

Gethsemane
Matthew 26:36-46

TEXT/INTRO: “This building is empty, the church is not.” Our ruling authorities have instructed us not to assemble here in this building and they are right to do so. This coronavirus mess is a very real threat to our very lives, so it makes sense that we would comply with those who rule over us concerning this matter. And quite frankly, I’m more leery about our government than I am about this virus. Turn in your Bibles to Titus chapter 3, **Titus 3:1** *Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,*
² *to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. (Tit. 3:1-2 NAU)* I have seen on the news where a pastor in Florida was arrested for holding a church service in his megachurch. He paid his \$500.00 for bail and was released.

I also read a report of a church that assembled and 17 of their people now have the coronavirus. Beloved, I trust God and I submit to our rulers as long as it doesn’t go against the gospel and our liberty in Christ. I stand by the word of God and our Constitution. I trust God but I wash my hands for 20 seconds. I trust God but I maintain “social distancing.” I trust God but I lock my doors. I trust God but I take my prescription meds everyday.

And Romans 13 ^{NAU} **Romans 13:1** *Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.*

² *Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.*

³ *For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; (Rom. 13:1-3 NAU)*

When our powers that be tell me to stay home, I’ll stay home.

This is an excellent opportunity for the church to be reminded that the building isn’t the body of Christ. All who are in Him make

up that body. And while we're apart physically, temporarily, He is still our head (Eph. 1:19-23).

Let's take our Bibles and turn to Matthew's gospel and chapter 26, Matthew 26 and we'll begin with v.36. Again, Mt. 26:36-46. Today is Palm Sunday. It's a unique Palm Sunday in that we won't all be together in the same place at the same time. I don't recall this ever happening before, at least not in our lifetime. I do know that this same thing happened in 1918 during the Spanish Flu when the government ordered the closing of schools and churches. That, by the way, killed between 50 million and some say as high as 100 million people.

³⁶ *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."*

³⁷ *And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed.*

³⁸ *Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."*

³⁹ *And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."*

⁴⁰ *And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"*

⁴¹ *"Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

⁴² *He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."*

⁴³ *Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.*

⁴⁴ *And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.*

⁴⁵ *Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."*

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*⁴⁶ "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"
(Matt. 26:36-46 NAU)*

Judas left them during the last supper and now he's back at the garden.

*The historical event that this passage covers, takes place in a place that is described in the gospel of John as a "garden." ^{NAU} **John 18:1** *When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. (Jn. 18:1 NAU)* And this garden was located on the Mount of Olives. It's called the Mount of Olives because of the olive trees that grew on it and it was there that the Jews had constructed an olive press.

Gethsemane literally means "an oil press." It's where olives underwent the process of pressing to extract the oil from them. They were subjected to the press. They were thoroughly pressed or squished or stressed so that their precious oil could flow from them and be sold in the marketplace for the user's use, whether it was for burning in a lamp or anointing for some religious purpose.

Do you see the analogy here? Can you even begin to imagine the stress and grief that the Man Jesus was laboring under in the Garden of Gethsemane? His being in this garden was no accident. His being in a garden that was named after the olive press located there was no accident. **God sent Him there. God sent Him there to paint a picture for us of the cost the Son of Man had to pay for our redemption. Only this press didn't extract olive oil, it extracted the blood of the Son of God!**

³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death;

Did you know that God the Father has a "soul?" When the word of God in Ephesians tells us not to "grieve the Spirit," it's because the

Spirit, the third person of the trinity, has a soul. Listen to what God says about Himself and His Son,

^{NAU} Matthew 12:18 "BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL is WELL-PLEASED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES. (Matt. 12:18 NAU)

²⁷ "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour '? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

*²⁸ "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."
(Jn. 12:27-28 NAU)*

Perhaps that can explain what our Creator meant when He said we are created in His image. That image includes the soul.

Here is what we can glean from Jesus' Gethsemane experience.

First, Gethsemane reminds us that Jesus was a Man.

³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." Jesus was a Man, He was certainly a unique man, but He was a Man. He had human eyes and ears and a nose and hair and nerve endings and muscles and feet that got dirty. He had a brain and lungs and kidneys and a bladder. He got hungry and thirsty just like His disciples did. And He liked eating fish.

He had human emotions and it bothered Him and even angered Him to see people suffering. It bothered Him to see His people being oppressed by the Roman Empire and by their fellow Jews who took pleasure in fleecing them. It angered Him to see the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the lawyers and doctors deceiving His people and leading

them to an eternity without God. And you and I can know that deception still angers Him. It still angers Him and it angers me as well.

He was the “God-Man,” 100% God, 100% Man. There’s a fancy name for that, the “hypostatic union,” but we just simply need to be reminded that Jesus was conceived as a human by the Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, and was God incarnate. We don’t really see His human side until we see Him in the garden of Gethsemane. And then there’s no missing it.

