

Come and See: The Garden of the Press

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[0 : 00] Mark chapter 14. Mark chapter 14, our passage today describes one of my favorite places on earth. I got to visit in 2012 and one day soon I hope to take my wife and go back.

It is the Garden of Gethsemane. This passage is also some of the weightiest of all scripture. Jesus had spent time with his disciples teaching them how to live and how to live on for him after he died.

Those teachings are recorded in John chapter 13 through 17 that we looked at last week. When they left that room, they went to the Mount of Olives, a grove of olive trees to pray.

And in the center of that grove on the Mount of Olives, just across the Kindred Valley from the Temple Mount, is a garden that is surrounding an oil press.

It is called the Garden of Gethsemane. Gethsemane meaning oil press. It's where they gathered the olives and came and pressed them into oil.

[1 : 21] Jesus and his disciples had just spent precious time in the upper room. They left the upper room and they traveled about three-fourths of a mile to the garden for a time of prayer.

It is a special place. And I want you to understand why this morning. It's found in Mark chapter 14, beginning in verse 32, and it says this.

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, sit here while I pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful even to death. Remain here and watch. And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

And he said, Abba Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.

[2 : 33] And he came and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you will not enter into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again, he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.

And he came the third time and said to them, are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come.

The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer.

The God is at hand. The events of the garden are amazing to me. I've spent years combing over this.

[3 : 40] And to summarize, I'm most amazed by three factors. All of them are very relevant to us today as well.

First, I'm blown away by the suffering. Jesus suffered in the garden. Understand, he knew what was coming.

John tells us that when the disciples came to arrest him, that he knew all that would happen to him. Yet even though he knew what was to happen and why they were there, he asked them, whom do you seek?

Who are you looking for? Now, I want you to understand something about that question. And let me just say all the questions that God asks us.

God never asks us questions because he needs the answers. He already knows. We need to deal with what the answer to his question is.

[4 : 45] He knew what was coming. And even knowing that it was not easy, there was nothing easy about the cross. And we often think about the physical aspects of that.

And in a couple of weeks, we'll look at that in detail. And we think about the emotional aspect of that, the shame that went along with a man who was sinless and yet hung, like a sinner.

But honestly, the spiritual part is what breaks my heart the most. The events in the garden revealed that because he said, and he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death.

Luke records for us in Luke 22, verse 43, that his sweat became like great drops of blood falling upon the ground. That actually describes a rare but well-documented malady that comes to people under tremendous stress called hematidrosis.

And hematidrosis is when there's so much stress upon you that the capillaries in your face that normally would cause you to blush actually burst. And the blood runs out of the sweat pores in the face and in the head.

[6 : 09] That bursting is only due to intense stress. And through those sweat glands, the blood runs and the person actually sweats blood.

It's not only rare, it is painful. And to think about what would happen in just not too long from that time when they would ram a crown of thorns upon that same head that had went through that, it was absolutely amazingly difficult.

When Jesus struggled though, notice that he struggled over the cup. That's what he asked for God to somehow let him pass from. The cup.

So what is the cup? The Old Testament tells us clearly. It says in Psalm 75, 6 through 8, it says this, for not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

For in the hand of the Lord, there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed, and he pours out from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to its dregs.

[7 : 25] Isaiah 51, 17 gives us a better example. It says, wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, old Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord, the cup of his wrath, who have drunk down to the dregs, the bowl, the cup of staggering.

Isaiah 51, 21 and 22 celebrates the release of the wrath of God. And it says, therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine.

Thus says the Lord, the Lord, your God, who pleads the case of his people, behold, I am taking from your hand the cup of staggering, the bowl of my wrath, you shall drink no more.

The cup that he speaks of is like a bad drink that ruins lives. Now some of you don't want to hear what I'm about to say, but I'll tell you that I don't apologize when I share the evils of alcohol.

Alcohol has caused ruin for too many people. If it hasn't for you, I encourage you to stop now before it does because it is simply not worth it.

[8 : 35] A person, a city, nothing else will ever thrive because of alcohol. It may look like it does for a season, but it will not. Adrian Rogers said one time, alcohol is the most dangerous drug in America because of its acceptance, availability, and the effect that it has upon hearts and the misery that it brings.

Now I'm not preaching on alcohol today, but I'll be happy to if I need to. Alcohol is what is used to describe what it's like to be under the influence of the wrath of God.

