

April 3rd, 2022
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Gethsemane to Glory: (It is Finished)
Sermon #1 Title: - The Final Decision
Sermon #2 Text: - (Matthew 26:36-46)

This morning we begin our trek to that wonderful Resurrection morning! – But I remind you today, that before there was a resurrection, there was a crucifixion, and before there was a crucifixion, there was a decision made by the Lord Jesus Christ that was the decision of the ages.

It was the single most pivotal moment, and the single most critical moment in all of history; and of your life and of my life. In 1979, I asked Jesus if He would save me. On that night in 33 AD, He said, “Yes, I will.”

We are looking today at nothing less, that the moment Jesus Christ decided that Yes, He would in fact die for my sin.

- Make no mistake about it, Before the foundation of the world, God planned to provide salvation to humanity that would not deserve it.
- It was God’s design, God’s desire. The Bible tells us in Revelation 13:8 that the **“Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world!”**
- But right alongside that, running parallel to it, like one train track to another, it was still up to the man Jesus, as to whether or not He would go through with it.

- vs 53 – **“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?”**

- Of course He could –

(We love John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

- that verse contains everything that God the Father and God the Son would do for us – and so We Love it, and rightfully so.

- But you must never forget the fact that while God sacrificed His son for you and me, at the drop of a thought, He would have sacrificed you and me to save His Son.

- We often remind ourselves, God did not have to save us. – God did not have to redeem man. – God did not have to step into our lives.

- He could have walked away at the garden of Eden, never to turn around again, and let all of humanity just go... be born, live, die, wake up in hell, and we would have never known the difference.

- It could very well be said, that “God so loved His Son that He gave over a sinful world to the punishment it deserved.”

As we begin this, we are reading from Matthew, but we are drawing from the well of Mark and Luke as well. John doesn’t describe this event for us in his own words, he just tells us that it was in this garden that Jesus would be betrayed.

Look at the events of that night, I want us to take particular notice of three different aspects of our Lord's private time in that particular garden.

I. The Sacred Setting – “the place called Gethsemane” (The Olive Press)

- Some of the Jews pronounce it “Get-hshemah-ne.”

A. The Place Jesus Chose – “Gethsemane”

*Note – Out of the whole of Jerusalem, leaving the upper room this is the place that our Lord chose to go.

1.) After the Supper had been ended, our Lord could have lead His disciples anywhere He wanted to go, but He chose this particular garden.

2.) Furthermore, we know this is late into the night... it would have been a good time to go home and go to bed. – Knowing all things – rather than go to bed, He went to pray – rather than go to the temple – He went to pray – Rather than find the Pharisees and turn Himself in – He went to pray.

*Note – Now what do we know about this place?

- Gethsemane means “olive press” or “olive oil press.”

- it was most likely walled a garden filled with Olive Trees, and at that time most likely had several stone presses.

Olive oil was one of the most valuable commodities of the day, and to have a “Garden” and a “Press” together right there so close to the city, no doubt was a fit and profitable business for the owners of the garden.

- We are told nothing about the owners of the garden, yet we can deduce that they were friendly to Jesus and His disciples because this was one of their regular meeting places of peace and refuge.

- Luke 22:39 – “And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.” – or “as His custom was”

- This was no doubt a friendly place of peace, and refuge, for Jesus and His disciples.

- But there would be no more fitting of a place for this particular night.

(I have no textual evidence to say this is why Jesus chose this location, but I will say, the picture is extremely fitting.

- Located in the Kidron Valley between two Mountains.

- to the East of Gethsemane is the Mount of Olives

- to the West of Gethsemane is Mount Moriah

On one side there is the place of Ascension – On the other side is the place of Crucifixion. On this night right in the middle, Jesus of Nazareth would endure the greatest amount of pressure any human being could ever face.

- He could turn to the Mount of the Ascension – give the Word, and 12 legions of angels would come and rescue Him.

- He could turn to the Mount of Crucifixion, and drink the cup of Gods wrath upon sin so you and I could be saved.

Furthermore – this valley has another name.

- It is called the Valley of Jehoshaphat – it is the valley where the Bible tells us judgment of the nations will take place.

