

TOO TIRED TO PRAY Luke 22:39-46

"Why pray when you can worry?"

How often do we pray God will strengthen us so we won't give in to temptation?

We often pray about our troubling circumstances.

Are we as concerned to pray for victory over temptation?

We're perplexed by impossible task of describing Jesus' sufferings,
as God-man, so as to do injustice neither to His divinity nor humanity.

The things He suffered overcame Him as an integrated person,
as they affect us.

Spurgeon: "I tremble at the task which lies before me, for how shall my feeble speech describe those agonies, for which strong crying and tears were scarcely an adequate expression? I desire to survey the sufferings of our Redeemer, but oh, may the Spirit of God prevent our mind from thinking aught amiss, or our tongue from speaking even one word which would be derogatory to Him either in His immaculate manhood or His glorious Godhead. It is not easy when you are speaking of one who is both God and man to observe the exact line of correct speech; it is so easy to describe the divine side in such a manner as to trench upon the human, or to depict the human at the cost of the divine.

With His betrayal and arrest at hand,

Jesus goes out to the mount to pray "*As usual, . . .*"

Jesus' followers should've prayed for strength to follow God's plan, to remain faithful Him and not abandon Him.

JESUS' INSTRUCTION 22:39-40 *Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."*

He instructs them to pray for themselves,

lest they enter into temptation

He knows what they're up against;

He's facing similar affliction.

JESUS' PRAYER 22:41-44

Jesus prays fervently for the trial to pass. 22:41-42 *He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*

It borders on heresy to presume our Lord's affliction was provoked by the thought of death—as if He somehow wanted to escape death.

He came for that, and willingly gave His life for His friends.

There's more here than fear of death

—far more than we normally imagine!

Before Jesus went to the cross to die for us, He gave us a glimpse of what a tremendous experience this was for Him.

He knew He'd be raised from the dead in the end, yet, He experienced tremendous agony as He considered the next few hours.

He'd be humiliated and abused, and suffer pain on the cross.

More significant was His own contamination by sin,
the righteous, holy God, would be made sin for us.

He would be separated from His Father.

In a brief moment, He would suffer the equivalent of what it would have taken all of us all eternity to pay.

Jesus bore the outpouring of God's wrath against every sinful person that ever lived.

God allowed Him to endure the entire weight of God's judgment on all sinners in one brief moment.

It wasn't death itself that caused such agony, but bearing the weight of the outpouring of the whole cup of God's wrath against every sinner that ever lived, including you and me!

Spurgeon: "As God He was perfectly holy and incapable of sin, and as man He was without original taint and spotlessly pure; yet He had to bear sin, to be led forth as the scapegoat . . . Do you wonder that His infinite purity started back from that? Would He have been what He was if it had not been a very solemn thing for Him to stand before God in the position of a sinner? yea, and as Luther would have said it, **to be looked upon by God as if He were all the sinners in the world, and as if He had committed all the sin that ever had been committed . . . ?**"

" . . . ALL HELL WAS DISTILLED INTO THAT CUP!"

"Drinking the cup"—O.T. image to describe those who experienced God's judgment—they "drank the cup of His wrath."

Jesus was about to experience God's judgment on Him, in our place!

If violent outbreaks of nature's wrath cause fear. How much greater the outpouring of the Creator's wrath on all sinful humanity, in one moment, one location, on one Person?!!! How much stress should that produce?

He went through it all so we don't have to.

We can trust Him and His work, or insist on paying ourselves.

Then we will go through the terror He already went through for us!

He experienced all pressure Satan could unleash to foil the plan.

If they could change the plan, they could destroy God's program.

Even aware of what was coming,

Jesus submitted to His Father's will

Questions from Serendipity Bible make me consider how Jesus' response to God's will compares to ours: "In saying 'Your will be done,'" is Jesus a) Helplessly submitting to fate?

b) Admitting defeat before a power that beat Him?

c) Bitterly resigning Himself to the inevitable?

d) Quietly trusting in God's love even still?

Barclay: "It makes all the difference in what tone of voice a person says, "Thy will be done."

(i) He may say it in a tone of helpless submission, as one who is in the grip of a power against which it is hopeless to fight.

The words may be the death-knell of hope.

(ii) He may say it as one who has been battered into submission.

The words may be an admission of complete defeat.

(iii) He may say it as one who has been utterly frustrated and who sees that the dream can never come true.

The words may be those of a bleak regret or even of a bitter anger which is all the more bitter because it cannot do anything about it.

(iv) He may say it with the accent of perfect trust. That is how Jesus said it. He was speaking to one who was Father; he was speaking to a God whose everlasting arms were underneath and about him even on the cross. He was submitting, but he was submitting to the love that would never let him go. Life's hardest task is to accept what we cannot understand; but we can do even that if we are sure enough of the love of God.

Jesus won the victory by complete submission to the Father's will!

He was not concerned about His own interest: how to escape affliction.
 He was concerned with the plan and obeying His Father's will
 That's Jesus' model for our praying. *"Lord, I want relief.
 But I want your will even more!"*

God sent a comforting messenger

to comfort and strengthen Him.