It compares the wrath of God to the agony and destruction that can be caused upon somebody by lives who have been devastated by alcohol.

Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about because you've seen folks struggle with it, you've seen lives destroyed by it, you've seen folks' lives taken away just simply by somebody doing something stupid under the influence of alcohol.

And he uses that example, of all examples, over and over again, he uses that example of the struggle of someone who's under the wrath of God.

[9 : 53] I'll tell you the struggle for Christ, it was not the nails, it was not the thorns, it was not, he struggled over the cup of God's wrath.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 21 tells us, for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin. So thank God in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Don't misunderstand me. His mind was made up. Luke 9 51 tells us that he set his face toward Jerusalem. That was when he knew what he was to go to Jerusalem for.

And his mind was set, his eyes were set, he knew what he was to do. But that does not make it easy. And as he prays in this garden right before he's to be arrested, he is simply saying, if there is another way, if the feeling of separation from the Father can be avoided, let it.

As all of the sin of the world comes upon his back, I am grown convinced over the years that Christ in the garden expresses the greatest sense of solitude, the greatest sense of loneliness, the greatest sense of despair of anything outside the cross itself.

[11 : 09] No one could go for him. No one could even go with him. It is the greatest sense of sorrow over the separation, the greatest sense of struggle.

Luke 22 verse 43 tells us that an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And I believe it is the greatest sense of struggle in all of humanity outside of the cross itself.

There was suffering in the garden. I'll tell you what else there was. There was also the sleep. He asked them to pray and instead they fell asleep.

Preoccupied by their own needs, they missed the power of the hour. Man, I'd love to point a finger at them. I really would. But the reality is if we look at our lives, we've had too many gardens of slumber in our own lives.

Opportunities that we have simply slept through. While God is doing a work of redemption for our world, the church too often slumbers. We too often fail to respond to his call for us to pray, for his call for us to share, for his call for us to lead those who need him so desperately.

[12 : 34] And we know from our own experience that we are too woefully weak in spiritual matters. And so we often remain silent when we have opportunities to speak for Christ. We often tolerate unrighteousness when we ought to be standing against it.

We're often timid when we ought to be bold. We often do nothing when we ought to act. We're often silent when we ought to speak up. Left to ourselves apart from the grace and power and might of God, we all lack the strength, the fortitude to stand up for Christ.

And sometimes maybe even sit up for Christ. So if you are appalled at them for sleeping in the midst of this, let's also be appalled for the numerous missed opportunities that we have in our own life.

The times when our tongues are too silent. The times when we are wearily nodding in our slumbering heads instead of paying attention to what God is doing in our world and in our lives.

It's not only the sleep and it's not only the struggle, it's also the silence. Let me explain.

[13 : 46] I've often stumbled over Judas. I can't understand how somebody who walked with Christ himself never heeded the message.

He was entrusted. He was their treasure. He was entrusted yet he bribed for Christ.

The Bible says that he betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Previously setting Jesus up, he's telling the mob that Jesus would be the one that he would kiss. What a way to betray somebody.

I mean the kiss in that day was a sign of respect. The kiss in that day was a sign of homage as well as affection. Slaves would kiss the feet of their master out of respect.

Students would kiss the hem of the garment of their teacher. A kiss on the hand was common as a sign of respect and honor. It was common. But a kiss on the face, that was a special kind of embrace.

[14 : 47] That was only to be done among the closest of friends. And yet that's exactly how Judas identified who Jesus was for the soldiers that were to arrest him that didn't know what he looked like.

And I want to point at Judas and say, shame on you! How in the world did you miss the opportunity of Christ when he walked right there before you? How did you betray him with a kiss?

How in the world? But let's be honest. If we can't be honest with each other, let's at least be honest with God. How many times have we tried to embrace him while disobeying him?

How many times have we made bribes with the world to be somewhat Christian but somewhat worldly? To have a little bit of this and a little bit of that.

How many times have we come to worship wanting blessing while we've ignored unconfessed sin in our own life and expected God to bless us?

[15 : 57] It's a hindrance. It's a shame to sin against God. It's shameless to embrace him with his people as if we love him and then betray him with our sin.

And the truth is that Judas was not led by love of God. He was led by love of self. And possibly the biggest wow statement in all of Scripture is found in Matthew 26 verse 24.

And it says the Son of Man goes at his written of him but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.

What a statement. The disciples slept. When God asked them to get up on their face and pray with him they slept.

