
Knowing Jesus

The Will of Christ

Luke 22:39-46

4/14/2019

Main Idea: Jesus gave Himself fully to the will of God in order to save sinners who would not.

Lesson Objective: Submit our will to Christ.

Introduction

As your class time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

James Hewitt wrote: “At first I saw God as my observer, my judge, keeping track of the things I did wrong, so as to know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there sort of like the president. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I didn’t really know Him. But later on when I recognized this Higher Power, It seemed as though life was rather like a bike ride, but it was a tandem bike, and I noticed that God was in the back helping me pedal. I don’t know just when it was that he suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since—life with my Higher Power, that is. God makes life exciting! But when He took the lead, it was all I could do to hang on! He knew delightful paths, up mountains and through rocky places—and at breakneck speeds. Even though it looked like madness, he said, “Pedal!” I worried and was anxious and asked, “Where are you taking me?” He laughed and didn’t answer, and I started to learn trust. I forgot my boring life and entered into adventure. When I’d say, “I’m scared,” He’d lean back and touch my hand. He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy. They gave me their gifts to take on my journey, our journey, God’s and mine. And we were off again. He said, “Give the gifts away; they’re extra baggage, too much weight.” So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received, and our burden became light. At first I did not trust Him in control of my life. I thought He’d wreck it. But He knows bike secrets—knows how to make it lean to take sharp corners, dodge large rocks, and speed through scary passages. And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places. I’m beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face with my delightful constant Companion. And when I’m sure I just can’t do any more, He just smiles and says, “Pedal!””¹

For many of us, one of the questions we must ask in every decision regards our trust in the will of God. Thankfully, though, Jesus was committed to praying for God’s will and carrying out the plan of God: His own death.

¹ James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) pp. 247-248.

Prayerful

Luke 22:39-42

³⁹ And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ And when he came to the place, he said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” ⁴¹ And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#).

A point of interest for us is understanding why Jesus was there on the Mount of Olives. This mountain was known for its olive groves and the production of olive oil. Prophets, priests and kings were anointed with olive oil. The promised Messianic king was known as the LORD’s Anointed. There was an ancient tradition that this king would come from the East. Even the Romans believed a great king would come from the East. We should not be surprised to learn that Jews in the time of Jesus believed that the LORD’s Anointed, long awaited descendant of David would enter Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. It was on this mountain that David wept during the revolt of Absalom (2 Samuel 15:30), and it was here that Jesus wept on Palm Sunday (Luke 19:41).²

Luke’s account of Jesus praying on the **Mount of Olives** before His arrest is a little different than the accounts of Matthew and Mark. He did not mention that Peter, James, and John were invited by Jesus to accompany Him while He prayed. Luke’s version did not include the three times that Jesus returned to them to find them sleeping and His rebuke of them. Luke placed attention on the

² Hannaniah O. Pinto and James W. Flemming, *Jesus’ Last Night with His Disciples*. Biblical Resources, LLC. Lagrange Georgia, 2008, 52.

disciples' role in prayer by calling them to “**pray that you will not fall into temptation** (vv. 40, 46).” This reveals the love that Jesus had for them because He knew of what was about to happen, and He wanted them to overcome the temptation to faithlessness.

Jesus gave them a prayer assignment. It centered on their chief need. The renewed activities of Satan called them to pray to escape temptation as Jesus had escaped Satan's tempting. Judas and Peter were not the only ones Satan wanted. He wanted all of Christ's disciples and would tempt each of them. Jesus was no stranger to prayer, it was a way of life for Him. Every major decision called for special prayer time for Jesus (3:21; 5:16; 11:2; 18:1). He had a special place in the Mount of Olives where He habitually went for prayer. The disciples followed, an ironic statement in light of Christ's original call to follow Him (5:8-11; 9:23; 18:22). Now they followed, but only to fall asleep in Jesus' greatest moment of need and in the face of Satan's renewed attack on them. They followed, but not in the way a person takes up a cross and follows.