- It is also called the Valley of Decision – where the Lord will drag the nations to at the close of the tribulation period, and sort out the sheep from the goats.

*Note – There is something about this place that serves as a Fork in the Road!

- Jesus could look at the Ascension and call the angels.

- Jesus could agree to the Crucifixion and spare humanity.

- The nations will come and either be set aside for punishment; or they will be set aside for the kingdom.

*Note – The Lord Himself would make the decision of the ages in this place, on that night.

B. The People Jesus Allowed – “Peter, James, John”

1.) The first thing we know is that He took 11 with Him from the upper room to here.

*Note – According to some of those who know Bible customs the fact that this is called a “Garden” means that it most likely had a rock wall around it, with a single gate or doorway for an entrance; and it is here that Jesus told Eight of the Disciples to stay.

- some postulate this to serve as “guards or watchmen.”

- these 8, would later have to rely on the account of the other three.

- these 8 would be the first ones to encounter Judas and the guard and the multitude.

2.) The second thing we know is that Jesus took Peter, James, and John, on into the garden with Him.

*Note – This is the third time we are told that Jesus gave these three privileges the others did not get.

- All throughout the ministry the Lord seemed to keep these as His most intimate circle of friends – and it was these three that He would bring with Him into His greatest crisis on earth.

*Note – It should not be lost on us that here at the end of the ministry on earth – These three hot-headed, foul-mouthed, uneducated fishermen that He started with, knowing all of their sins, their appetites and their failures – brings them with Him, into what will be one of His weakest moments on earth.

This nighttime Sacred Setting, is in the place that Jesus chose, with the people Jesus allowed, and we now see the purpose that Jesus went.

C. The Purpose Jesus Went: -

*Note – It was twofold: - To Pray to the Father and to Wait for Judas.

1.) “while I pray”

a.) To get His answer and to make His decision.

*Note – I want to suppose for just a second. Someone may ask, and it’s a fair question – Why didn’t Jesus just go give Himself to the Pharisees, after the upper room?

- Why didn’t He go to the temple and find them?

- Why did He make Judas go through the betrayal? – Why didn’t He just hand Himself over?

- I don't KNOW – except to say – Jesus had Not Yet Given the Father His Final Answer!

- Why would He turn Himself in, before He got His question answered?

- Why would He give Himself to the Pharisees before His decision was Final?

- Why would He do anything, without speaking with His Father, One More Time?

*Note – That Dark Night in Gethsemane was the Seminal Moment in Sacred History. – It was there, the pendulum would swing.

II. The Difficult Dialogue – “Then saith He...”

*Note – There were two ongoing conversations taking place that night. One between Jesus and the Disciples, and one between Jesus and the Father. Both were spoken with intensity and difficulty.

A. Between Jesus and His Disciples –

~1.) vs 38 – *“Then saith he unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.**”*

*Note – The first thing that Jesus tells Peter, James, and John, is the magnitude of the stress that He is under.

a.) My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death!

b.) Luke tells us that He sweat great drops of blood.

*Note – Luke 22:43-44 – *“**And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**”*

*Note – Literally He is telling them that He has enough sorrow and grief upon Him to actually take His life!

- Now friend – Jesus couldn't die! – Where there is no sin, there is no death, God He had yet to take upon Him the sin of man!

- Imagine how much you could suffer, if you could not die!

*Note – One thing that must be noted here, is the complete loss of human strength in Jesus.

- Luke 22:41 – Luke records for us that when Jesus first withdrew from the disciples, that He first, “kneeled down”; Matthew tells us here that He then fell on His face.

- As one writer put it, this is *“assumed only when the strength of man gives way under a load of sorrow, and some unutterable desire struggles within the soul.”*

*Note – Luke informs us that He had become so weak, that the God sent an angel to strengthen Him.

~2.) vs 40-41 – *“And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, **What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**”*

*Note – There were two things that Jesus had instructed these to do...

- They were to WATCH – Observe

a.) See the exchange that was happening between Him and the Father.

b.) See and observe the happenings
that night – be alert and pay attention
to all that was going on.

- They were to pray that they “not enter into
temptation” and I can think of no one that would need
that prayer more than Peter himself.

~3.) The spirit indeed is willing, the flesh is
weak.

