

Luke 22:39-46; Isaiah 51:17-25; Praying through the Trials I. The Command to Pray II. The Example of Prayer  
 Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, times of trial have a strange way of encouraging us to pray- don't they.  
 But has anyone here ever started to pray only to fall asleep? Perhaps in the early morning or late night-  
 attempting to pray with good intentions but only to succumb to sleep before too long. Well, if you have ever  
 slept when you wanted to be in prayer you may have an understanding of what happened to our disciples in  
 today's passage. This morning we return to our series through Luke which we took a break from this past  
 June. As we return to Luke 22, we find ourselves in the midst of great sorrow. Jesus is now at the end of his  
 earthly ministry- in the midst of His passion and soon to face death. And Luke, the beloved physician, will  
 bring to our attention the sorrow, sweat and blood that flowed from our suffering savior. Yet even in this  
 time of great sorrow, Jesus continues to pray for His people and Himself so that the Father's will would be  
 done- and so that our salvation would be completely purchased. We consider this theme: Jesus Christ calls  
 His people to pray through the trials so that we remember His perfect work.

### **I. The Command to Pray**

In our first point we consider the command given to the disciples found in v. 40 and again in v. 46- and that  
 command is this- Pray that you may not enter into temptation. And because the disciples fell asleep- Jesus  
 had return at the end of our text and repeat this very same command- pray! Now what is prayer? Prayer is  
 when God's people offer up their desires, requests and praise to God. Basically, prayer is when we talk to  
 God- it is when God's people call upon the Father in the name of the Son in the strength of the Holy Spirit.  
 Prayer is a necessary part of our thanksgiving- we rejoice and acknowledge all that God has done for us and  
 given to us. But it is also a part of humble faith- we confess our guilt and cry out to God in our need. So the  
 parts of prayer are these 4- Adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. We thank God for what He  
 has done- and we ask for help to do what we are called to do. But in this prayer- pray that you enter not into  
 temptation- the disciples are being told by Jesus to pray for a specific thing- that they may not fall into sin.  
 That they may not fail to do what is necessary. What is necessary for these disciples? That they stay away,

watch out for temptation, and pray for strength for themselves. What was the specific temptation that these disciples were facing? Not only the temptation to sleep in the flesh- but to fall asleep in the moral sense. For Simon- as v. 31 indicates- the temptation will be in the form of Satan filling his heart with fear. For these men, they were supposed to watch- be on guard- so that they would not deny Jesus when the guards would come. That when the shepherd was struck- that they would not all flee. And after the death of Jesus, they would be tempted to despair! Their faith would be severely tried- they would say- “we thought that this was the one who would redeem Israel” as Luke 24 will say. Would their faith be shattered- or would they remember the words of Jesus- would they still believe? So the disciples were tempted to sleep- in their weakness they would not see the trial at hand- they would fail to support Jesus and they would fail to stand ready and obey! The fact remains- sleepy Christians do not see the need for prayer- and when trials come, they are caught off guard and unprepared for temptation.

Temptations are anything that might cause us to sin- or some trial that tests our faith. Something that might lure us- or entice us. Even adversity and affliction- these are all temptations. Now why did these disciples- and why do we need to pray? Well the answer is simple enough- we are weak and our enemies are strong! We are by nature sleepy- drowsy people who walk through this life with our eyes closed. We are weak in our sin and would easily fall into every temptation and evil desire that would be placed in our path. We do not see the danger- we are ignorant to various attacks that may be coming. On our own- since we are so weak- we would just give up and succumb. Being sleepy is much more than just falling asleep. Far too many Christians are sleepy when it comes to temptation! They are self reliant- boasting in their own strength. If any man thinks he stands- beware lest he fall as I Cor. 10 says. Do you think you are above any sin? That you would never commit adultery or murder? Do you think that you could commit idolatry- if you were faced with a test like these disciples were- do you think you would stand firm and remain with Jesus- or would you deny him and run away as well? Any person who thinks that they are so mature- so strong that they would not sin in this way is dilutional! Sleepy Christians do not see the snake in the path- they are busy with the

things of this world- they are not aware of their surroundings- and they are bitten! Any temptation would give us an excuse to rebel against God and break His commandments- and if not for the grace of God and the strength of the Spirit we would all be much worse than we are! Added to this fact, our enemy is strong! The devil is that roaring lion- Satan as found back in v. 31 is looking for unsuspecting prey so that he might consume, sift, separate and devour. Why do we need to pray? Because we all have and we all will face various temptations! That is why Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer- lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil! We are weak- but you are strong! We cannot stand- so you must deliver us! Temptation can come from any area- at any moment! A stray thought- a passing glance- an innocent click of a button. So we, like the disciples must always be awake and be in prayer! As Eph. 6:18 says- "praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints!" Keep alert and pray! And the benefit of this kind of prayer is that it confesses weakness by appealing to the source of power! Jesus, deliver me from temptation! Give your strength and power by your Spirit! Speak to me- work within me- so that I do not fall! Provide for me a way out when I am tempted as I Cor. 10 promises- do not let me be tempted beyond what I can bear! And even if I do fall- forgive me! Restore me! Return to me the joy of your salvation as David would say in the Psalms. That is why Christians must be people of prayer- and that is why one of the last instructions Jesus gave His disciples before His death was this- keep watch and pray! Jesus knows our need- so He tells his disciples to watch and pray! As our HC LD 52 summarizes, when we pray "lead us not into temptation" we are acknowledging that we are weak- too weak to stand on our own. So Lord, uphold us and make us strong by your Spirit so that we might firmly resist our enemies until we win the complete victory! Strengthen us- so that we might stand at the ready- and not fall asleep. That is why we pray!

