would face the consequences of sin and the guilt of sin, and not just for one man but for ALL men. Christ knew how much God hated sin and He knew that He would be the one to pay the penalty for it.

Also, beyond just the physical pain he was facing death. Death is something for sinful man, not for the Son of Man. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death. And ever since sin entered into the world in the first garden, man has faced death. On this night Jesus is staring a certain death in the face. Ederheim says, “And beyond this lies the deep, unutterable mystery of Christ bearing the penalty due to our sin, bearing our death, bearing the penalty of the broken Law, the accumulated

night, I believe that if we will draw close to God he has promised us that he will provide for us. As a part of this promise to provide for us during these times of temptation, we are promised that no matter what we face, with God’s help, it will never be more than what we can bear.

*1st Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”*

God has not promised us that we won’t face temptation. He has not promised us that we won’t go through things that will be difficult, in fact, quite the opposite. He has promised us that we will suffer and we will be tested and we will be tried and we will face temptation. But he has also promised us that no matter what we are facing, if we will submit ourselves to him, he will provide a way of escape, a way for us to overcome those temptations.

God will allow us to walk through some pretty dark valleys in our lives, but he will always be there to help us make it to the other side. With prayer. With his Word. With these minister-

ing spirits. With the Holy Spirit. He has provided for us and given us these great and precious promises to help us through.

### Christ Viewed Suffering in the Proper Light

The third thing that we can take from looking unto Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane is his attitude toward his temptations and his struggles. We mentioned several times how that Christ prayed for this cup to pass from him, for him not to have to drink that cup. But it is important to notice the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of that prayer and his attitude. Each time that he prays for this cup to be removed from him, he finishes with “nevertheless not my will but thine be done.”

While Christ was in anguish and pain and going through a tremendous season of temptation, his attitude toward these trials was, “If I have to go through this and this is your will, God, then let your will be done.” He viewed this trial as an opportunity to carry out the will of God. So often when we are tried and tested and tempted, we can fall into the attitude of “Why me? Why is this happening? Why do I have to deal with this?” Instead, we should we should view these times as opportunities to

learn about prayer in the Garden. Three times Jesus asks for this cup to pass from him. And three times God tells him “No.” Not because he didn’t love Jesus, but because God’s will must be carried out. God has never promised us that the answer to our prayers will be “Yes.” But he has promised us that he will provide us with what we need to carry out his will. And he has promised us that through prayer, we can have a peace that passes all understanding

*Philippians 4:6-7, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”*

This night in the Garden, as Jesus is facing tremendous stress and strain and temptation, he uses prayer so that he will have the strength and the peace and the calm that we will see him display as he makes his way to Calvary

#### God’s Promises and Love in Times of Trial

The next thing that I want for us to notice from the Garden and remember in our times of temp-

tation is that God will always provide for us. His providential care and promises are with us during these times of temptation.

As Jesus is in the Garden and completes the first prayer, Luke 22:43 says that an angel appeared to him and strengthened him. This is reminiscent of what happened in the wilderness. After Jesus endures those temptations, Matthew 4:11 says that angels came and ministered to him there. And you might be thinking, well, that is Jesus. That is the son of God. Of course, angels were there to take care of him. But I would turn your attention to an interesting verse that we find.

*Hebrews 1:13-14, “But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”*

The Hebrew writer says that these ministering spirits, these angels, are sent to minister to those that are heirs of salvation. That is you and me. I won’t pretend to know exactly how all of that works and how exactly angels interact with us today. But I do believe what God says. And just like Jesus was ministered to by angels in the garden that

guilt of humanity, and the holy wrath of the Righteous Judge upon him....”

In addition to this physical death, though, there was a form of spiritual death that he would experience. Because he would take the sins of the world, he would face something else that he had never experienced before. He would experience a feeling of separation from his Father in Heaven. Isaiah 59:2 says, “...but your iniquities have separated you from your God....” On this night Jesus knew that if he drank from that cup and took on the sins of mankind, he would experience a separation between him and God.