*Note – There is a bit of a mystery as to the sleepiness of the
disciples. Jesus both chastened them, AND explained them.

- WHAT – Could you not watch for an hour? – As though they
should have been able to.

- The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak – As though
they wanted to, but could not.

- When the Lord Jesus rebuked them, among anything
else He was doing, He was drawing to their attention
the fact that *the weakness in their flesh was still
greater than the strength in their spirit.*

Luke 22:45 – *“And when he rose up from prayer, and was
come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,”*

- They had just come from the upper room

- All that Jesus had warned them about was
happening.

- Judas had betrayed all of them.

- Jesus’ looming death was now real

- The Lord was weak, weeping, and in agony
in the garden.

- it is late at night after a busy Passover

- and more than one person in life has given
themselves to sleep in order to avoid sorrow
and trauma.

*Note – The man Jesus in His darkest hour brought His three
closest friends into His time making the decision of the ages –
and the “Circumstances would see to it that He was still
absolutely alone with the Father.”

B. Between Jesus and His Father –

1.) “Take away this cup from me” – (Mark
14:36)

2.) “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me”

*Note – Three times the Lord Jesus made His request to the
Father.

*Note – What was it, that Jesus was in so much agony over?

- That cup!

- I’m sure death would have been a relief to
the stress.

- All he had done was prepare to die, and I’m
sure there was some of that, that cause His
agony.

- I’m sure the physical torture that awaited
Him was more than enough to cause such
dread... but that wasn’t it.

*Note – Thoughtful theologians down through the ages have
pointed to that Cup!

- In that “cup” was the sin of man and the wrath of
God.

Dr. Rogers pointed out that Christ, being an infinite being
would suffer in a finite amount of time, what a finite being
would suffer in an infinite amount of time.

- In short, in those six hours on the cross, Jesus would
suffer an eternities worth of hell for you and for me.

Hebrews 2:9 – “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honour; *that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*.

(Now listen, I don’t want to make more of this thought than is necessary – but – many men have learned the art of swallowing bad medicine without tasting it. – Jesus would not merely swallow this cup, He would know the maximum bitterness of sin, the maximum wrath of judgment, and His father turning His back to Him for a time.

- Don’t tell me, there was no reason Jesus would not give pause before saying Yes!

Note – There is one more thing before we move on to the last point. - Mark 14:36 – “And he said, *Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*”

- Don’t you think, if there had been any other way for men to be redeemed – the Father would have done it?! Don’t you think if there had been any other way, God would have found it?

The Sacred Setting – The Difficult Dialogue and now –

III. The Moving Moments – “the hour is come”

*Note – There are four primary moments that I want you to notice in that Garden. Moments of Movement that Mattered.

A. The Silence of the Father – (no recorded response)

1.) We have no record of God speaking to Jesus in that Garden that night.

a.) We know that God often spoke with Jesus, and He may have that evening, yet the scriptures are painfully silent.

*Note – As Christ cried out, for our eyes and ears, heaven was silent. In His darkest hour there was no Word given to Him.

B. The Sleeping of the Disciples – “their eyes were heavy”

1.) Was it merely their weak flesh

2.) Was it the working of spirit of satan

3.) Was it the Father closing them out from such a sacred moment – leaving Jesus absolutely alone to deal with this decision.

*Note – Peter had at one time, pleaded with Jesus not to let the crucifixion happen. Satan had already offered Jesus everything without the crucifixion, and in His weakest emotional moment on earth, the last thing that needed to happen was for Peter to get a bad case of advice giving.

C. The Strengthening of the Angels – John 22:43

1.) Though God was silent, He was not uncaring.

a.) While a great battle was being waged on the inside of Jesus; the Lord God didn’t provide a way out; He provide strength to go through.

D. The Sealing of Salvation – “thy will be done”

*Note – We’ve danced around it all morning, and now we come to it.

- Nevertheless, Not My Will, but Thine Be Done.

Jesus said, “YES” I will drink that cup for all mankind.

- It was at that moment, on that night, in that place, the final decision was made by the Lord Jesus to take all of our sin upon Him, and all of the Wrath of Judgment upon Him, so that WE would be delivered from both the PENALTY of Sin at our death, and the Power of sin in our life.