Some people may wonder that if Jesus knew what was about to take place, then why did He pray for God to remove the cup from Him? There are many possible responses to that question, but just to name a few: 1) Jesus knew that death is the “wages of sin” (Romans 6:23)—and that he would pay the total wages in full. 2) He also knew that death is a result of the judgment of God (cf. Romans 5:12)—and that he would bear that judgment. 3) He knew that death would bring the wrath of God on Him (cf. 1 John 2:2),—and that he would propitiate it to the full. Jesus knew what lay ahead. The cup of the blood of the new covenant must be spilled. Yet He, as a human being, did not want to suffer. He did not want to die. He would have liked to have found another way to follow God's plan. Still, He submitted to the Father. The Father's will He would do, not

His own. He knew the Father's will was best. The Father's will was what He always prayed for and did, even when the human side wanted something else. That is why Jesus was filled with such unremitting dread. This is why he was so fearful. This is why he could well have died *before* the cross.³

He voluntarily drank the cup of suffering (Matt. 20:22; 26:39, 42; Mark 10:38; 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11). It is a metaphor here not only for physical death in general, but also for the particular death Jesus would suffer on behalf of mankind. As He contemplated the awful experience awaiting Him, His soul drew back from the horror of the essence of sin. In spite of this "cup," Jesus willingly obeyed God's will, bearing the sins of all people so that mankind could be saved.

Jesus, more than any of us, knows anxiety. He knows the difficulty of aligning our desires with the will of God. The Father had given a cup of suffering and death. The Son, in obedience and subjection, would drink it. God knows that we can only find the strength we need to do the will of God through the power of God.

Look closely at Jesus' prayer in verse 42. What, in your own words, was He saying?

What is the "cup" which Jesus must drink (v. 11)?

Does His prayer bother you or encourage you? Why?

Why do you think Luke included the detail that Jesus knelt to pray? What does that indicate about the nature of prayer and what Jesus was feeling?

Why is it important that we understand that it was the will of the Lord that Jesus die?

³ Mark C. Black, [Luke](#), College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 1995), Lk 22:39–40.

Diligent

Luke 22:43-44

⁴³ *And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.*

⁴⁴ *And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)

There is some discussion over these verses about whether or not these verses were Luke's words or later additions to the text. Verses 43-44 are missing from many of the best Greek manuscripts and may reflect the interpretation by an early Christian scribe. However, we can see that these verses coincide with the anguish that Jesus felt in other Gospel accounts (Matthew 26:38 and Mark 14:34, in which Jesus says, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.") The problem for modern translators is that Luke chose to focus more on Jesus's acceptance of God's will rather than His personal grief.⁴ This could be true, but it doesn't take away from the fact that He had accepted God's will and was also in great anguish. Most modern translations will include these verses because there is not enough evidence to keep it from being in the Bible.

With that being said, we can first notice that there was no mention of a verbal response from the Father. The silence was deafening! We know that because Jesus took the cup by the way of the cross that there was no other way. There had to be a perfect sacrifice for the atonement of sins. When we hear the tv personalities talk about the narrow-minded viewpoint of Christianity because it does not include other ways into heaven, let us remember that Jesus

⁴ Mark C. Black, [Luke](#), College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 1995), Lk 22:43-44.

asked if there was another way, and there wasn't any. If there was another way to get forgiveness of sins and entrance into the presence of God, then the Father was wrong by sending His only Son to the cross. Because we know that He can't be wrong, we must believe in His testimony that there is no other way to the Father except through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

The cold reality of the cross sent Jesus into agony and rather than running from His Father He ran towards Him in continued prayer. Prayer was always a priority for Jesus. The Father gave an immediate answer to His prayer, but in a somewhat unexpected way. Rather than tell Him what to do, God sent an angel to feed and encourage Him. The angel's presence reaffirmed what Jesus knew. He had to face the task God had placed before Him. He had to go to the cross. But He went with heavenly presence, heavenly strength, and heavenly nourishment. Angels played a significant role in Luke.

Matthew and Mark tell us exactly where Jesus was when He prayed. He was in the Garden of Gethsemane. What is very interesting is that the name Gethsemane means olive press. Dr. Jim Flemming shared some insights to these passages. He explained that we can begin to understand why He was there by learning the process of extracting the olive oil from the olives.

First, ripe olives were beaten from the branches and collected on sheets beneath the tree.

Second, the olives were crushed (not yet pressed) by rolling a heavy stone upon them.

Third, sacks or baskets of crushed olives were placed upright in the pressing area.

Fourth, the oil was pressed from the crushed olives by the weight of the stones suspended from a wooden beam.

Fifth, the oil was collected in a vat below the pressing area and stored in earthenware jars.

