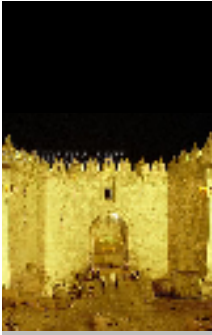


# No One Takes My Life From Me PART 13 - GETHSEMANE

TEXT: LUKE 22:39-46 (ESV)



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## Why We're Here

Today we resume our study of the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry leading up to His Resurrection. What is the purpose of this series, which is looking to have at least 24 parts? One reason we're taking the time we are, for sure, is to tell the story of what happened during that pivotal week. Another reason is to fill out the much more epic story to which this series belongs—the story of God's redeeming grace to a desperate people. Today we'll give time to the story of a moment, but to get there I want to spend the first half of our time here on the epic story to which this moment belongs.

## Everything Broke

The Bible tells a story—the story of a world created by the word and will of God, which He pronounced as good until sin entered through Satan's deception and Adam and Eve's sin. When our first parents defied God and ate the forbidden fruit, everything broke. But it wasn't just that everything broke. The brokenness yielded exponential damage. Disease and corruption entered the natural order of things. We have seen such effects of the Fall wipe out thousands of people at a time.

But God did not build a fragile creation. He built a creation He, from His all-knowing vantage point, declared "good." (Gen 1) But when sin entered, this carried a devastating wage—death. (Rom 5:12, 6:23) Even still today we see that while God has certainly held back the full fury of the disease and corruption we can imagine plus what we cannot, these are still everywhere.

But this is not the worst of it. The worst part of the Fall of Man is what it has done to our relationship with God. We were made for relationship with God—to know Him intimately in a face-to-face kind of way, with nothing to hide or fear or prove. But here's what the Psalmist wrote about what is, versus what was used to be: "The LORD looks... to see if there are any... who seek after God. They have all turned aside and together have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one." (Ps 14:2-3)

When Adam and Eve sinned against God, it did not send God into hiding. It sent the man and the woman into hiding. God sought them as they hid. He called their names. But as they came out from the bushes, wearing garments of figs they had made to cover their shame and with rehearsed excuses to cover their guilt, God told them something we must hear if we are to understand His grace. He told them there would be no "do-overs." There was no heavenly "reset button" He would push to make everything return to the way things were.

Their relationship with God had gone from whole to broken. The brokenness wouldn't heal itself, and neither would the man and woman be able to fix it. Nor would God accept it or ignore it. Let the gravity of that linger. If God and man were ever to be restored, God would have to be the one to do it. Our only hope rested in the hands of the One offended.

God set apart the children of Abraham as His own, promising He would be their God and they would be His people and He would love them with an everlasting love. From Abraham's line, and nations and kings would come. (Gen 17:6) To one of those kings, David, God promised to establish his kingdom eternally, (2 Sam 7:16) and from this kingdom, the prophet Isaiah later said, would come a King, and "of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this." (Isa 9:7) God is clear. It is never on man to keep the promises God makes. God is zealous to do this.

I'm painting with a broad brush, but here's where the people of Jesus' day were: though man once knew peace with God, they sinned against Him and everything broke beyond what they could fix. God called a remnant of those people to Himself, promising them an eternal Kingdom with a righteous and just King who would bring unending peace with God. That King has come. And He is a warring King, though His fight is not against flesh and blood. He has come to overturn the effects of that fall, including the deception and power of the devil as well as the rebellion, infidelity and brokenness of man.

But how? Hebrews says, "It fit that [God] in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering... Since the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (Heb 2:10, 14-15) Jesus would deal the death blow to Satan's power by absorbing the blow that is the wage of our sin and then rising from the grave in victory over death.

But to whom is the wage of sin owed? To the devil? No, he wasn't the one our sin offended. And this is crucial for us to understand. There was never a time when God said, "I'd love to redeem you, but I'll have to pay the devil first." There is no parity between God and Satan. They are not equals. Neither is the devil free to do as he pleases. God sets the boundaries for what the devil can inflict and how far he can take it. (Job 1:12, 2:6)

Why am I telling you all this? We need to see Jesus is the King Isaiah spoke of—the King who reigns over God's eternal Kingdom, the King who puts His people at peace with their Maker. And He does it through suffering on their behalf as Hebrews explains, paying the wage of our sin with His very life. But that wage is **NOT** paid to the Devil. It is paid to God. It was our sin against Him that led everything to breaking.

So here before we zero in on a very telling moment not only in the particular story of the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry, but also in the epic story of redemption, we need to keep in mind that Jesus had not come to satisfy the vindictive demands of the devil, but the just and righteous demands of a Holy God, Who is right to refuse to regard our rejection of and rebellion against Him as being, in any way, acceptable. But we also need to remember that it was God Himself sent Christ. This is the Gospel—God to the rescue. The One we've sinned against, the only One who can set things right between us, is the same One who provides a Redeemer to do just that. And in our text today, this is what is on our Redeemer's mind.