The Preacher said in Ecclesiastes that there’s not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins. Jesus broke that rule. The average righteous man sins. Jesus was not your average righteous Man. In fact, Jesus is the only Man to ever be truly righteous. We’re righteous by faith; Jesus is righteous by nature. He was and is the only Man to ever live without sin.

Second, Gethsemane reminds us that Jesus identified intimately with us.

Jesus gave us a brief glimpse of His humanity that night in the garden and let us see just how human He was. He identified with us in fear and anxiety and dread and stress and the fear of dying in a horrible way. But He also made His joy available to all who are in Him. He wants us to know and experience the same joy He knew.

¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.... (Jn. 1:14 NAU)*
That means so much more than that He merely became a Man and lived with His fellow Jews. It means He was fully committed to being one of us to the point that He could relate to us and save us from our fallen and sinful natures. It meant that here is a Man who knows what He’s talking about. It means that here is a Man who could walk the walk and talk the talk on our behalf, because we are on our best day, inconsistent. He is our consistency. And listen to this, this is great,

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¹⁴ *Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*
¹⁵ *and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. (Heb. 2:12-15 NAU)*

When someone is bitten by a poisonous snake, what is the antidote? Snake venom. By the way, do you know what the antidote for a black widow spider's bite is? It's horse blood. It's a serum made from horse blood. Go figure. Do you know what the antidote for a brown recluse spider's bite is? There is none.

Do you know what the antidote for sin is? The blood of Jesus. Do you know what the antidote for death is? The resurrection. Listen to this verse, ²⁷ *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,*
²⁸ *so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (Heb. 9:27-10:1 NAU)*

¹⁰ *For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

¹¹ *Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 6:10-11 NAU)*
Amen? Amen.

Third, Gethsemane reminds us that Jesus was tempted as we are.

Can you imagine that? Someone as powerful as the Son of God crying out of fear and dread, totally stressed out? His disciples would have freaked out if they had seen Him crying out for help. They thought He was above all that. "Not my Jesus. My Jesus is a real man. He wouldn't cry." The One who defeated the devil who held the power of death in his evil little hands, overcame him by overcoming His fear of

death.¹⁴ *Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*
¹⁵ *and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.* And Hebrews 4:15,

¹⁵ *For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.*

(Heb. 4:15 NAU)

That, beloved, doesn't say that Jesus simply refused to sin, but rather that He was without sin, period. The words, "yet without sin" tell us that. The Greek word translated "without," means "apart from." He was apart from sin. Sin never touched Him. He was living in a totally different realm than any man who had ever lived. He was by definition the spotless and sinless Son of God, the Lamb of God, because of who He was inside. "Yet apart from sin." In Him is no darkness at all. Jesus is the spotless and sinless and perfect Son of God.

I can hear it now because I've heard it before, "Okay, Jesus is God, that means He wasn't really tempted as we are was He?" Well, you're wrong. He was tempted in all things as we are. Here's the difference. When you and I are tempted there is always the possibility and even the probability that we'll give in and sin. There is that part of every believer that too often finds some temptation too much to handle. Whether it's lust or greed or hatred or anger or worse, our temptations too often find a place in us. It wasn't that way with Jesus.

The temptation isn't the sin, it's giving into it that is the sin. Temptation is an opportunity to sin. Jesus was presented with the opportunities to sin just as we are. And, furthermore, what is a temptation to you might not be tempting to me. You and I find temptation as attractive as Eve did in the garden, and you know how that turned out. Being tempted is only effective if that temptation finds a place in our hearts and minds. None of them did with Jesus. He was tempted when sin presented itself to Him, whether it was through a

seductive female or the temptation to rule the world or prove He is the Son of God by jumping off a 1st century skyscraper. It was just as sure a temptation as it would have been for you and me. The temptations were real, and so was Jesus. He never gave in so that you and I can have eternal life through His holy life. He never gave in to His very real temptations because it wasn't in Him to. It is for us. Temptations are merely an opportunity.

Fourth, and finally, Gethsemane reminds us of the high cost of our salvation.

I hope that from this day forward, when we hear the word Gethsemane, we'll remember just how much Jesus suffered before He ever got to Calvary. Next week we'll remember Calvary and the empty tomb. Today lets exalt the Lord Jesus for His living and suffering on our behalf.

³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

Gethsemane reminds us of Jesus' humanity and His identifying with us in all things human, apart from sin. And it reminds us of the high cost of living as a human being in order to pay for our sins and to reconcile us to the Father. What response does God desire from all men? That they might hear the gospel and call upon the name of His Son and be saved. Have you done that? ¹³ for "**WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.**" (Rom. 10:13 NAU)