



RBC BIBLE STUDY FOR WEEK 29/03/2020

"GETHSEMANE - GRAPPLING WITH GOD'S WILL"

Gethsemane: The name is derived from the Aramaic  *Gad-Šmānê*), meaning "oil press". The garden was surrounded by olive trees and was possibly at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

I will suggest the possible relevance/imagery of the name towards the end of this study.

Bible Reading: Matthew 26:36-46

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." ³⁷ He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. ³⁸ He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹ He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

⁴⁰ Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? ⁴¹ Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!"

⁴² Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, "My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away^[a] unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³ When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open.

⁴⁴ So he went to pray a third time, saying the same things again. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said, "Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But look—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!"

To my mind this moment in Jesus' life is the most pivotal. To be sure there were many significant times, places and people that Jesus had already ministered to. It is almost as if Matthew has invited us (the readers) in to the Garden to observe this most intimate time of struggle that Jesus had faced up until this event.

1) Do you think this was a pivotal time for Jesus?

Why do you think it was... or wasn't?

Jesus teaches about prayer in Matthew Chapter 6, and in verse 6 states:

"when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you,
and pray to your Father in private."

As Jesus didn't have His own house, the garden effectively became Jesus' room for prayer in private.

2) Do you have a private place for quiet prayer?

3) What is the clue that this was such a struggle for Jesus?

Do you ever struggle in your dealings with God?

What do you do to overcome that struggle?

Note Matthew 26: 37.

4) Why do you think Jesus took Peter, James and John with him?

You will notice that Jesus left them in one part of the Garden and withdrew from them.

5) Why did He do that?

Jesus spent an hour in private, anguished prayer and comes back to meet up with the three disciples.

6) What does He find?

This is an interesting point in the story.

These disciples promised Jesus (**Matthew 20: 22 & 26: 35**) that, come what may, they would suffer and die with Him, but did not have the strength to stay awake for **one hour**.

7) How would they go when faced with more difficult challenges?

8) What was required to happen for these men for them to stand strong and firm (which they ultimately did do)?

Luke (a physician) adds an extra detail to his relating of this event.

In **Luke 22: 44** he writes, "And being in anguish, Jesus prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."

If you recall my mention of the meaning of *Gethsemane* being - oil press.

9) How is the imagery of oil press and sweating drops of blood similar?

For me, at least, this is an insight into the distress and sometimes difficulty in accepting to obey the Will of God. Jesus was no different from you or me in this regard. Both Matthew and Luke present us with a Jesus who grappled with God's requirement of Him. It took three times before He settled the matter and garnered His strength, accepted His Father's will for his life, got up in a resolute manner and looked ahead to the days that would follow.

We now know that this was to end in the pain and suffering of the Cross.

Conclusion:

In concluding this first of our bible studies I draw a simple conclusion.

Jesus was faced with, perhaps, the most important decision ever required of anyone. We have seen how he took three disciples with him for moral support (but they failed Him), left them and went deeper into the privacy of the garden.

It is always good to have support and people to lean on. It is also wise to seek good counsel when we are faced with major decisions, but at the end of the day it is you and it is me that has to make these important and impacting decisions. At the end of his prayer time in the garden... Jesus, and Jesus alone had to arrive at His decision, and thank God He did!

Next week's Bible Study: "Making an Entrance" Luke 19: 28 - 40