When he went back they continued to sleep. When he went back again they continued to sleep. How many times has Christ asked us to go an extra mile and we passively have passed it by?

[17 : 27] Judas had the greatest opportunity the grandest opportunity in life the will of God and he walked away from it. Has God ever spoken to you and found a professed Christian that was too selfish in his or her ways to be obedient?

All the while he drinks the cup of God's wrath for your sin and my sin and our sin. he suffers the cross as an innocent man for the sins of sinners that too often are reckless and that are not really willing to sacrifice their appetite for stuff and their appetite for lust and their appetite for power for the lordship of Christ to really be in their lives.

I think we need to fall on our face. and have a garden type experience. In all the sacred places in the Holy Land years ago in that worn torn area they began building chapels on top of those sacred spots.

Some of them great cathedrals to protect that spot. to see where Christ was believed to be born. You go into a huge cathedral and walk down a narrow stairway and look down in the basement at one small spot that's protected by all that building as to where he was to be born in the Palestinian land of Bethlehem.

the garden of Gethsemane is still there. Some of the olive trees that are there were there when Christ prayed that day.

[19 : 32] When I went in 2012 there was a man almost 90 years old that still took care of those trees and he would prop up the branches of those 2,000 year old trees to make sure that they survived.

survived. It's a special place. And beside it there is a large cathedral built. We walked into that building and across the stage in the front of it is a gated area but inside that gated area is a rock embedded in the ground.

It is the same rock facement that rolls through all of the top of the Mount of Olives. And it is thought to be the rock in which Christ agonized in prayer that very night.

When I went that day that area was crowded. They were about to have some type of communion service different denominational thing than what I was a part of.

And I tried to bust up among them and I wasn't crazy about that. As I backed up and went around I looked over in the corner of that building and that rock that rolls through that building jetted up over in the corner along the wall.

[21 : 04] You could see how the rock was coming out of the wall and how they had built that building around that wall. Most sacred time I had of all of them in the Holy Land was walking over to that corner putting my hands on that rock and kneeling before it and saying thank you Christ.

thank you for taking on the cup of God's wrath for my sins.

Thank you for how you've changed my life because of what you were willing to do for me and how you went and hung on that cross for me to have salvation.

May my life be lived in gratitude of what you've done for me. I don't know what you need to do this morning but I think somehow God's allowed us to reflect on that time for us to just thank him for what he's done for us.

For some of you that's a bowed head and a closed eye. For the others of you it could be a surrender of your life and when you look back over your life no matter how long you've been in church you realize that there's never been a time in your life when you surrendered your life to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

[22 : 56] You've never asked him to forgive you of your sins to come into your life and to change you. Maybe everybody thinks that you have and maybe nobody thinks that you have but it really don't matter what anybody thinks because there comes a point in your life when you must choose to take the offer that he gives you.

and surrender your life to follow Christ. If you've never done that in just a few moments we're going to stand and we're going to sing but more important than that is that you surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He lived a sinless life and died a sinner's death so that you could have eternal life. Maybe you're here and you know you have done that but you've done that privately and you've never done that publicly you've never acknowledged that.

Jesus showed us by example and by his teaching that we acknowledge that through baptism. And if you've never been baptized as a believer maybe something happened early in your life but since then you've made a decision for Christ but you've never been baptized as a believer you need to come make a commitment to do that.

Maybe you're just like I was that day and as I am today. When you realize that what God has done for you you're not worthy of and that every breath that you live your life ought to be for his honor and for his glory and the reality is we live in such a hectic paced world that we don't bother to settle down and wait a moment and reflect upon the wrath of God that Christ endured so we don't have to.

[24 : 51] May this be our rock this morning. May this be a makeshift altar for us to lay it down before the Lord as he leads I'll never ask you to do anything that God don't want you to do and I hope I'll never let you be satisfied with doing anything less.

I just think you ought to honor God with your life today. Heavenly Father I love you and I thank you for the love that you have for us and I thank you dear Lord for the garden of Gethsemane and I thank you dear Lord for what you endured in that time and I'm thankful that you didn't consider our worthiness God I ask Lord that we'll leave here more committed to live our lives for the Lord Jesus Christ than we've ever been before and that as we approach that day of celebration of the resurrection of Christ that our hearts will be so right and we'll be so ready it'll be a celebration like we've never experienced oh God help us to do the business at hand however you're leading God right now in Jesus precious name

I pray amen stand