## **II. The Example of Prayer**

But Jesus does more than teach his disciples- not only telling His people to pray- He prays for them as He did in John 17 and the High Priestly Prayer. But what may be surprising is this- Jesus prays for Himself! Yes He

prays for us- as he did in Luke 22- but He prays for His own work! Now why would the perfect Prophet and HP need to pray? Well, remember that Jesus is not only the son of God He is also the son of Mary- a man in humility as He came to be our suffering servant! The need He has here was a need for comfort and strength because the task at hand was not only difficult- it was monumental! It was here that the Son would cry out- and then submit! It was in this place that the Son would agree to take the cup of wrath and drink it to the last drop. In this garden on the Mt. of Olives, the sacrificial lamb agrees to lay down on the alter. As a grape pressed produces wine, as an olive pressed produces oil, so in our passage the Son is pressed and it produces both sweat, blood and sorrow! Now consider where Jesus was praying- he was in the well-known place of prayer. The location that His disciples- even Judas- knew well- according to his custom as v. 39 begins. On the top of the Mt. of Olives- in the Garden of Gethsemane- the HP is considering the work set before him. And that work is of suffering and death. A death on the cross- the experience of the Father's wrath- being separated and forsaken by His Father- becoming a curse. This was not something that Jesus approached lightly- He knew what lay ahead and his body shuttered at the thought! So Jesus prays in v. 42- Father, if you are willing, remove this cup. Now the cup of God's wrath as we read of earlier in Is. 51- is a symbol of God's anger and judgement against sin. It is the culmination of the vengeance of God against the sins of the world- concentrated to a cup of foaming wine. To drink from this cup- to swallow the contents of this cup- is to take on the punishment and wrath that mankind deserves because they are rebels. It is to take on the curse- to experience the hellish agony that every man ought to receive. Although we sometimes forget, Jesus was not looking forward to this suffering. Yes- for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross and despised the shame- as Heb. 12 states. So there was a joy and delight in obeying the Father's will and the prospect of saving His flock from destruction. But at the same time, the horror of this suffering was not free from agony as v. 44 says. So Jesus says- if there is any other way for my people to be saved- if there is any other path that I might go and yet obey your will- then let me know. Remove this cup from my hands- let it pass me by! But never the less- not my will but your will be done! I submit to your sovereign plan! If this is the only way

in which my people can be saved- if this is the only path that leads to their deliverance- then I will go! My own desires are submissive to your good will- heavenly Father! In every human there is an aversion to suffering and death- but He was fully committed to securing His flock- fully obedient and submissive to His Father's will- and He would go where He was sent! He would do whatever was asked of Him! And we know what the Father's will was! If there was any other way in which we could have been saved- Jesus would have gone that way! If there was any other source of salvation- any other action or path that would lead to our life- Jesus would have done it! But there was not- only in the death of God's Son can mankind be saved! Even now His agony increases- as v. 44 continues. His agony was a wresting- struggling and suffering. His sweat pours off his like blood- falling on the ground is great drops. Sorrow and turmoil fill his heart- as Jesus Himself is tested and tried! It was necessary for Him to enter tribulation, trial- for Him to be tested as well! Will He go- will He obey- will He submit? Yes He does- the time is at hand- and the night of sorrow will soon give way to the light of day! So Jesus goes- He continues on this path of suffering- He drinks from the cup of God's wrath until it is finished! His prayer is answered- an angel appears in v. 43 to strengthen and encourage Him- and Jesus goes forth! It is now clear- there is only one way for fallen man to be saved- and that is when the Lamb of God suffers and dies in their place! It is also important to note who Jesus is praying to- He prays to His Father! His Father and our Father! The perfect, good and sovereign Father of church! The loving Father who sent His Son to this world- so that we might not perish- but have everlasting life! Jesus was lead into temptation so that we might not be! His suffering secures our deliverance!

To conclude, the limitation of the OT sacrifice was that the victim was killed without their choice. They were but witless and helpless beasts. But the perfect sacrifice knew what was coming- what the cost would be- how high the price was- and yet He submitted- He came- and He endured! That is the depth of Jesus Love! Jesus Christ calls His people to pray through the trials so that we remember His perfect work. Our trials remind us that He suffered as well- in our place! So may we all rejoice in the perfect sacrifice that Jesus offered as we pray for the strength to endure trials today.