Jesus knew all of these things waited for him the next day. Can you imagine the strain and stress and the TEMPTATION he faced? How his flesh must have been screaming, “DON’T DO THIS! You don’t have to! You can just call all of those angels down here and you will be right back in heaven. This doesn’t have to happen!” And I’m sure that Satan was right there reminding him of these things, whispering into his ear as he prayed.

But Jesus doesn’t give in. After he completes this first prayer, he

goes to check on Peter, James, and John, but they are sleeping. Jesus returns a second time in prayer and asks again for this cup to pass from him. And then a third time, he prays “for this cup to pass away.”

Here in the Garden, Satan is whispering to Jesus, “God’s way is too hard. It will be too much pain, too much anguish, too much suffering. It isn’t necessary.” But thanks be to God that on this night in the Garden, just as he had done in the wilderness, Jesus faced those temptations and overcame them.

Many think that the battle was won at Calvary. Others think that the sign of victory is the empty tomb. Those are the places where the act was carried out. But where the final decision was made to carry that out was here in the Garden. So as Jesus completes these prayers, he gets up and heads toward the entrance of the Garden. He sees Judas and a band of soldiers and Jewish leaders approaching.

Of course by this time, Judas has betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. He and the soldiers probably looked for Jesus and the apostles in the Upper Room. When they didn’t find them there, Judas knew exactly where to look. So he leads the soldiers

to Jesus. He approaches Jesus, gives him a kiss on the cheek to signify which man they were to capture. Peter tries to save Jesus and ends up trying to murder Malchus. But Jesus takes compassion on Malchus and heals him. And then Jesus is captured and led off to his destiny at Calvary the next day.

Perhaps at no other time in the earthly life of Jesus did he face such stress and anguish and temptation as what he faced in the Garden of Gethsemane. Despite all that he went through that night, he never once sinned, never once disobeyed God. That night in the Garden he perfectly carried out the will of God. We should never forget that, yes, Jesus was 100% God. But he was also 100% man. And his flesh faced all of the same temptations that we face.

*Hebrews 4:15, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin"*

Jesus faced all that he faced and he understands temptation. C.S. Lewis wrote, "A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist tempta-

tion know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness — they have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means — the only complete realist."

So we can look unto Jesus. We can look into the Garden and we can learn some valuable lessons on what it takes to deal with and overcome temptation in our lives. We can see 4 things from the Garden of Gethsemane that we can apply to our lives to help us deal with temptation and trials.

#### Jesus Prayed

Sometime between the end of the Passover Meal and the events of Luke 22:39-53, Christ prays the prayer that we can read

about in John 17. He urges the disciples to pray once they get to the Garden, and then Christ spends probably several hours in prayer that night. He is humbled before God, laying his thoughts and desires before God. But he also prays that, whatever the answer to these prayers, God's will shall be carried out. Christ says several times, there in the Garden, that this time of prayer would help them deal with temptation.

When we face times of trials and temptations do we take time to pray? Have we made prayer a part of our lives? I don't mean the quick little prayer we say before a meal. I don't mean routine prayers we utter before bedtime. I don't even mean the 2 or 3 prayers we probably say during our worship services. I mean do we spend our time speaking to our Father in Heaven? Do we humble ourselves before God and spend time communicating with him?

*James 1:5, If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."*

*James 4:8, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you...."*

In the Garden this night, Christ

knew what he would be subjected to the next day. And he knew that he needed to draw close to God for strength and guidance. During our times of temptation do we do the same?

It is interesting to look at the difference in the outcomes between Christ and the apostles that night. Christ spends hours in prayer and has the faith and strength to carry out God's will. The apostles would rather sleep. And when they are faced with temptation and trials, some run and hide; others deny that they even knew Christ.

As I look at my life and those times when I struggle and fail to carry out God's will, those are usually the times when I fail to spend time drawing close to God in prayer. Prayer is more than just an item on the checklist that we are supposed to do to make God happy. Unfortunately, I think that is how we approach prayer sometimes. Instead it is an avenue to approach the throne of God with humility. It is an opportunity to speak to God and through it we receive his blessings and the strength to carry out his will.

Now does that mean that we will always get the answer we are looking for in our prayers? That is an important lesson that we