He also faced the renewed assault of the enemy

22:43 *"An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him."*

The causes of affliction are not removed. They're just easier to face.

Jesus experienced anguish at the prospect of what was about to happen,

His sweat falling like drops of blood to the ground.

22:44 *"And being in anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."*

It's not clear in what sense it was like drops of blood.

Many assume the agony is so intense that He suffers *hematidrosis*: under great emotional stress, tiny blood vessels rupture in or near the sweat glands, producing mixture of sweat and blood.

Maybe it's attempt to describe how the sweat fell,
 like large drops of blood.

What's clear: no one has ever endured pressure
 like Jesus at this moment.

The sense of **betrayal and abandonment**.

One of his closest followers betrayed Him

Another denied Him All abandoned Him

The sense of **rejection by loved ones**

The people He came to save were trying to kill Him

His own family rejected and made fun of Him

The conviction that He was **suffering unjustly**

He created the universe and now the creatures would kill Him

He who knew no sin, was about to carry the sin of every rotten sinner that ever lived—even tyrants and mass murderers.

The expectation of **pain and suffering**.

No more excruciating death has been invented than the cross!

When have we been through so much?

We think God allows us to suffer?

I'm reminded of a woman, grieving the loss of a son in tragic automobile accident: *"Where was God when my son died?"* she cried out. Someone lovingly responded, *"The same place He was when His Son died?"*

If this event does nothing else for us, it should remind us that **Jesus understands whatever we're going through**. He understands our pressure!

Are the waters you're going through deep?

They're nothing compared to the torrents He faced!

Jesus understands our sorrow;

He suffered more than we ever suffer!

He endured more intense agony than we will ever face,

and yet He responded properly,

trusting the Father, and entrusting His future to Him.

No one can complain that God doesn't understand, that He can't know what we're going through.

In the garden, Jesus faced it all!

Even the depression—even the suicidal thoughts.

Satan would have been feeding Him thoughts:

"Why go through all this?"

"Why face the mocking and the scorn?"

"Why don't I end it all now, quietly?"

Avoid the cross.

It was all there, just like it is for you!

JESUS' CONCERN FOR THE DISCIPLES 22:45-46

"When He rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, He found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 Why are you sleeping?" He asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

What was their condition? Why?

They were exhausted, not from overwork, but from grief.

The anguish, frustration, the pain, left them exhausted.

They couldn't bear the thought any more!

So they escaped into sleep. —that's depression!

What is Jesus' concern? What counsel does He give them? Why?

He urges them to wake up and pray God will deliver them from the temptation they're facing.

Sleeping it off won't resolve the anguish; *we need to give it to God!*

His exhortation for them to pray is *not that they pray for Him.*

He warns them to pray for themselves.

He knows the tests they'll soon face.

What are the temptations believers have the greatest struggle with today? A 1992 survey of Discipleship Journal readers ranked materialism as the number one temptation. That was followed by pride, self-centeredness, and laziness. Anger/bitterness tied for fifth place with sexual lust. Envy, gluttony, and lying rounded out the list. Respondents also shared that they feel most vulnerable to temptation when they have not been spending much time with God (81%) and when they're overtired (57%). The most effective strategies for resisting recurring temptations were prayer(84%), avoiding tempting situations (76%), Bible study (66%), and accountability to someone else(52%).

The disciples profess willingness to die with Him,

but He knows the flesh is too weak.

They're going to be confused, depressed, defeated and frustrated.

Their only hope is to keep God's perspective on these events!

Not only do they face physical danger; but spiritual danger also.

Jesus gives the exhortation TWICE to pray not to fall into temptation. It was a real threat.

Satan is preparing the "mother of all spiritual battles, the most significant of human history.

Now's the time to destroy the church!

If you think you've experienced the attack to keep you from becoming all God wants you to be, imagine how intense this battle was!

Jesus says "PRAY!—that you don't give in to the temptation that's about to bombard you!" "Let God fight for you!"

Just as the angel ministers to and strengthens Jesus, heavenly reinforcements are available to strengthen and help *us* in the battle also.
Jesus' warning: you can't face this kind of temptation alone.
We need God's help!
Instead of "hanging in there" trying to slug it out in our strength,
we need to call God to enable us
to endure the temptation without caving in.
No one here, including the pastor, will escape similar temptations.
When will we stop trying to handle them in the flesh?
"I tried for a while!
When it didn't work, I decided to handle it myself."
Who says it didn't work? Who says it's time to stop?
Sometimes we have to keep on turning the problem over to God.
Maybe it's not His time to take "the cup" away yet.
We labor under a misconception:
We think that when we pray, God will take the troubling circumstances away.
He never promised to do that.
He responds to Paul's expectation of that: *"MY GRACE is sufficient for you . . . My strength is made perfect in [your] weakness."*
He doesn't promise to remove the circumstances.
He promises strength to stand firm in the midst of them!
—to resist the temptation.
Jesus says, **"PRAY THAT YOU NOT CAVE IN TO THE TEMPTATION!"**