Another important point to remember about Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is understanding what the word meant. Each Gospel writer showed a different emphasis. Matthew and Mark demonstrated the humanity of Jesus falling flat on the ground, much like Him being "pressed in the Garden of the Oil Press." In Luke (and Acts) God's Spirit is always present during a time of human need, so "**strengthened Him**" while He prayed. Jesus is pictured as experiencing heavy spiritual testing during His prayer. His perspiration did not just bead; it flowed down His sides like olive oil down the sides of the sacks under the pressure of the stone weights. Just like us, He faced a difficult decision and suffered emotional distress while He tried to make it. He became so emotionally involved that He perspired profusely. His perspiration became so heavy that it did not run in little rivulets like water. Rather, it dropped from His skin as if each drop of sweat were as heavy as a drop of blood. Jesus was clearly pressed in the Garden of the Oil Press. This passage should captivate us because our Savior who committed no sin, took the punishment of our sin which is death.⁵

Jesus didn't approach the cross glibly. He was realistic about the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain He was about to endure. Though He was tempted to avoid pain, as we all are, Jesus was confident in the plan and goodness of His Father.

How does understanding that the cross is the will of God impact the way we view the crucifixion?

How does it impact the way we view Jesus' prayer in the garden?

⁵ Pinto and Flemming, 50-53.

Attentive

Luke 22:45-46

⁴⁵ And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.” [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)

Jesus' prayer time came to an end. It was time to get back to the world of rejection and arrest. So He walked over to the disciples, hoping to find them in prayer. Instead, they were sleeping. Luke explained that they were sleeping due to sorrow. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus told them point blank that He was leaving them during their last meal together. He went on to tell them that they could not go with Him. The reality of what Jesus said was creeping into their consciences. They realized their time with Jesus was coming to an end. We know that Jesus expected to die, and He had repeatedly informed His disciples that this was going to happen. Imagine leaving everything to follow someone. You have seen and experienced so much good while you were with Him and then He tells you that He leaving and you can't go. Everything that you hoped and dreamed of doing together was now in question. You are experiencing loss and uncertainty as you begin to think about what lies ahead. There is no wonder why the disciples were broken and sorrowful. Their grief wore them out.

While sleeping away their grief, they yielded to temptation by not praying for power to withstand temptation. Again, Satan had won a battle. But Jesus invited them to pray so temptation would not be too much for them.

Charles Simmons wrote that the Lord had asked them to join with Him in prayer, not only in interceding for Him, but in imploring strength for themselves, that they might be able to sustain the trials which were now coming fast upon them. But they were so overpowered with sleep, that they were again and again awakened by their Lord. They were no sooner left to themselves than they fell asleep again. “Not a single hour could they watch with their Lord,” notwithstanding all their recent protestations and professions. The fact was that they were “overcome with sorrow,” which, in some cases, when it is exceeding deep, operates as a blow, that, for a season, only stuns and stupifies. The whole of our Lord’s late conversations with them respecting His approaching sufferings and death had altogether oppressed their minds, so that they were no longer able to exercise their faculties as the occasion required. “Their spirits were willing; but their flesh was weak.”]

He did indeed administer reproof to them with the utmost tenderness, and even apologize for them, as he afterwards did for his very murderers. But to be so neglected by them in this his last extremity, and to behold them so indifferent about him and so careless about themselves after all the exhortations he had given them, must have occasioned him the most poignant grief; and still the more, when he saw that the time for prayer was now lost, and that the traitor, with his armed bands, was at hand, to deliver him up into the power of his blood-thirsty enemies.

We are told indeed, that “they knew not what to answer him.” And well might they be confounded, when they saw how shamefully they had violated

their obligations to their divine Master, and how regardless they had been of their own eternal interests. And what shall we ourselves answer in the last day, when called to account for our present carelessness in the midst of all the warnings that are given us and the dangers to which we are exposed? Verily, whatever excuses we may *now* make, our mouths will *then* be shut: and to all eternity shall we reproach ourselves, that when we could watch whole nights about our temporal concerns, as the Apostles had done with their nets, we have not been able to “watch with Christ one single hour” in fervent and persevering prayer; so “stupid have we been and brutish, even as beasts before him.”⁶

Are you comfortable praying for God’s will to be done?

What must we believe to be true about God’s character in order to pray for His will to be done in our lives and the world?

Are we obligated to live in God’s will? What are the benefits of doing so?

What are the dangers of not?

What happens when we view prayer as something to check off our daily spiritual checklist?

How might remembering the struggle of Jesus in the garden this week aid you in more fully appreciating the gravity of the crucifixion?

⁶ Charles Simeon, [*Horae Homileticae: Luke XVII to John XII*](#), vol. 13 (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1833), 109–110.