## Luke 22:39-46

*<sup>39</sup>And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup>And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." <sup>41</sup>And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup>saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." <sup>43</sup>And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup>And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup>And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise, pray that you may not enter into temptation."*

### Not My Will, But Yours

From the Upper Room, Jesus and His disciples have walked from Jerusalem to the eastern slopes of the Mt. of Olives to a garden where it was their custom to gather. (v. 39, cf. Jn 18:2) It has been a night of lasts—their last supper, last hymn together, last walk through the city. In the garden, Mark tells us Jesus parted from His disciples, except Peter, James and John. (Mk 14:32-33) Luke adds as they went into the garden, Jesus told them to pray, and He withdrew “about a stone’s throw,” and knelt down. Do you wonder how Luke came to know such things as Jesus’ distance from His friends or His posture when He prayed? Peter told him. Later Luke logged many hours with Peter, and though Luke authors this Gospel, Peter is one of his main eye-witnesses.

What lies around the corner is no secret to Jesus. He knows the end is at hand, and here we see He handles it as He always has—He took His concerns to His Father in prayer. Notice too that He enlists His followers to pray as well. This is part of praying for the Will of God, as Jesus teaches in the Lord’s Prayer. (Mt 6:10) So much of the importance of prayer lies not in how it changes God—because God does not change—but in how it changes us. It is the business of bringing our desires, fears and burdens before the Lord and laying them at His feet. And as we see in Jesus here, it can be a very agonizing experience to kneel before the Lord and pray honest prayers.

One of the threads of this narrative we’ve been following here in this series, specifically in these messages focused on Thursday night, is how the Gospels tell us about Jesus’ mood. At the start of the Last Supper, He was troubled in His spirit. (Jn 13:21) And now here, as He kneels to pray, Luke describes what He is enduring as “agony.” Luke was a physician by trade, so when he describes a physical condition, we can expect precision as opposed to flourish. His sweat became like drops of blood, perhaps a reference to a condition called hematrodosis, when the capillaries beneath the surface of the skin burst from stress.

Often when we are suffering the agony of stress and anxiety, it is because there are outcomes we dread (real or imagined) and ones we desire. We fear those we dread will prevail. Appreciate the position Jesus is in. He is not asking His Father to thwart the will of those who are on their way to arrest and eventually crucify Him **in order that** His Father’s will might prevail instead. Jesus knows that although His Father’s reasons are very different, the will of those coming to crucify Jesus and the will of His Father have converged, at least in the short term, and both are committed to the same course of action.

So Jesus prays, “If you are willing, remove this cup from me. But not my will, but yours be done.” There are three things I note about Jesus in this. **First, He is honest.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity in human form is looking at a very painful death and is confessing to God that He’d honestly rather not endure this, if there was any other way. **Second, He is yielded.** He wants His Father’s will, regardless. **Third, He is answered.** This is not a prayer spoken into the void. God answers by sending an angel to comfort Christ—an answer which reveals two specifics: 1) the Father cared about His Son’s agony and did not leave Him alone and 2) the course was, in fact, set and would not be altered. This cup would not pass from Him.

What is the cup spoken of here? This is an old euphemism dating back generations before this moment in time referring to the cup of God’s wrath, (Ps 11:6, Isa 51:17, Jer 25:15-16) the idea being what is in the cup will bring death, and the Father is the one handing it to Him to drink. Jesus will take in His body the full measure of God’s wrath toward the sins of the world.

### Sleeping for Sorrow

When Jesus left His disciples, He told them to pray that they wouldn’t be tempted. When Jesus returns to them, He finds them sleeping, as Luke describes it, “for sorrow.” Have you ever had a day so emotionally draining that at the end, you collapse, eyes stinging either from tears or from holding them back? This has been their day. We may sell them short if we read of them sleeping and brand them as being a million miles away from what Jesus was enduring. Luke comes to their aid here to help us understand. They might be lazy and detached, but they’re also spent. Jesus warns them again to wake up lest they succumb to the trials at hand. They need to be ready.

In the distance, a line of flames snake their way up the hill. Soon the sounds of clanking armor reach their ears. There is one in front with a familiar silhouette and gait—a friend. Why are they there? They are there to hand Jesus the Cup His Father means for Him to drink—the cup of God’s wrath toward our sin.

I’ll leave you with this thought. In the first garden, the devil deceived the man and woman, but they intentionally disobeyed God. And everything broke. They couldn’t fix it and God wouldn’t accept or ignore it, meaning if ever man was to be put right with God, God would have to be the One do it—and He’d have to do it by dealing perfectly with the problem, our problem—sin. The wage of sin is death, because when God looks on sin, His wrath burns against it—all of it.

Now in this garden we find the Son of God accepting that cup of God’s wrath. We find He was completely willing to do so. Also we see this whole thing was God’s idea, the one we offended. There isn’t one of us who doesn’t need this. Jesus took the cup of God’s wrath and drank it down to the dregs. Are you sleeping through it? Or are you coming awake to the truth of what has happened in the story of God’s redemption. He has rescued us by His Son. Do you believe this?

### Notes: