



Week 5: Matthew 26:36-46

**THE PEACE OF PRAYER**

Just hours before he would be crucified, Jesus moves his disciples from the Upper Room, over the Kidron Valley and up into a small, terraced garden, near the Mount of Olives known as Gethsemane. It is here that Jesus undergoes a period of deep sorrow and distress as he approaches the cross, articulating his anguish through three pleading prayers.

**THE SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 26:36-46<sup>10</sup>**

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane<sup>2</sup>, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." <sup>37</sup> And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." <sup>39</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup<sup>3</sup> pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." <sup>40</sup> And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? <sup>41</sup> Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." <sup>42</sup> Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." <sup>43</sup> And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. <sup>45</sup> Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup> Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>2</sup> The name "Gethsemane," is only found in the Gospels of Matthew (26:36) and Mark (14:32), and translates to "oil press," indicating the likely existence of an olive grove in that location.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus is facing the most severe temptation of his life, at the moment when he is ready to accomplish the culmination of his life's mission—to bear the sins of the world—which is what this cup signifies.

## LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 5

### OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Can you recall a moment in your life when others failed you and didn't give the comfort and support you needed? Can you recall a moment when you failed someone in a similar way also?
2. Have you ever been in agony in prayer?

### DIVING DEEPER

3. What happened immediately before these verses? What happens immediately after them?
4. Reexamine the text, and carefully identify every word or phrase that emphasizes the challenging nature of this moment for Jesus.
5. Within these verses, there is mention of three specific occasions to pray. Highlight each of them in the text on the previous page.
6. What occurs between each of these prayers? What do you think Matthew's account is exposing for us in this contrast?
7. In verse 4, Jesus states that, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." What do you think this means? Where do you see this in your own life?

8. Read Luke's account of this scene in his gospel in Luke 22:39-46. After Jesus' prayer in this gospel, how does the Father specifically send comfort to his Son?
  
9. While Jesus' suffering in Gethsemane may resonate with our responses to personal trials, in what distinct and incomparable ways is His suffering entirely unique, setting it apart from our own experiences?
  
10. Like Jesus, we are also promised comfort in our pain and trial. Read John 14:24-27. How does the comfort and help of the Lord come to us? By what other means does the Lord send comfort to his people in trial?
  
11. When Jesus addresses his disciples who were sleeping, how do you envision the tone of that conversation? Could there be a chance that the tone differed from what you initially perceive?
  
12. What generally wins out as you face decisions in life—your feelings or your commitments? How can Jesus serve as an example to us?
  
13. In what area of your life do you need to say to God, "Your will be done"? How can you reach out to others for help in this?